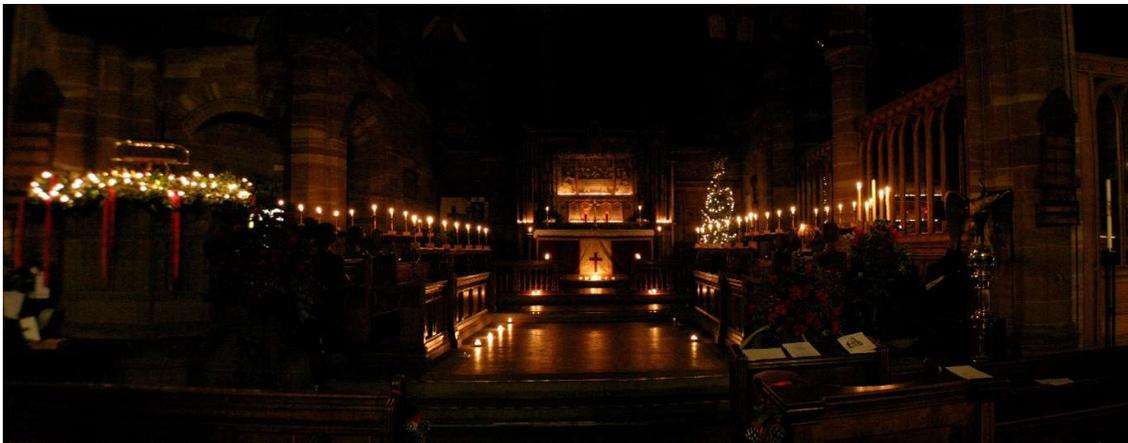




**All Saints' Church, Hertford  
A Service of Lessons and Carols  
20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 18.30**



**“The Christmas Journey”**



# The Christmas Journey

**All: Once in royal David's city**

## Welcome

Welcome to this service of music and readings for Christmastime. We come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in prayer.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

for the Church, that it may bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;  
for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognise their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;  
for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

**All Our Father, which art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done,  
in earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## **Prophecy**

Isaiah 11:1-9 read by Andrew Belfield

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

**Choir:** O Radiant Dawn – *MacMillan*

## Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38 read by Isabel Hurley

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 for ever, 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.

**Choir:** I sing of a Maiden - *Willis*

**All:** O little town of Bethlehem

## Birth

John 1:1-14 read by Revd Doug Loveridge

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The paschal candle is lit

*Please be seated for the Prayer*

From the very beginning was your Word,

Which spoke this world into being,

Your word that gives life and light,

Your Word, that over comes the darkness

That flows like mountain streams,

Your Word, that whispers in the morning breeze,

Your Word, revealed through prophets and angels,

Your Word, revealed in humility

Through a tiny child,

Your Word at the beginning of all things, Alpha,

And for all eternity, Omega.

We bring to you ourselves, all our darkness, our fear knowing that you

will infuse us with your deep joy and peace,

knowing that we are all your beloved children, through Jesus Christ,

**Amen**

**Choir:** Blest Mary – *arr, Cleobury*

## The Visit of the Shepherds

Luke 2:8-16 read by Andrew Povey Richards

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.

**Choir:** Hush my Dear – *G.Jackson*

**All: The First Nowell**

## The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2 : 1-12 read by Nick Hassell

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.

**Choir:** What child is this? - *T.Hewitt-Jones*

## Light

Luke 2:22-40 read by Kay Povey Richards

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

**Choir:** O Nata Lux - *Lauridsen*

**All: O come all ye faithful**

**The Final Prayer and Blessing**

Lord, we pray for each person here,  
and each family represented tonight.

We give thanks that you hold every single one of us in your hand  
and we pray as we join together in your presence,  
for your world, all those who are alone, those who are suffering in mind, body  
or spirit. We pray that we can take the blessing we receive out into the cold  
night air, into the darkness, then back in to the warmth of our families and  
friends, near or far, so that our Christmas will be truly filled with your Spirit.

**Amen**

God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds  
the good news of Jesus' birth.

**Amen.**

You have heard his story,  
the story of God's own Son.

**Amen.**

May he fill you with joy  
to bring this good news to others today.  
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you  
now and for ever more.

**Amen.****All: Hark! The herald angels sing**

*May you be blessed with  
The spirit of the season, which is peace,  
The gladness of the season, which is hope,  
And the heart of the season, which is love.*

Rev Canon Jo Loveridge,  
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