



Christmas Carols

by candlelight



A Christmas Carol Artist: Dante Gabriel Rossetti Date: 1857

The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill

Elsworthy Road, London, NW3 3DJ

Tel: 020 7722 3238 Email: office@smvph.org.uk

www.stmarysprimrosehill.com

Welcome to all who are visiting St Mary's for the first time today. We hope that you will find this church a place where you can encounter God, enjoy worship & make new friends.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional Hymn

The congregation is asked to remain seated until the 3rd verse of the hymn when they should stand and join in the singing. The choir and Minister will process to the altar.

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 only

*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.*

All Sing **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.**

*Words: C F Alexander
Music: H J Gauntlett*

The congregation remains standing for the Bidding Prayer

Welcome and Bidding Prayer

concluding with:

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.**

May the humility of the shepherds, the faith of the wise men, the joy of the angels, and the peace of Christ himself, be God's gift to us and to all this Christmas.

All **Amen.**

The congregation sits. The Minister moves to her place while the choir sings.

Choir Only **O Radiant Dawn**

*O radiant Dawn
Splendour of eternal light
Sun of justice:
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.
Isaiah had prophesied, "The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone." Amen.*

*Words: Antiphon for 21 December
Music: James MacMillan (born 1959)*

THE COMING OF GOD

Isaiah 35: 1-10 read by Ted Ruscoe

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader: O Lord our God

All **Open our ears to hear your word, and our eyes to see your way.**

Choir Only **A Christmas Round**

Today the Virgin bears a child whose birth cannot be borne.

*Words: Feast of St Nektarios of Aegina
Music: John Tavener (1944-2013)*

Please stand

Carol

All Sing **God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this 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:**

**The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
The blessed babe to find:**

**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:**

**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:**

Traditional

Please sit

MARY

"The Annunciation" by Edwin Muir, read by Sheena McCaffrey

The angel and the girl are met.
Earth was the only meeting place.
For the embodied never yet
Travelled beyond the shore of space.

The eternal spirits in freedom go.
See, they have come together, see,
While the destroying minutes flow,
Each reflects the other's face
Till heaven in hers and earth in his
Shine steady there. He's come to her
From far beyond the farthest star,
Feathered through time. Immediacy
Of strangest strangeness is the bliss
That from their limbs all movement takes.

Yet the increasing rapture brings
So great a wonder that it makes
Each feather tremble on his wings.

Outside the window footsteps fall
Into the ordinary day
And with the sun along the wall
Pursue their unreturning way.
Sound's perpetual roundabout
Rolls its numbered octaves out
And hoarsely grinds its battered tune.

But through the endless afternoon
These neither speak nor movement make,
But stare into their deepening trance
As if their gaze would never break.

Choir Only **Long the night**

Long the night but kind the dawn in Bethlehem when her son was born.
She touched his side and stroked his head as she gently laid him to bed.
She held his hand, she kissed his feet,
She sang to see a sight so sweet *in excelsis gloria*.
In the wood where an axe would ring to cut a cross that would bear a king,
Mary's voice rose from afar *in excelsis gloria*.

In the hills the iron lay that men would beat into nails one day,
Where the thorn tree roots go down that men would twist to a crown.
She held his hand, she kissed his feet,
She sang to see a sight so sweet *in excelsis gloria*.
In the wood where an axe would ring to cut a cross that would bear a king,
Mary's voice rose from afar *in excelsis gloria*.

Words: Alick Rowe

Music: Ukrainian melody, arranged by Roy Massey (b. 1934)

Please sit

JOSEPH

Matthew 1:18-end read by Anthony Wills

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall

bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Reader: O Lord our God

All **May we trust in you and be guided by your Holy Spirit.**

Choir only **Joys Seven**

The first good joy that Mary had it was the joy of one,
To see the blessed Jesus Christ, when he was first her son
When he was first her son, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good Joy that Mary had it was the joy of two,
To see her own son, Jesus Christ, to make the lame to go,
To make the lame to go, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had it was the joy of three,
To see her own son Jesus Christ to make the blind to see.
To make the blind to see, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had it was the joy of four,
To see her own son Jesus Christ to read the bible o'er.
To read the bible o'er, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had it was the joy of five,
To see her own son Jesus Christ to bring the dead alive.
To bring the dead alive, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had it was the joy of six,
To see her own son Jesus Christ upon the crucifix,
Upon the crucifix, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had it was the joy of seven,
To see her own son Jesus Christ to wear the Crown of Heaven.
To wear the Crown of Heaven, good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.

*Words: English traditional carol
Music: Arranged by Stephen Cleobury (1948-2019)*

THE BIRTH

Luke 2:1-7 read by Ruth Kitching

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 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 Judaea, 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.

Reader: O Lord our God

All Show us how to make room for the coming of your Son in our hearts.

*From Robert Atwell's essay in honour of the 100th anniversary of the English Hymnal:
In the parish records for December 1905 we have a note of the debut of Christina Rossetti's poem, 'In the bleak mid-winter' as a Christmas carol. The editors had specially commissioned Gustav Holst to write a tune for it, which he named 'Cranham', the village outside Cheltenham where he was born. It is strange to think how this Christmas carol, now an established part of the English repertoire, along with many other famous hymns began their life on a Friday evening congregational practice in north London.*

Please stand

Carol

Solo 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.

Choir only 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.

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

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.

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)
Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Please sit

THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8-18 *read by Amber Slater-Young*

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. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Reader: O Lord our God
All Drive away our fears and give us joy.

Please sit

Choir only **Ding dong merrily on high**

Ding dong merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "Io, io, io!"
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Words: G R Woodward (1848-1934)

Music: Traditional French carol, arranged by Mack Wilberg (born 1955)

THE WISE MEN

"Epiphany" by Malcolm Guite, read by Gerard White

It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.

They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

Choir only ***The Magi's Dream***

Night has come to Bethlehem,
The family is asleep,
Exhausted by the wonders seen,
The news outrageous, deep.
'That I may come and worship him.'

Ox and ass have closed their eyes,
Their ears now hear no sound.
Shepherds have gone back to their flocks,
The mouse still noses around.
'That I may come and worship him.'

Kings have left for their distant lands,
Fractious camels moan.
At a desert spring they make their farewells.
'It's a mighty way to home!'
'That I may come and worship him.'

Later that night their heads are filled
With a dream-drenched holy ray.
'Do not return to Herod the king,
Go back another way.'
'That I may come and worship him.'

And so our Christ is saved from death
His mission to complete
To change the world by selfless love
Satan's legions to beat.

Words: Robert Tear (1939-2011)
Music: James Whitbourn (born 1963)

During the next carol a collection will be taken

Carol

All 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.**

**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!**

All remain standing and turn to face the reader

Gospel: John 1:1-14

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

When the Gospel is announced, all say:

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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 children of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which 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.

All This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Carol

All 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.
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.

Words: Charles Wesley
Music: Felix Mendelssohn

Please remain standing

Prayers and Blessing: The Minister

The following response will be used:

Let us pray to the Lord.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Organ Voluntaries: In dulci júbilo (BWV 729) - J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
 Fugue from Chorale Fantasia on Wachet auf!, ruft uns die
 Stimme Op.52 no. 2 - Max Reger (1873-1916)

Please do stay after the service and enjoy some wine, refreshments and conversation with the rest of the congregation.



Advent & Christmas Services 2019

Sunday 1st December

- 10.30am Parish Eucharist with lighting of Advent wreath
6.00pm Advent Carol Service

Sunday 22nd December

- 10.30am Parish Eucharist with children's nativity
6.00pm Christmas Carol Service
followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Christmas Eve

- 5.00pm Christingle Service for all the family
6.00pm Carol singing on Primrose Hill (in aid of CRISIS)
11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

- 10.30am Sung Eucharist

New Year's Eve

- 11.30pm Watchnight Service
A candle-lit service of silence, space and room for reflection.
Followed by a drink to ring in the New Year

St Mary's
Primrose
Hill



The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill
Elsworthy Road, London, NW3 3DJ
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www.stmarysprimrosehill.com