



Chet Valley Churches



Carol Service

19th December 2021

Greeting and Welcome

We meet to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
he has come to his people and set them free.

Light has sprung up for the righteous
and joyful gladness for those who are true-hearted.

Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Introduction

As we listen to the Christmas story and sing our carols,
Let us wonder with Mary at the words of Gabriel;
Kneel with the trembling shepherds at the angels' song;
And hurry with them to the stable.
Let us journey with the wise men
And follow the star to Bethlehem.
Let us look for and find the baby lying in the manger.
Amen.



♫ **Carol: Once in Royal David's City**

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in: be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

Reading 1: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Carol: Silent Night

**Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child: holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace; sleep in heavenly peace!**

**Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds first saw the sight,
Glory streams from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born!'**

**Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light:
Radiance beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**



Reading 2: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

♫ Carol: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

**Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega; he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.**

**By his word was all created; he commanded; it was done:
Heaven and earth and depth of ocean, universe of three in one,
All that grows beneath the shining
Of the light of moon and sun, evermore and evermore.**

**Blessed was that day for ever when the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Saviour of our race,
And the child, the world's redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.**

**Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son,
Glory to the Holy Spirit, persons three, yet Godhead one.
Glory be from all creation
While eternal ages run, evermore and evermore.**

Reading 3: Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Choir Carol: Star Carol

**Sing this night for a boy is born in Bethlehem.
Christ our Lord in a lowly manger lies.
Bring your gifts, come and worship at his cradle.
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.**

***See his star shining bright in the sky this Christmas night.
Follow me, joyfully; hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.***

**Angels bright come from heaven's highest glory;
Bear the news with its message of good cheer.
Sing, rejoice, for a king is come to save us.
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.**

See his star shining bright..

**See he lies in his mother's tender keeping.
Jesus Christ in her loving arms asleep.
Shepherds poor come to worship and adore him;
Offer their humble gifts before the son of Mary.**



See his star shining bright..

**Let us all pay our homage at the manger.
Sing his praise on the joyful Christmas night.
Christ is come bringing promise of salvation.
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.**

See his star shining bright..

Reading 4: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Carol: While Shepherds Watched their Flocks

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground, the angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.**

**'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);**

'Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind.

**'To you in David's town this day is born of David's line
A saviour, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:**

**'The heavenly babe you there shall find to human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands, and in a manger laid.'**

**Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:**

**'All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.'**



Reading 5: Luke 2:8-18

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

Carol: Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.**



Reading 6: Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has

been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

♫ **Carol: We Three Kings of Orient Are**

**We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar;
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star:**

***O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.***

**Born a king on Bethlehem’s plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King for ever, ceasing never, over us all to reign:**

O star of wonder...



**Frankincense to offer have I, incense owns a deity high;
Prayer and praising, gladly raising, worshipping God most high:**

O star of wonder...

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;

Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb:

O star of wonder...

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and sacrifice.

'Alleluia, Alleluia!' sounds through the earth and skies:

O star of wonder...

Reading 7: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Reflection [Rev Alison]

Words! Words! Words!

Words can be joined together to create great literature and poetry;

They can be used to write Christmas letters updating friends and family of news;

They can be used for poisonous messages; hate mail; death threats; trolling.

And then there are slogans:

Make America Great Again—MAGA

Get Brexit Done!
Build Back Better!
#metoo
Black Lives Matter

Few words, so they are simple and memorable.

Trouble is, slogans in their simplicity can be shallow: Make America Great Again—for whom?

And slogans can be misinterpreted or altered. Black Lives Matter? White Lives Matter *too* was one response as well as All Lives Matter! And of course they do, but the point of the original slogan was being missed.

So what about a Christmas slogan?

Turning to The Beatles for inspiration perhaps it could be: All You Need is Love?

It's certainly simple and memorable; definitely not shallow.

You could say that the Word made flesh, God with us, was Love... Jesus, God with us, is love.

God's love—it's almost unimaginable...

God's love is unlimited, endlessly poured out on us;

God's love never gives up; no matter what happens whether we receive or reject it;

God's love does not control; God doesn't try to live our lives for us.

God's perfect love!

All You Need is Love—deceptively simple and yet as true now as it was all those years ago.

If only we could all love like God. What a wonderful world it would be!

Amen.

♪ **Choir Carol: Love Came Down at Christmas**

**Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.**

**Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?**

**Love shall be our token; Love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and others, Love for plea and gift and sign.**

 **Prayers [Richard Ball]**



Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Christ, shine brightly in our lives; may others see your love reflected in us.
Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Christ, give us obedient hearts to live lives that please you.
Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife."

Christ, give us courage to face difficult decisions and to act fairly and properly.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

She laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Christ, look mercifully on the homeless and through us provide means of support.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

"Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place."

Christ, give us strong and eager legs in our journey of faith.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

They offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Christ, give us generous hearts, when we see so much need around us.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

John came to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

Christ, give us the words to witness well to your Light.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

All you need is love.

Christ, give us love in our lives, love that we freely shower on others.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Notices

This year we are collecting for Unicef, providing support for children across the world throughout the year. You can donate during our refreshments or through our JustGiving page (All Saints, Chedgrave), making a note in the 'Your Message' box that it is for Unicef.

Other Christmas Services still to come:

Christmas Eve

Crib Service: *It's Christmas, Baby!* 4:00pm Holy Trinity

Midnight Mass: 11:30pm at both All Saints and Holy Trinity

Christmas Day:

9:00am St Margaret, Hardley

9:00am St Mary, Sisland

10:00am All Saints, Chedgrave

10:45am St John, Loddon

Carol: *O Come All Ye Faithful*

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the king of angels:**

***O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!***

**God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:**

O come, let us adore him...

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God in the highest:**

O come, let us adore him...

Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God almighty, ☩ Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you and those whom you love now and for ever. **Amen.**

