

# St. Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood

Sunday 18th December 2022. NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Please join in singing or saying the words in **BOLD**

## Carol: Once in Royal David's City (521)

### Welcome and Bidding Prayer

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

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first day of our disobedience to 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 fellowship within the Church he came to build, and especially in our community of Hinchley Wood and diocese of Guildford.

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 those 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 one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

### The Lord's Prayer

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

**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 for ever.**

**Amen.**

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

**Amen**

**Reading 1: Isaiah 9.2, 6 & 7**      *(Isaiah prophesies the Messiah's birth)*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Choir Carol: The Sussex Carol**

**Reading 2: Micah 5:2-4**      *(The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem)*

A reading from the prophet Micah

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.  
Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.  
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

**Hymn: O Come O Come Emmanuel (480)**

### Reading 3: Luke 1:26-38 (The annunciation)

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

### Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem (508)

#### Reading 4: Gabriel's Annunciation by Jan Richardson

For a moment, I hesitated, on the threshold.  
For the space, of a breath, I paused, unwilling to disturb,  
her last ordinary moment, knowing that the next step  
would cleave her life:

that this day, would slice her story in two, dividing all the days before,  
from all the ones, to come.

The artists would later, depict the scene:  
Mary dazzled, by the archangel, her head bowed, in humble assent,  
awed by the messenger, who condescended, to leave paradise  
to bestow such an honour, upon a woman, and mortal.

Yet I tell you, it was I who was dazzled, I who found myself agape  
when I came upon her - reading, - at the loom, - in the kitchen,  
I cannot now recall;  
only that the woman before me - blessed and full of grace  
long before I called her so - shimmered with how completely  
she inhabited herself, inhabited the space around her,  
inhabited the moment, that hung between us.

I wanted to save her, from what I had been sent, to say.  
Yet when the time came, when I had stammered, the invitation  
(history would not record, the sweat on my brow, the pounding of my heart;  
would not note, that I said, *do not be afraid*, to myself as much as, to her)

it was she, who saved me - her first deliverance - her *Let it be*  
not just declaration, to the Divine, but a word of solace, of soothing,  
of benediction

for the angel, in the doorway, who would hesitate, one last time -  
just for the space, of a breath, torn from his chest -  
before wrenching himself away, from her radiant consent, her beautiful and  
awful yes.

### Choir Carol: Silent Night (597)

#### Reading 5: Luke 2:17      *(The birth of Jesus)*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### Carol: Away in a Manger (776)

#### Reading 6: Meditation by Paula Gooder

Before the beginning – The Word was  
Before ears our mouths, language or understanding – God was ready to speak  
Before people were created – God looked outwards in love  
Before the beginning – There The Word was

At the beginning – The Word was  
When life first started to stir – The Word nudged it further into life  
When creation emerged into being – The Word fanned the life- giving flames  
At the beginning – There The Word was

After the beginning – The Word was  
As life gave birth to more life – The Word spoke love and life  
As life turned away from those words – Still The Word spoke  
After the beginning – There the Word was

As beginning turned into middle – The Word was  
From Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to David,  
from David to Jehoiakim, from Jehoiakim to Joseph  
When the right time came – There The Word was, The Word made flesh  
Before the beginning, at the beginning, after the beginning – there The Word was  
And There The Word will always continue to be.

## Choir Carol: In the Bleak Midwinter

### Reading 7: Luke 2:8-20      *(Visit of the Shepherds)*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### Carol: While Shepherd's Watched (745)

### Reading 8: Matthew 2:1-12      *Visit of the kings*

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they

were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### Carol: We Three Kings (724)

#### Gospel Reading: John 1:1-14     *The Word was made Flesh*

A reading from the Gospel of John

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.  
All things came into being through him,  
and without him not one thing came into being.  
What has come into being in him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.  
He came as a witness to testify to the light,  
so that all might believe through him.  
He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.  
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.  
He was in the world,  
and the world came into being through him;  
yet the world did not know him.  
He came to what was his own,  
and his own people did not accept him.  
But to all who received him,  
who believed in his name,  
he gave power to become children of God,  
who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man,  
but of God.  
And the Word became flesh and lived among us,  
and we have seen his glory,  
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

### Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful (479)

#### Prayers

Lord of All, we give you thanks because in choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son you have exalted the humble and meek. Your angel hailed

her as most highly favoured; with all generations we call her blessed and with her we rejoice and magnify your holy name.

**Amen**

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

## Notices

### Blessing and Dismissal

May the joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the wise men,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas;  
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you, and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

### Final Carol: Hark the Herald (266)

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