



A Festival of Christmas Readings and Carols

24th December 2025

Christmas Eve



WELCOME TO SERVICE

O God, since you have made this most holy night
shine with the brightness of the true Light:
Grant that as we have known on earth
the mysteries of that Light, we may also come
to the fullness of his joys in heaven;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVIS'S CITY

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 meek, 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.

Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, Henry John Gauntlett
Public Domain

OPENING SENTENCES

Welcome tonight to a celebration like no other!

This is the night of the Holy Birth!

Let the love of Jesus be born in your hearts and spirits!
Open our hearts to receive this blessed gift, Loving God.

Rejoice, good friends, the Good News is here!

Christ our Saviour is Born! Hallelujah!

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

*We light the **first** Advent Candle: the candle of hope. Through the gift of God's Son, we have been given an everlasting hope based on God's grace and love.*

*We light the **second** Advent Candle: the candle of faith. Through the gift of God's Son, we have the wonderful assurance of salvation by grace through faith.*

*We light the **third** Advent Candle: the candle of joy. Through the gift of God's Son, we have been filled with joy. Jesus has showed us how much God loves us and made us God's children forever.*

*We light the **fourth** Advent Candle: the candle of peace. Through the gift of God's son, we have peace with God, and are led into the ways of peace in our relationships with others.*

*After four Sundays of preparing, our time of Christmas celebration is here! Tonight we light our last Advent Candle, the **Christ Candle**. Jesus, the Light of the World, has been born, to dwell with us and save us. Thanks be to God!*

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

Friends in Christ: As we gather this Christmas Eve, let us hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind go to Bethlehem to see the loving-kindness of our God, and the baby lying in the manger. Let us hear the story of our Saviour's birth as foretold by the prophets and narrated in the Gospels and let us thank him God with our carols of praise. But first, let us pray to God to bless our worship:

PRAYER OF CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

Glorious God, who presents us with the most precious of gifts, we praise you for all your blessings in our lives. Tonight, we have come to this place in the midst of a busy time. We might not even have everything ready at home, yet we have come, because we ourselves need to be ready. Work in our hearts this night, preparing us for your presence. Work in our lives that we may reach out to others in comfort and compassion; work in our world that the darkness that has encompassed it may be dispelled by the brightness of your love. In faith and expectation we pray, amen.

BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah Chapter 9 Verses 2,6 & 7 – Prophecy of the Messiah’s Birth

The people who are now living in darkness will see a great light. They are now living in a very dark land. But a light will shine on them. A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called: Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace. There will be no limit to how great his authority is. The peace he brings will never end. He will rule on David’s throne and over his kingdom. He will make the kingdom strong and secure. His rule will be based on what is fair and right. It will last forever. The Lord’s great love will make sure that happens. He rules over all.

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

**Come Thou long expected Jesus Born to set Thy people free
From our fears and sins release us Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's strength and consolation Hope of all the earth Thou art
Dear desire of every nation Joy of every longing heart**

**Born Thy people to deliver Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne**

Charles Wesley, Rowland Hugh Prichard

Luke Chapter 1 Verses 26-38 – The Annunciation to Mary

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 for ever; 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 no word from God will ever fail.’ ‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Then the angel left her.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:
yet, in your dark streets shining the everlasting Light,
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in you one night.

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 their great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) alt

Luke Chapter 2 Verses 1-7 – The Birth of Jesus

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 guest room available for them.

AWAY IN A MANGER

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 cradle till morning is nigh.

**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.**

John Thomas McFarland, Martin Luther, William James Kirkpatrick
Public Domain

Luke Chapter 2 Verses 8-16 The Shepherds Go to the Manger

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, 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's 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.

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

**Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King**

**Christ by highest heav'n adored Christ the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold Him come Offspring of the Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see Hail th'incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with men to dwell Jesus our Emmanuel
Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King**

**Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace Hail the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings Ris'n 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 newborn King.**

Charles Wesley, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Public Domain

Matthew Chapter 2 Verses 1-11 – Wise Men Are Led by the Star to Jesus

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 when it rose 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 when it rose 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.

WHAT CHILD IS THIS

**What child is this who laid to rest On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping
This this is Christ the king Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste haste to bring Him laud The Babe the Son of Mary**

**Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding
Good Christian fear for sinners here The silent Word is pleading
Nails spear shall pierce Him thro' The cross be borne for me for you
Hail hail the Word made flesh The Babe the Son of Mary**

**So bring Him incense gold and myrrh Come peasant king to own Him
The king of kings salvation brings Let love hearts enthrone Him
Raise raise the song on high The virgin sings his lullaby
Joy joy for Christ is born The Babe the Son of Mary**

Unknown, William Chatterton Dix
Permission used under CCLI - 53805 / 230276 / 153413
Public Domain

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory.

Alleluia.

John 1:1-14 – The Incarnation of the Word of God

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 when it rose 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 when it rose 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.

INFANT HOLY

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all;
swift are winging angels singing, nowells ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true;
thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow,
Christ the babe was born for you.

MESSAGE

At this point you may wish to watch the Sermon.

For Church YouTube Channel ([click here](#))

For LCA Worship Resources ([click here](#))

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world the Lord is come Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room And heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n and nature sing And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods Rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat repeat the sounding joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found Far as far as the curse is found

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

George Frideric Handel, Isaac Watts
Permission used under CCLI - 53805 / 230276 / 153413
Public Domain

OFFERING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
you are the giver of all good gifts.

In this season of giving, we offer you these gifts
as an expression of our thanks for the greatest gift of all,
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS

Part A – right side of Church (lectern side)

Part B – left side of Church (piano side)

A. We have celebrated Christmas with Mary and Joseph.

B. We have rejoiced with the angels and the shepherds.

A. We have celebrated the birth of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

B. Lord, you came to live among us, caring, loving and healing us.

A. Make us your arms, your hands and your feet.

B. Use us to care for your people.

All Lord Jesus, be with us.

A. Lord, you bring peace with God and pardon.

B. Bring peace to our hearts and love to our homes.

A. Guide the nations; let there be justice; let there be hope.

All Lord Jesus, be with us.

B. Lord, you blessed the home of Mary and Joseph.

A. Bless our homes this Christmas and make our families a blessing to others.

B. You were born in a stable, then driven out as a refugee.

A. Shelter the homeless.

B. Open our hearts to those in need.

All Lord Jesus, be with us.

A. Lord, you were born among the poor.

B. You experienced hurt and pain and disappointment.

A. Strengthen the weak.

B. Care for the sick.

A. Comfort those who are suffering.

All Lord Jesus, be with us.

B. Lord, you bring joy to all people.

A. Be a friend to the lonely.

- B. Lift up the depressed.
A. Your birth brings new life to the world.
B. Give life and health to all babies,
A. to the unborn, and to those who are born this night.
B. Go with the dying into their darkness,
A. and lead them to resurrection.

All Lord Jesus, be with us.

- B. Be with us tonight and always.
A. Be with us as we journey through this life and when our life here ends,
B. so that we may see your glory in heaven,
A. and with the angels and all your people,
B. praise the heavenly Father,

All now and forever. Amen.

A: We pray together the Lord's Prayer.

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.

BLESSING

May God bless you this Christmas
With the light he gave to the wise men,
With the joy he gave to the angels,
With the hope he gave to the shepherds,
And with all the love and the peace that Jesus brings.

Amen.

SILENT NIGHT

**Silent night holy night All is calm all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace Sleep in heavenly peace**

**Silent night holy night Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia
Christ the Savior is born Christ the Savior is born**

**Silent night holy night Son of God love's pure light
Radiant beams from Your holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord at Your birth Jesus Lord at Your birth**

**Silent night holy night Wondrous star lend thy light
With the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King
Christ the Savior is born Christ the Savior is born**

Franz Xaver Gruber, John Freeman Young, Joseph Mohr; ©
Public Domain

**Merry Christmas to you
and your family**

