



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

A Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas

20th December, 2020 at 3.00pm

22nd December, 2020 at 6.00pm

23rd December, 2020 at 6.00pm



WELCOME

We welcome you to this beautiful church in the heart of the city for this Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas. This year is very different and it is good to be have people with us in the building and also for many who will be watching us on line at home.

COLLECTION

The Cathedral costs in excess of £5,500 a day to keep open, and we urgently need your support with the loss of our regular income during Covid19.

We are not able to hold a collection in the usual way at the moment, but your donation is more important than ever as we struggle at this difficult time.

We invite you to generously give to ensure our future in 3 ways:

Our suggested way is for you to donate now

via

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ChesterCathedral>

At the entrance door to the service

By tapping the **contactless** donation boxes on your way in or out of the service; this is set at £5

or

simply placing your collection into the box

On the Screen (for online viewers)

Clicking the **donate now** box on the screen.

We really do need your help to make sure that services like this one can continue and that we can keep the doors open for everyone, so please donate generously.

With blessings and thanks

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hymn texts and extracts from the *Book of Common Prayer*, the rights of which are vested in the Crown, are reproduced by permission of the Crown's Patentee, Cambridge University Press. Scripture quotations are from *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition*, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. CCLI Licence Number: 177097.

HYMN

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 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.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95)

Henry John Gauntlett (1805-76) revised by A H Mann (1850-1929)

IRBY

GREETING

Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford, Dean of Chester, says

In these dark days when pandemic looms and hope seems still some distance away, in the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and made a place for us in the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

We meet to celebrate anew the coming of God's kingdom and long for the days when we can be close once more to those we know and love. Here we will hear revealed the mystery of God's loving purpose for us – how that when we were far off, he met us in his Son and brought us home; how he humbled himself to take our human nature, that we might share his divine glory.

Let us then so celebrate this coming with hope renewed through our carols of praise, that our lives may be charged with Christ's life; that we may bear witness to his glory and so bring light to those who dwell in darkness. So first we pray for those among whom the Christ was born: the poor and the helpless, the aged and the young; the hungry and the homeless; the victims of poverty and injustice, unemployment and oppression, the sick, those infected by covid and affected by long covid, their carers and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; those in despair or in the shadow of death.

Then, as we hear again the message of peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that all may be inspired to work together for the establishment of justice, healthcare and vaccines for all, freedom and peace the world over. And that we may bear true witness to this hope in a divided world, we pray for the peace and unity of Christ's Body, the Church universal, that the whole earth may live to praise his name.

Finally, as we rejoice with the saints in heaven and on earth, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we offer up our prayers for the coming of his perfect kingdom, in the words he himself has taught us, saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All say

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

CAROL

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!
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
let steeple bells be swungen,
and 'io, io, io!'
by priest and people sungen:

Pray you, dutifully prime
your matin chime, ye ringers!
May you beautifully rime
your evetime song, ye singers!

George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)

TRADITIONAL
arranged Charles Wood (1866-1926)

READING

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

read by Dr Hannah Kennedy, Royal Liverpool University Hospital (20th December)
Revd John Kingsley, Lead Chaplain, Countess of Chester (22nd December)
Dr Dorothy King, Countess of Chester Hospital (23rd December)

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.

Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 9. 2, 6-7

CAROLS

In dulci júbilo let us our homage shew;
our heart's joy reclineth in praesepio,
and like a bright star shineth, Matris in gremio. Alpha es et O.

O Jesu parvule! I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee, O Puer optime!
My prayer let it reach thee, O princeps gloriae! Trahe me post te!

O Patris caritas, O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained, per nostra crimina;
but thou hast for us gained caelorum gaudia. O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, where, if that they be not there?
There are angels singing, nova cantica,
there the bells are ringing, in Regis curia: O that we were there!

Old German carol, arranged Bob Chilcott (born 1955)

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 Christians fear: for sinners here,
the silent word is pleading:
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
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 loving hearts enthrone him:
Raise, raise the song on high
the Virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born
the babe, the son of Mary.

READING

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

read by Chris Mathieson, MP for the City of Chester (20th December)

Liz Taylor, Hospice of the Good Shepherd, Chester (22nd December)

Barnabas Borbely, Abbey School, Chester (23rd December)

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 11. 1-4, 6-9

CAROLS

This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love;
therefore don't turn me from your door, but hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate is that God did man create;
the next thing which to you I'll tell woman was made with man to dwell.

And we were heirs to endless woes, till God the Lord did interpose;
and so a promise soon did run that he would redeem us by his Son.

And at that season of the year our blest Redeemer did appear;
he here did live, and here did preach, and may thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved, to show us how we must be saved;
and if you want to know the way, be pleased to hear what he did say.

The holly and the ivy,
when they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood,
the holly bears the crown.

*O the rising of the sun
and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ,
sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom,
as white as the lily flower,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
to be our sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a berry,
as red as any blood,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
to do poor sinners good.

The holly bears a prickle
as sharp as any thorn,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
on Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark,
as bitter as any gall,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
for to redeem us all.

The holly and the ivy,
when they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood,
the holly bears the crown.

*English Folk Carols (1911 London, Sharp)
arranged Matthew Owens (born 1971)*

READING

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

read by Mary Horbury, Cathedral Sunday School (20th December)

James Phillips, Chorister (22nd December)

Grace Crook, Chorister and Saturday Singing Club (23rd December)

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.' 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.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 1. 26-35, 38

CAROLS

Nowell, nowell, nowell, this is the salutation of th'angel, Gabriel.

Tidings true there be come new, sent from the Trinity
by Gabriel to Nazareth, city of Galilee.

A clean maiden, a pure virgin, thoro' her humility
hath conceived the person second in deity.

When that he presented was before her fair visage,
in most demure and goodly wise he did to her homage;
and said, "Lady, from heaven so high. That Lordes heritage,
the which of thee born would be, I am sent on his message.

"Hail, Virgin celestial, the meek'st that ever was!
Hail, temple of the Deity! Hail, mirror of all grace!
Hail, Virgin pure, I thee ensure, within a little space
thou shalt receive and him conceive that shall bring great solace.

Then bespake the Maid again and answered womanly,
"whate'er my Lord commandeth me I will obey truly."
with "Ecce sum humillima ancilla Domini;
secundum verbum tuum," she said, "Fiat mihi."

Traditional

I sing of a maiden that is makeless;
King of all kings to her son she ches.

He came all so still where his mother was,
as dew in April that falleth on the grass.

He came all so still to his mother's bower,
as dew in April that falleth on the flower.

He came all so still where his mother lay,
as dew in April that falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden was never none but she;
well may such a lady Godës mother be.

*Ancient Traditional Carol
arranged Neil Cox (born 1955)*

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:'

Latin 18th century, translated by Frederick Oakeley (1802-80)

*ADESTE FIDELES
J F Wade (1711-86)*

READING

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

read by Revd Ken Walker, Chair of Churches Together in Chester (20th December)

Revd Christine Dutton, Wesley Methodist Church (22nd December)

Revd Andy Glover, Hoole Baptist Church (23rd December)

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.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 2.1-7

CAROLS

Come to me, Infant Holy, Eyes of wonder softly close,
tiny hand release my finger, weary hand receive repose.
Sleep, and love arises in me, waking hope joy o'erflows.
Lead me, little child so tender, to the place I long to go.

Be with me, O saviour holy, may my faith in thee increase:
'Till I hear around us winging seraphs singing heavenly peace.
Then I'll walk through night and shadow by the light that shines in thee,
flowing as a stream for ever to the blessed fruitful tree.
Singing heav'nly peace forever, sleep.

arranged Mack Wilberg (born 1955)

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 Saviour is born, Christ, the Saviour is born.'

Silent night, holy night, God's own son, Love's pure light.
Radiance beams from thy holy face. With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesu Lord at thy birth, Jesu Lord at thy birth.

READING

The shepherds go to the manger.

read by Helen Barber, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (20th December)

Jon Turley, Cathedral Commercial Director (22nd December)

Lizzie Butterworth, Cathedral Events Manager (23rd December)

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.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 2. 8-16

CAROLS

Lully, lullay, thou little tiny Child,
bye, bye, lully, lullay.
Lullay, thou little tiny Child,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.
O sisters too, how may we do,
for to preserve this day
This poor youngling for whom we do sing
bye, bye, lully, lullay.
Herod, the king, in his raging,
charged he hath this day
his men of might, in his owne sight,
All young children to slay.
That woe is me, poor Child for Thee!
And ever mourn and sigh,
for thy parting neither say nor sing,
bye, bye, lully, lullay.

arranged Philip Stopford (born 1977)

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 pow'r
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
rejoicèd much in mind,
and left their flocks afeeding
in tempest, storm and wind,
and went to Bethlehem straightway
this 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.

READING

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

read by David Briggs MBE, K.St.J. Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire (20th December)

Nick Hopkinson, MBE, DL, High Sheriff of Chester (22nd December)

Mark Williams, Lord Mayor of Chester (23rd December)

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.

Thanks be to God.

John 1. 1-14

CAROL

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
and Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:

*and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.*

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
and Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
and Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:

Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red,
then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead.

COLLECT

The Dean says

Let us pray.

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.

All Amen.

BLESSING

The Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead (20th and 23rd December)
The Rt Revd Mark Tanner, Bishop of Chester (22nd December)

The Bishop says

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one, things earthly and heavenly,
grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill,
and make you partakers of the divine nature;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN

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.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

George Whitefield (1714-70) Martin Madan (1726-90)

MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-47)

ORGAN VOLUNTARY