



St Matthew's Church

Chichester Road, Croydon



Nine Lessons and Carols

*We welcome you to St Matthew's
this evening and pray you are blessed
as we hear once again the mystery of
the Incarnation, and worship our
wonderful God and Saviour, Jesus
Christ.*

*Please be aware that candles can be
dangerous. We ask you to hold your
candle upright when lit, ensure that
clothing and hair is kept well away
from the flame and to extinguish the
candle when directed. Should there
be any incident, someone will come
to your aid.*

*Please stand for the first Carol. The
first verse will be sung as a solo and
the second verse by the choir. Please
join in from the third verse.*

Carol

solo:

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

choir:

He came down to earth from
heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
and His shelter was a stable,
and His cradle was a stall;
with the poor, and mean and lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy

And through all His wondrous
childhood,
He would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us He grew,
He was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us He knew.
and He feeleth for our sadness,
and He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
through His own redeeming love;
for that Child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads His children on
to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by
we shall see Him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars His children
crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Bidding Prayer

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who 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.**

First Lesson

The Fall

read by a member of the choir

Genesis 3.8-14

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' ¹⁰ He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' ¹¹ He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' ¹² The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked

me, and I ate.' ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.'

Choir

Torches

John Joubert

Second Lesson

The promise to Abraham

read by a Churchwarden

Genesis 22.15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

Carol

See, amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below;
see, the Lamb of God appears,
promised from eternal years!

*Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!*

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height
sublime,
sits amid the cherubim!

Say, ye holy shepherds, say
what your joyful news today;
wherefore have ye left your sheep
on the lonely mountain steep?

'As we watched at dead of night,
lo, we saw a wondrous light;
angels singing "Peace on earth"
told us of the Saviour's birth.'

Sacred Infant, all divine,
what a tender love was Thine,
thus to come from highest bliss
down to such a world as this!

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,
by Thy face so meek and mild,
teach us to resemble Thee,
in Thy sweet humility:

Edward Caswall (1814-1878)

Third Lesson

The prophecy of the Messiah's Birth

read by a Parish Safeguarding Officer

Isaiah 9.2, 6, 7

The people walking in
darkness have seen a great
light; on those living in the land
of deep darkness a light has
dawned.

For to us a child is born, to us a
son is given, and the government
will be on his shoulders. And he
will be called Wonderful
Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his
government and peace there will
be no end. He will reign on
David's throne and over his
kingdom, establishing and
upholding it with justice and
righteousness from that time on
and forever. The zeal of the LORD
Almighty will accomplish this.

Carol

Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth.

*Come and worship,
Christ, the newborn King;
come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant Light:

Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen His natal star.

Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear;
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in His temple shall appear.

Though an Infant now we view
Him,
He shall fill His Father's throne,
gather all the nations to Him;
every knee shall then bow down:
All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to th'eternal Three in One.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Fourth Lesson

The prophecy of the Messiah's Kingdom of Peace

read by a Young Church Leader

Isaiah 11.1 – 9

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.

Carol

The holly and the ivy
when they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood
the holly bears the crown.

Refrain:

*The rising of the sun
and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ,
sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom,
white as the lily flower,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
to be our sweet Saviour. *Refrain*

The holly bears a berry,
as red as any blood,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
to do poor sinners good. *Refrain*

The holly bears a prickle,
as sharp as any thorn,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
on Christmas day in the morn.

Refrain

The holly bears a bark,
as bitter as any gall,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
for to redeem us all. *Refrain*

English traditional

Fifth Lesson

The Annunciation to Mary

read by a Young Church Member

Luke 1.26 – 38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.

For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

Choir

I saw a maiden sitten and sing

Basque traditional arranged by Edgar Pettman

Sixth Lesson

The Birth of Jesus

read by a member of the PCC

Luke 2.1 – 7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Carol

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round the virgin and her Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace;
sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quail at 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:
radiant beams Your holy face
with the dawn of saving grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth.

Joseph Mohr (1792-1848)

trans. John Freeman Young (1820-1885)

Choir

In the bleak midwinter

Harold Darke

Seventh Lesson

The shepherds go to the manger

read by a Server

Luke 2.8 - 16

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found
Mary and Joseph, and the baby,
who was lying in the manger.

Choir

While shepherds watched their flocks by night

John Foster

Carol

Joy to the world, the Lord is
come!

Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare Him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature
sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour
reigns!

Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills
and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and
grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748) based on
Psalm 97*

Eighth Lesson

The Magi are led by the star to Jesus

*read by a new member of the
congregation*

Matthew 2. 2 - 12

In the time of King Herod, after
Jesus was born in Bethlehem in
Judea, during the time of King
Herod, Magi from the east came
to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is
the one who has been born king
of the Jews? We saw his star in
the east and have come to
worship him.” When King Herod
heard this he was disturbed, and
all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all
the people’s chief priests and
teachers of the law, he asked
them where the Messiah was to
be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,”
they replied, “for this is what the
prophet has written: “‘But you,
Bethlehem, in the land of
Judah, are by no means least
among the rulers of Judah; for out
of you will come a ruler who will
shepherd my people
Israel.’”

Then Herod called the Magi
secretly and found out from them
the exact time the star had
appeared. He sent them to
Bethlehem and said, “Go and
search carefully for the child. As
soon as you find him, report to

me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Choir

Far away, what splendour comes this way

Traditional Provencal melody

Ninth Lesson

The Incarnation of the Word of God

read by a Minister

John 1.1 - 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Choir

How far is it to Bethlehem?

Geoffrey Shaw

Carol

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:

See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with
lowly fear;

we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
glory to God in the highest:

*Latin, 18th century, trans. Frederick
Oakeley (1802-1880) and others*

Prayers

Carol

Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;

with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold Him come,
offspring of a Virgin's womb!

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:

Hail, the incarnate Deity!

Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of
Peace!

Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings,
risen with healing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.

*Charles Wesley, (1707-1788) and
others*

Blessing

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