



ST MARY MAGDALENE, GREAT HAMPDEN

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE



21ST DECEMBER 2025
6.00PM

Welcome to St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden for our Christmas Carol Service this evening.

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, is the reason for all our festivities:

*Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.*

(Thomas Pestel)

As we welcome you to our service tonight we hope the joy of this most holy season will be yours and your family's, as we hear the story of Jesus' birth and sing the carols that celebrate it again this year.

This church has stood here for many centuries, and the local community still gathers here to worship God and to demonstrate faith at work in our daily lives. This building provides a sacred space for prayer and meeting between God and his people.

We welcome all who seek God and invite you to join our efforts to be a strong facilitator of good in our community. We seek to build the Kingdom of God in our souls, our lives and our community here in Great Hampden and beyond.

There is a toilet with disabled and baby changing facilities in the churchyard, on the path behind the church.



*During the service a collection is taken to support the life of this church. If you don't already give regularly you can support us by contributing to the collection, or by using the contactless donation box opposite the door as you enter or leave the church. To give regularly please take a **Parish Giving Scheme** leaflet from the rack.*

With grateful thanks to all our musicians,
led by Sam Laughton and Alexandra Caldon

Please refrain from clapping during the service.

Christmas Concerto
Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Please 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.

For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew.
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew:
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

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.

The Bidding

Brothers and sisters: in the name of Christ I welcome you. We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;

for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognize their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;

for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

**Our Father, which 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 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.**

Choir

In dulci jubilo

Music: arr. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

*In sweet rejoicing, now sing and be glad!, Our hearts' joy lies in the manger;
And it shines like the sun in the mother's lap. You are the Alpha and Omega!*

Reading

Luke 1.26-38

The Annunciation to Mary

Choir

O magnum mysterium

Music: Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

*O great mystery and wondrous thing that the animals behold the new-born
Lord lying in a manger. O blessed Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear the
Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia.*

Carol

Please stand

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
let nothing you dismay,
for Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
was born upon this day,
to save us all from Satan's power
when we were gone astray:
**O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!**

From God our heavenly 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:
Refrain

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 blessed babe to find:
Refrain

Choir only

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:

Refrain

All

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:

Refrain

English traditional carol

Reading

Please sit

Luke 1.39-45

The Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

Choir

In the bleak midwinter

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

Music: Becky McGlade (b.1974)

*In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, water
like a stone, Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow, In the bleak
midwinter long ago.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; Heaven and earth shall
flee away when he comes to reign: In the bleak midwinter a stable-place
sufficed The Lord God almighty Jesus Christ.*

*What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb, If
I were a wise man I would do my part, Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.*

Reading

Luke 1.46-55

Mary's Song of Praise

Choir

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

Music: John Gardner (1917-2011)

*Tomorrow shall be my dancing day; I would my true love did so chance To see
the legend of my play, To call my true love to my dance; Sing, O my love, O my
love, my love, my love, This have I done for my true love.*

*Then was I born of a virgin pure, Of her I took fleshly substance Thus was I knit
to man's nature To call my true love to my dance.*

*In a manger laid, and wrapped I was So very poor, this was my chance, Betwixt
an ox and a silly poor ass, To call my true love to my dance.*

*Then afterwards baptized I was; The Holy Ghost on me did glance, My Father's
voice heard from above, To call my true love to my dance.*

Reading

Luke 1.57-66

The Birth of John the Baptist

Carol

Please stand

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heav'n's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

All

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold:
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

Edward Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)

Choir only

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

Reading

Luke 1.67-80

Zechariah's Prophecy

Choir

Angels' Carol

Words and music: John Rutter (b.1945)

*Have you heard the sound of the angel voices Ringing out so sweetly, ringing
out so clear? Have you seen the star shining out so brightly As a sign from God
that Christ the Lord is here? Have you heard the news that they bring from
heaven To the humble shepherds who have waited long? Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels sing their joyful song.*

*He is come in peace in the winter's stillness Like a gentle snowfall in the gentle
night. He is come in joy, like the sun at morning Filling all the world with
radiance and with light. He's come in love as the child of Mary In a simple
stable, we have seen his birth. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing 'Peace on earth'.*

*He will bring new light to a world in darkness Like a bright star shining in the
skies above. He will bring new hope to the waiting nations When he comes to
reign in purity and love. Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour's coming Let the
heavens answer with a joyful morn. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis
Deo! Hear the angels singing, "Christ is born".*

Reading

Luke 2.1-7

The Birth of Jesus

Instrumental

O Holy Night

Music: Adolphe Adam (1803-56), arr. Caldon

Carol

Please stand

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
**Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.**

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

Refrain

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Refrain

This star drew nigh to the north-west,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain

Choir only

Then enter'd in those wise men three
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offer'd there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

All: Refrain

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heav'nly Lord;
that hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.

Refrain

English traditional carol

Reading

Please sit

Luke 2.8-20

The Shepherds

Choir

A Lullaby

Words: Greek traditional, tr. Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi (1877-1944)

Music: Greek traditional, arr. Gerald Finzi (1901-56)

Lightning is flashing, flashing in the East (Rock my baby, nanny. Rock him to sleep!) Westwards, hark, there's thunder loudly rolling. (Rock my baby nanny, lest the storm awake him, Rock him gently, may his dreams be happy!) Sleep, my darling son, while mother o'er thee watches.

Take him and lull him kindly to sleep! (Sleep, my darling, baby safe in thy cot!) Bring him sweet dreams and kindly sleep! Three watchers have I summoned In the sky the sun, the eagle on the mountain over the sea the keen cool north wind blowing, over thee will watch avert from thee all danger.

Carol

Please stand

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:
Refrain

Child, for us sinners
poor and in the manger,
fain we embrace thee, with awe and
love;
who would not love thee,
loving us so dearly?
Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God,
in the highest:
Refrain

Latin, vv 1-2, 4 anonymous 18 cent

tr Frederick Oakeley (1802-80)

v 3 Étienne Jean François Borderies (1764-1832)

tr William Thomas Brooke (1848-1917)

Reading

Please remain standing

John 1.1-14

The Incarnation of the Word of God

Choir

Please sit

Hodie Christus natus est

Words: Anon

Music: Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Christ is born today: today our Saviour has appeared: on earth this day the angels sing, archangels sing praises: today righteous men shout exulting: 'Glory to God in the highest.' Alleluia.

The Collect for Christmas Eve

Please kneel

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

All: Amen.

Carol

Please stand



During which a collection will be taken. Those that wish can make a contactless donation using the contactless donation box opposite the door.

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 th'angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

**Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.**

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
hail, th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Refrain

Hail, the heav'n-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.

Refrain

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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.

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

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

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you this Christmas time and always.

All: Amen

Music after the service

La Majesté

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

<p>Please stay for refreshments afterwards</p>

<p>Please join us for our Calm Christingle, Christmas Eve, 11.15am Family Communion Service , Christmas Day, at 11.15am</p>



from the Reverend Nigel Spoor,
the Reverend Kayleigh Lucas,
the Churchwardens
and all at St Mary Magdalene

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