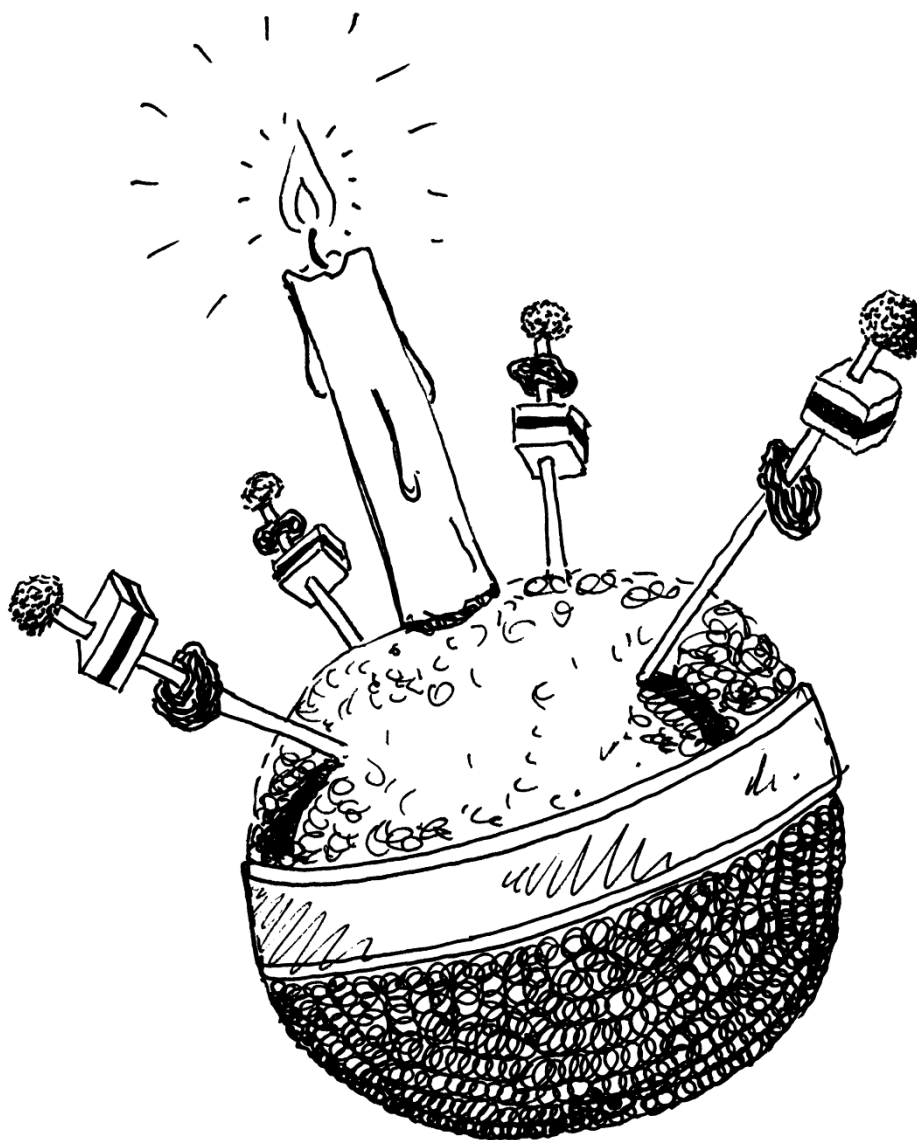


St Mary's
Primrose
Hill



Christingle Service



The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill

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We welcome all worshipping with us tonight, particularly any visitors here for the first time. Christmas Eve is always special, and not just for children. We pray that the Christ Child, the light that shines in the darkness of this world, may be born in our hearts and homes this Christmas.

Christingle means 'Christ-light'. The ceremony is Moravian in origin. In Moravia children were encouraged to take their Christingles home and to re-light them, placing them in the cottage windows for passers-by to see. Traditionally, the orange represents the earth, and the red ribbon the love of God revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ which enfolds the world. The cocktail sticks with their fruits and sweets represent God's providential care in providing the fruits of the earth for our use. The lighted candle set in the middle of the orange represents the light of Christ shining in the darkness of this world.

Today we have not only the light from the Christingles, but from our advent wreath. Each candle represents something that helps us think about the coming of Christ. The first candle is for God's people, both the people in the Bible who were waiting for the Messiah and us, God's people here in Primrose Hill.

The second candle is for the prophets like Isaiah who reminded everyone that God is faithful to his promises. God kept his promise by sending Jesus to be born as one of us. I wonder who the prophets are today, telling us what God is doing in our world?

The third candle is for John the Baptist. He called people to repent of their sins and be ready to greet Jesus. In the middle of our preparations for Christmas, we should think about whether we need to make up any quarrels or misunderstandings. Then we can celebrate the season with a peaceful heart.

The fourth candle is for the Virgin Mary, to whom our church is dedicated. She was the person specially chosen by God to do something very important for all of us. She said "yes" when God asked her to be the mother of his Son Jesus. Are we ready to listen to what God is asking of us?

Late on Christmas Eve, at midnight mass, we light the white candle in the middle to show that Christ has been born. Then Advent is over, with all its quiet reflection, and the great feast of Christmas really begins.



Merry Christmas from everyone at St Mary's

WELCOME *From the Minister*

CAROL *(Please stand)*

**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
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;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.**

Please sit

FIRST READING

St Luke describes the birth of Jesus

At the end the reader shall say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

CAROL *(Please stand)*

**Little donkey, little donkey,
On the dusty road,
Got to keep on plodding onwards
With your precious load.
Been a long time, little donkey,
Through the winter's night.
Don't give up now, little donkey,
Bethlehem's in sight.**

**Ring out those bells tonight,
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Follow that star tonight,
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Little donkey, little donkey,
Had a heavy day.
Little donkey, carry Mary
Safely on her way.**

**Little donkey, carry Mary
Safely on her way.**

SECOND READING

St Luke describes how shepherds were the first to hear of the news of the Messiah's birth.

At the end the reader shall say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

CAROL *(Please stand)*

**Mary had a baby, yes, Lord.
Mary had a baby, yes, my Lord.
Mary had a baby, yes, Lord.
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**What did she name him, yes, Lord?
What did she name him, yes my Lord?
What did she name him, yes, Lord?
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**Mary named him Jesus, yes, Lord.
Mary named him Jesus, yes my Lord.
Mary named him Jesus, yes, Lord.
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**Where was he born, yes, Lord?
Where was he born, yes my Lord?
Where was he born, yes, Lord?
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**Born in a stable, yes, Lord.
Born in a stable, yes my Lord.
Born in a stable, yes, Lord.
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**Where did she lay him, yes, Lord?
Where did she lay him, yes my Lord?
Where did she lay him, yes, Lord?
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

**Laid him in a manger, yes, Lord.
Laid him in a manger, yes my Lord.
Laid him in a manger, yes, Lord.
The people keep a-coming for to see her child.**

*Music: West Indian traditional melody. Words © Word & Music
Carols for Today (Jubilate hymns)*

PRAYERS

Lord Jesus, you were born in poverty in a stable. Bless all those this Christmas who are homeless or cold.

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to escape from the fury and violence of King Herod. Bless all refugees this Christmas and keep them safe.

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, this night the angels sang songs to your glory. May our singing join theirs, and our lives reflect your love for all people.

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, we pray for our families and friends. Please bless all those this Christmas who are lonely or by themselves.

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Let us now pray to our heavenly Father in the words our Saviour taught us:

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

CAROL *(Please stand - During this carol a collection will be taken for the Children's Society)*

**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.'**

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

After the collection has been presented, please sit.

The minister will give a short talk and explain the order of the ceremony, including the collection of Christingles. Please would parents accompany young children.

THE LIGHTING & PROCESSION OF CHRISTINGLES

**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.**

PRAYER AT THE CRIB

Holy Jesus, to deliver us from the power of darkness you humbled yourself to be born among us and laid in a manger. Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts, and bring us at last to the joyful vision of your beauty in heaven, where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

CAROL *The children sing the first two verses*

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 bedside till morning is nigh.

All **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.**

THE BLESSING *(Remain standing)*

May Christ, the Son of Mary, bring you and all whom you love, joy and peace this Christmas; and the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you, always.

All **Amen.**

Go in the love of God, and bring the light of Christ to others

All **Thanks be to God.**

The children blow out their candles now.

FINAL 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 sings
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 sings
Glory to the new-born King.*

**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 sings
Glory to the new-born King.*

***Everyone is invited to join the carol singing on top of Primrose Hill at 6 pm for
half an hour to raise money for Crisis.***