

The Parish Church of St Giles
with St Mary's, Pontefract



A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday 17th December 2023 4.30 pm

Welcome to this service of Nine Lessons and Carols

5 minutes before the service begins, a bell will ring to signal that a period of quiet reflection is kept during which you may wish to use this prayer..

**At the setting of the sun,
in the enveloping darkness of night,
at the interplay of the hours
with sunlight giving way to moonlight,
I step from the day into the night
with a desire to be still
and in being still
to turn to you, O God,
and in returning to you
to return to the creative depths of my soul.**

**At the setting of the sun,
in the darkness of the night
I turn to you.**

J Philip Newell

(Taken from Pocket Prayers for Advent and Christmas, CHP 2009, compiled by Jan McFarlane)

A bell is rung to begin our worship.

Before the service begins, please take a moment to check that you have turned off your mobile telephone.

Parish Giving

It costs us at least £2,000 per week to carry out our ministry, mission and basic maintenance of this lovely building. One off cash donations can be made in the box in reception just by the entrance door into church. Contactless payments can be made using our free-standing contactless giving machine located in church. It is also possible to donate using our QR code which links to a safe and secure 'Give a little' payment portal which is compliant with GDPR, PCI & PCI-DSS.

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Carol - Once in royal David's city

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.

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.**



All remain standing.

The Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this town of Pontefract and diocese of Leeds.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

**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.**

May the almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life, and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

Amen.

Please be seated

First Lesson Genesis 3.8-15, 17-19

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Thanks be to God

Choir – Jesus Christ the apple tree – Elizabeth Poston

Second Lesson Genesis 22.15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Thanks be to God

Choir – Zion, at thy shining gates - arr. George Guest.

Third Lesson Isaiah 9 .2,6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Thanks be to God

The congregation stands to sing

Carol - It came upon the midnight clear

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King.'
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**



**Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lonely plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring.
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! The days are hastening on,
by prophet bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

Words: E.H. Sears, Music: Trad. English/Arthur Sullivan

Please be seated

Fourth Lesson

Isaiah 11.1~4a,6~9

The Prophet Isaiah foreshows the peace that Christ will bring.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God

Choir - Lullay, my liking - Alan Spedding.

Fifth Lesson Luke 1.26-35,38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered

and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God

Choir - Gabriel's message - Basque Noel.

Sixth Lesson Luke 2.1-7

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God

Choir - Whence is that goodly fragrance arr. A E Baker

Seventh Lesson Luke 2.8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone

away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Thanks be to God

The congregation stands to sing

While shepherd's watched their flocks by night

**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!'**



Words: Nahum Tate, Music: Este's Psalter,

Please be seated

Eighth Lesson Matthew 2.1-12

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Thanks be to God

Choir - *Away in a manger*

arr. Reginald Jacques

Please stand

Ninth Lesson John 1.1-14

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

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: who 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.

Thanks be to God

The congregation stands to sing

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...

**See how the shepherds,
summoned to His cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear.
We too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:**

O come, let us adore Him...

**Child, for us sinners
poor and in the manger,
fain we embrace Thee with awe and love;
who would not love Thee,
loving us so dearly?**

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...

Please be seated

The Collect & Blessing

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Let us pray:

O God who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill, and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

The congregation stands to sing

Hark! The herald-angels sing

**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.**

Hark! The herald-angels sing...

**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.**

Hark! The herald-angels sing...

Charles Wesley, and others

Please be seated

Organ Voluntary

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December

10.15am Parish Mass at St Giles'

4.30pm Family Crib service at St Giles'

5.00pm Carol Service at St. Mary's

11.00pm Midnight Mass and Blessing of the Crib at St Giles'

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December

9.00am Holy Communion at St Mary's

10.15am Sung Eucharist at St Giles'

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