

ST MARY'S
CHURCH
MERTON

Service of
Lessons and Carols



*And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory.*

20-22 December 2020
6.30pm

ORDER OF SERVICE

Please stand as the Procession enters the Church.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

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.

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.

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

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto 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 brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this city London and diocese of Southwark.

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

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who 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.**

FIRST LESSON

Sit

ISAIAH 11 verses 1–3a, 4a, 6–9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown

CAROL

THERE'S A SONG IN THE AIR

Words *Josiah G. Holland*

Music *John Hearne*

SECOND LESSON

ST LUKE 1 verses 26–38

The angel of God salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

CAROL

LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

Words *15th century German,*
trans. Theodore Baker

Music *14th century German,*
harm. Michael Praetorius

THIRD LESSON

ST LUKE 2 verses 1–7

Luke relates the birth of Christ

CAROL

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Words *Phillips Brooks*

Music **FOREST GREEN**
arr. Bob Chilcott

POEM

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
“Now they are all on their knees,”
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy

HYMN

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 side until 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.

FOURTH LESSON

ST LUKE 2 verses 8–16

The shepherds go to the manger

HYMN

God rest ye merry, gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray

O tidings of comfort...

From God our heav'nly Father
A blessèd angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name.

O tidings of comfort...

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

O tidings of comfort...

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:

O tidings of comfort...

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 other doth deface:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy*

CAROL

SUSSEX CAROL

Words *English trad.*

Music *English trad.*
arr. Bob Chilcott

FIFTH LESSON

ST MATTHEW 2 verses 1–11

The wise men are led by a star to Jesus

CAROL

BETHLEHEM DOWN

Words *Bruce Blunt*

Music *Peter Warlock*

SIXTH LESSON

Stand

ST JOHN 1 verses 1–14

*Prologue to St John's Gospel
The mystery of the Incarnation is unfurled*

Minister The people who walked in darkness
People **have seen a great light.**

Minister For to us a child is born
People **to us a Son is given.**

Minister His name will be called Wonderful counsellor,
People mighty God,
 the everlasting Father,
 the Prince of Peace.

Minister Glory to God in the highest
People **and peace to his people on earth.**

CAROL

Sit

REJOICE AND BE MERRY

Words *English trad.*

Music *John Rutter*

THE COLLECT

Stand

THE BLESSING

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

HYMN

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,
Christ the Lord.*

See how the shepherds
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear,
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps;

*O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations:

*O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

*O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

ORGAN MUSIC AFTER THE SERVICE

CHORALE PRELUDE ON *IN DULCI JUBILO*
BWV 608

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Director of Music	Helen Smee
Organist	Ian Tindale
Organ Scholar	Olivia Priestland

Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS EVE 24 DECEMBER

9.00pm Christmas Eve Eucharist

11.30pm Midnight Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY 25 DECEMBER

8.00am Said Holy Communion

10.00am Communion of Christmas Morning

Please note that due to space restrictions, seats must be booked in advance at all services listed above.

This can be done online at stmarysmerton.org.uk from 11 Dec, or from 8 Dec for subscribers to the church's online mailing list. Telephone bookings may be made on 07516 920 253, Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri, 9am-12pm.

We ask that individuals book for only a single carol service, and only one service on Christmas Eve/Christmas Day, in order that as many people as possible have the opportunity to attend church over the Christmas period - thank you.