



ADVENT 4 23 December 2018

Service of 9 Lessons & Carols

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 315 Once in Royal David's city v1 solo

Welcome & Notices

Bidding Prayer & Lord's Prayer

HYMN A hidden birth (tune at #323, The First Nowell):

A hidden birth, unnoticed, unseen:
Just a mother, a manger, some shepherds unclean;
ignored by all who lived near or far,
but for dubious strangers who'd followed a star.
This hidden birth must soon come clear:
Christmas is God come to live with us here!

A promised birth of David's own line,
and a virgin who carries the presence divine;
here God in person comes to this earth;
here Creator as creature is now brought to birth.
Here's peace and joy to cure our fear:
Christmas is God come to live with us here!

Christ lives today that sinners may live,
and receive his forgiveness and others forgive;
Christ plants his Spirit deep in each heart
So that day after day we may each play our part.
This truth remains from year to year:
Christmas is God come to live with us here!

So let us all, with head, heart and voice,
offer praise to our Saviour, repent and rejoice:
and grasp the joy that Jesus has wrought,
who by coming and dying our freedom has bought!
To make us fit for heav'nly cheer,
Christmas is God come to live with us here!

1st Reading: Genesis 3:8-19 read by John Wise, St John's Church Secretary

Remember, O Thou Man

Ravenscroft

2nd Reading: Genesis 22:15-18 read by Jennie Willett, Art Group & Poetry Group

HYMN 273 O Come, O come Emmanuel, omit v5

3rd Reading: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 read by Christine Giles, on behalf of the Brownies

Lighting of the fourth Advent Candle

We light this candle to recall Mary and Joseph
who saw their visions and dreamed their dreams,
who heard angelic announcements
and were obedient to your word and their calling,
giving a home and care to the child.
May the light overcome the darkness.

HYMN 543 Christ be our Light, omit v5

4th Reading: Micah 5:2-4 read by Anne Samson, on behalf of the Book Group

The Little Road to Bethlehem sung by Morfudd Wise

Verse 1 of Micah 5 reads – ‘Now you are walled around with a wall: siege is laid against us.’
And so it has come to pass that a wall does surround the noble city of Bethlehem.



Bethlehem by Sabrina Mahfouz

Next December
when nativity scenes
swamp school halls and high street corners,
ripped bedsheets
strung around children's shoulder bones
as they play three kings,
I will think of the shop where the Palestinian
let me charge my mobile phone for free.
Coaches were parked nearby
full of t-shirt tourists eager to touch the city
where Jesus was born.
They are told before they arrive
'the Christians here are hounded by the Muslims,
made to feel unwelcome'.
The Christian in the shop
Where my iPhone charges says;
'but of course not, we are all the same, it is Israel who hounds
us all.
Israel covers itself with paper angels,
shepherding a concrete wall around us who live where Jesus did.
Mystery exists here, a virgin birth etcetera,
those buildings that appear overnight
so magical, so monstrous'.
O little town of Bethlehem.
My phone charged now, I tweet a picture of an old man
hunched over a walking stick, carrying white cheese and watermelon
as the unemployed smoke along the street
looking up at an illegal sky
clangorous church bells reminding everyone
that there is no such thing
as wise men.

HYMN 304 O Little Town of Bethlehem

5th Reading: Luke 1:26-38 read by Graham Wheeler, St John's Organist

Gabriel's Message

6th Reading: Luke 2:1, 3-7 read by Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz on behalf of Live at Home

There's no room in this country,
we're full up.
In fact we're overcrowded,
there's hardly room for us
(well, for our cars, at any rate)
so we really can't take you or anyone else..
Sorry.

No really, believe me, there's no housing to spare,
none at all; especially with the rising demand
for second homes.
So you see, we really can't help you.
You must go somewhere else.
And please, move your old moke away from the Portico.

Thanks.

The stable? What stable?
What on earth do you mean?
We couldn't put you in a stable.
This is a civilised country
and a stable, even if we had one, which we don't,
wouldn't comply with the building regulations
for human habitation.
So move away, please.

No, my dear, it's all right. They've gone now, thank God,
Just a couple of foreigners, bogus asylum seekers, probably,
in an old banger. O course we couldn't take them in,
people like that. Louise Pirouet

HYMN 322 Good Christians all rejoice

7th Reading: Luke 2:8-16 read by Zarina Mohamdee on behalf of St Martin's

HYMN 296 While humble shepherds

**8th Reading: Matthew 2: 1-12 read by Jenny Bullock on behalf of St John's
musicians & building users**

HYMN: In Bethlehem...: (tune at #294, Sussex carol)

During this hymn the offertory will be taken

In Bethlehem, with Jesus' birth,
the God of heaven came to earth;
a babe who left us free to choose;
a gift of love we could refuse.
What will we do? What will we say?
Will we welcome our God today?

First unknown strangers saw a star,
and seeking, travelled from afar.
Responding to its sign and call,
they journeyed, searched, then gave their all.
Will we, with them, both kneel and pray?
Will we welcome our God today?

King Herod found this quite absurd
although he had the prophet's word;
defensive, wary, trapped by fear,
he ordered slaughter far and near.
Will we, like him, push you away?
Will we welcome our God today?

This challenge still confronts us all:
this Christmas will we heed your call?
Will we be open to your care,
or fight against the love you share?
God, help us now, that we may say,
'Will we welcome our God today!'

9th Reading: John 1:1-14 read by Naomi Young, Assistant Minister

HYMN 306 O Come all ye faithful, omit v 4

Blessing

Hold your light out to the world and let people of all nations
feel the warmth of God's love
as they encounter the Word made Flesh
through Christ our Lord.
Follow where the Spirit of Hope leads us
Listen, as the Child of Peace cries for us
Rejoice, as the Love of God embraces us
And let us go with Hope, Peace and Love in our hearts
And the blessing of Creator, Child and Spirit for ever within us. **AMEN**