



**The Parish of St Mary, Portsea**



# **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
6pm**

**At the heart  
of Christmas** 

# Welcome to St Mary's

*Welcome to St Mary's for this service of Readings and Carols for Christmas. It is a special pleasure to welcome any visitors this evening.*

*Tonight's service follows the traditional pattern of prayers, lessons and music made popular by Kings College Cambridge. The service has its origins, however, far from Cambridge: in 1880 E. W. Benson, the then Bishop of Truro, drew up a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for use on Christmas Eve in the wooden shed which served as his cathedral. In 1918 this was adapted for use in the chapel of Kings College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote the well known Bidding Prayer. The service is an extended meditation on the prophecy of the coming of the Christ-child and a narration of the events of his birth. Once again we enter into the well known story of Christmas and are invited hear again the song of the Angels, share in the wonder of the Shepherds and resolve to be as persistent as the Magi. We hope that through prayer, reading and music you will share in something of the joy and peace that Jesus' birth brings to the world.*

*The building is equipped with a hearing loop system, to take advantage of this please switch your hearing device to the "T" position. Toilets are to be found in under the tower. Large print copies of this order of service are available.*



*The Choir sings the carol*

Silent Night – Franz Gruber (1787-1863)  
arr. Barry Rose (b. 1934)

*Please stand to sing:*

*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.*

**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.**

*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 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.**

**All**

**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.**

**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 stand around.**

*Words: Cecil Alexander (1818-95) Tune: H. Gauntlett (1805-76) arr. A. H. Mann, Rick Erickson & David Willcocks*

*Please remain standing for the* **BIDDING PRAYER AND WELCOME**

*Please Sit*

The Choir sings

On This Day Earth Shall Ring by H. C. Stewart (1868-1942)

**READING ONE**

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall  
bruise the serpent's head. Genesis 3.8-15

The Choir sings

Adam Lay Ybounden by Boris Ord (1897-1961)

**READING TWO**

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the  
nations of the earth be blessed. Genesis 22.15-18

Stand to sing:

**Of the Father's heart begotten  
Ere the world from chaos rose,  
He is Alpha: from that Fountain,  
All that is and hath been flows;  
He is Omega, of all things  
Yet to come the mystic Close,  
Evermore and evermore.**

(Choir only)

*O how blest that wondrous birthday,  
When the Maid the curse retrieved,  
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,  
By the Holy Ghost conceived,  
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,  
In her loving arms received,  
Evermore and evermore.*

(Choir only)

*By his word was all created;  
He commanded and 'twas done;  
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,  
Universe of three in one,  
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,  
All that breathes beneath the sun,  
Evermore and evermore.*

**This is he, whom seer and sybil  
Sang in ages long gone by;  
This is he of old revealed  
In the page of prophecy;  
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;  
Let the world his praises cry!  
Evermore and evermore.**

**He assumed this mortal body,  
Frail and feeble, doomed to die,  
That the race from dust created  
Might not perish utterly,  
Which the dreadful Law had  
sentenced  
In the depths of hell to lie,  
Evermore and evermore.**

**Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;  
Angels and Archangels, sing!  
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,  
Let your joyous anthems ring,  
Every tongue his name confessing,  
Countless voices answering,  
Evermore and evermore.**

Please Sit

The Choir sings

A Spotless Rose by Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

**READING THREE**

*Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.  
Isaiah 9.2,6,7*

The Choir sings

I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In *arr. Brian Moles (b. 1979)*

Stand to sing:

**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 wond'ring love.**

*Choir only*

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

**Where children pure and happy  
pray to the blessed child.  
where misery cries out to thee,  
Son of the Mother mild.  
where charity stands watching  
and faith holds wide the door,  
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,  
and Christmas comes once more.**

**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.**

*Please Sit*

**READING FOUR**

*The Prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.*

*Micah 5.2-4*

*The Choir sings*

To Us In Beth'lem's City – *traditional English arr. Lionel Pike (b.1939)*

**READING FIVE**

*The Angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary*

*Luke 1.26-38*

*The Choir sings*

Hail Blessed Virgin Mary – *Trad. Italian arr. Charles Wood (1866-1926)*

*Stand to sing*

**In the bleak midwinter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone:  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter,  
Long ago.**

**Our God, heaven cannot hold him  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When he comes to reign:  
In the bleak midwinter  
A stable place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty,  
Jesus Christ.**

**Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and Seraphim  
Thronged the air  
But only his mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss.**

**Enough for him, whom Cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk,  
And a mangerful of hay:  
Enough for him, whom angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.**

**What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him  
Give my heart.**

*Words: Christina Rossetti 1830-94*

*Tune: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)*

*Please Sit*

*The Choir sings*

O Little One Sweet – *attrib. Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)*  
*arr. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

**READING SIX**

*St Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus*  
*Matthew 1.18-23*

*The Choir sings*

Still, Still, Still – *Traditional German Carol*  
*arr. Philip Ledger (1937-2012)*

**READING SEVEN**

*The Shepherds go to the Manger*  
*Luke 2.8-16*

*Stand to sing*

**God rest you merry, Gentlemen  
let nothing you dismay,  
for Jesus Christ our Saviour  
was born on Christmas day  
to save us all from Satan's power  
when we were gone astray**

***O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy,  
O tidings of comfort and joy.***

**From God our heav'nly father  
a blessed angel came.  
And unto certain shepherds  
brought tidings of the same,  
how that in Bethlehem was born  
the Son of God by name**

***O tidings of comfort and joy...***

*Continued...*

**Those shepherds at those tidings  
rejoicèd much in mind,  
and left their flocks a-feeding  
in tempest, storm and wind.  
And went to Bethlehem straightway  
The blessèd babe to find.**

***O tidings of comfort and joy...***

**But when to Bethlehem they came,  
whereat this infant lay,  
they found him in a manger,  
where oxen feed on hay;  
his mother Mary kneeling  
unto the Lord did pray:**

***O tidings of comfort and joy...***

**Now to the Lord sing praises  
all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood  
each other now embrace;  
this holy tide of Christmas  
all others doth deface**

***O tidings of comfort and joy...***

*Tune and Words: Traditional London Carol – arr. Willcocks*

*Please Sit*

*The Choir sings*

*Tres Magi de Gentibus by Craig Sellar Lang (1891-1971)*

**READING EIGHT**

*The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.*

*Matthew 2.1-11*

*The Choir sings*

*The Candlelight Carol by John Rutter (b. 1945)*



*Stand to sing*

**Unto us is born a son,  
King of choirs supernal:  
See on earth his life begun,  
of lords the Lord eternal,  
of lords the Lord eternal.**

**Christ, from heav'n descending low,  
comes on earth a stranger;  
Ox and ass their owner know,  
becradled in a manger,  
becradled in a manger.**

*Gentlemen*

**This did Herod sore affray,  
and grievously bewilder,  
So he gave the word to slay,  
and slew the little childer,  
and slew the little childer.**

*Ladies*

**Of his love and mercy mild  
this the Christmas story;  
and O that Mary's gentle Child  
might lead us up to glory,  
might lead us up to glory!**

*Full*

**O and A, and A and O,  
*cum cantibus in choro,*  
Let our merry organ go,  
*benedicamus Domino,*  
*benedicamus Domino.***

*Words and Melody from Pies Cantiones (1582) arr. David Willcocks*

*Please remain standing for*

**READING NINE**

*St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.  
John 1 1-14*

*Please sit.*

*The Choir sings*

*Bethlehem Down by Peter Warlock (1894-1930)*

*All stand to sing:*

**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:**

**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...**

**O come, let us adore Him...**

## **THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**

*The Collect is said or sung and all respond*      **Amen.**

**Yea, Lord we greet thee,  
born for our salvation,  
Jesu to thee be glory given.  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing**

**O come, let us adore Him ...**

*Words and Melody: J.F. Wade (1711-86) – arr. Willcocks*

## **THE BLESSING**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

*God's blessing is given and all respond:*      **Amen.**

We 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 th'angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem:**

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

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come  
offspring of a Virgin's womb!  
Word made flesh the Godhead see,  
hail th'incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel:**

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

**Hail the heav'n-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  
Glory to the new-born King.***

*Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788) et al. Tune: Mendelssohn arr. Willcocks*

*Organ Voluntary: Von Himmel Hoch, da komm ich her, BWV 606 –  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

*Toccata sur "Il est né, le divin Enfant"  
– Denis Bédard (b. 1950)*

We wish you a Peaceful and Happy  
Christmas and a Joyful New Year!

*Please do join us at other services  
over Christmas:*

*St Mary's*

*Christmas Eve*

*5 pm Crib Service for Children*

*11.30 pm Midnight Mass with Carols*

*Christmas Day*

*10 am Parish Mass with Carols*

*Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>*

*December*

*10am Parish Mass*

*St Faith's*

*Christmas Eve*

*7pm Vigil and Mass of the Nativity  
with Carols*

*St Wilfrid's*

*Christmas Eve*

*6 pm Vigil and Mass of the Nativity  
with Carols*

