

St John's, Hythe
"The Glory of His Coming"
Epiphany Carol Service



Sunday 3rd January 2021
at
5:00 pm

Lord Jesus, our Master, go with us while we travel to the heavenly country; that following your star, we may not wander in the darkness of this world's night. May you, who are our Way, and Truth, and Life, shine within us to our journey's end; for your mercy's sake.

Amen.

Cantor: Arise, shine, for your light has come
The glory of the Lord is rising upon you

Welcome and Introduction

The First Nowell

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 lookèd 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.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

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.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

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.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

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

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who with the Father we adore
and Spirit blest for evermore.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

From William Sandy's Christmas Carols,
Ancient and Modern (1833) alt.

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-9

Cantor: Psalm 98

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Father we thank you for giving your son to the world and for revealing his glory not only to your chosen people, but also to nations who did not know you.

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice!

You sent him to proclaim good news to the afflicted, liberty to the captives, and to declare a time of grace, pardon and peace.

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice!

You led wise men by the light of a star, so that they might offer their gifts with their reverence and their worship.

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice!

You call men and women to follow after them, from the darkness into your wonderful light, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, and in the depths.

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice!

Enlightened by your grace and guided by your gospel, at the beginning of this year we offer to your Son the treasures of our faith, our hope, our love, and the worship of a faithful life.

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice!

Nations shall come to your light.

All: And kings to the brightness of your rising!

Cantor: We Three Kings

Second Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

(During the hymn, gifts are brought up)

In the bleak mid-winter
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 mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him
nor earth sustain;
heav'n and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter
a stable-place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk,
and a mangerful of hay:
enough for him, whom angels
fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but only his mother
in her maiden bliss
worshipped the beloved with a kiss

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.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Third Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12

O come, O come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

O come, thou rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law,
in cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

From the Great O Antiphons (12th-13th
century) trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)

Cantor: In the Lord be ever thankful
(*During which water is poured into the font*)

The Renewal of the Covenant

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,
reluctant to follow him
and afraid to bear the cross:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace,
and our hesitating witness for Christ:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,
evade our responsibilities
and fail to be good stewards of your creation:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good,
tolerant of injustice,
quick to condemn
and selfish in sharing your love with others:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, forgive.

(Silence is kept)

**Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness;
according to the abundance of your compassion
blot out my offences.
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin.
Make in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Give me again the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your gracious spirit.**

Psalms 51.1, 2, 11, 13

If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw *us* to himself,
and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ,
let us again claim for ourselves
this covenant which God has made with his people,
and take upon us the yoke of Christ.
This means that we are content
that he appoint us our place and work,
and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.
Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,
who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.
Let us give ourselves to him,
trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Lord God, holy Father,
since you have called us through Christ
to share in this gracious covenant,
we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience
and, for love of you, engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.
We are no longer our own but yours.

**I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering:
let me be employed for you
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen**

(Sprinkling with water)

Christ, when for us you were baptised

Christ, when for us you were baptised
God's Spirit on you came,
as peaceful as a dove,
and yet as urgent as a flame.

God called you his beloved Son,
called you his servant too;
his kingdom you were called to preach,
his holy will to do.

Straightaway and steadfast until death
you then obeyed his call,
freely as Son of Man to serve,
and give your life for all.

Baptise us with your Spirit, Lord,
your cross on us be signed,
that likewise in God's service, we
may perfect freedom find.

F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984)
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Reading: Poem

Prayers of Intercession

Let us worship the Saviour with joy
and make our prayer to our heavenly Father.

The magi came from the east to worship your Son:
Father, grant to Christians everywhere the spirit of adoration.
Lord of glory.

Hear our prayer.

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and myrrh:
Father, accept the offering of our hearts and minds
at the beginning of this year.

Lord of glory,
Hear our prayer.

The kingdoms of this world have become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:
Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world.
Lord of glory,
Hear our prayer.

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death.
Father, look in mercy on all
who are poor and powerless, and all who suffer.
Lord of glory,
Hear our prayer.

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth:
Father, protect in your love
our neighbours, our families and this community
of which we are a part.
Lord of glory,
Hear our prayer.

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.**

Litany of Dedication

Gracious and everlasting God, you have revealed the incarnation of your Son by the
bright shining of a star, which the wise men saw, and offered costly gifts in
adoration; let the star of your kingdom shine in our hearts, that we may give as our
treasure all that we are and all that we possess, to your service; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. **Amen**

Christ, be our light

(During this the congregational candles are lit and held aloft)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
gathered today.*

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)
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To a troubled world.
Peace from Christ

To a searching world.
Love from Christ

To a dying world.
Hope from Christ

We proclaim Jesus as Lord
And ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Blessing

May God the Father, who led the Wise Men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from Light, lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord

Amen

May God the Son, who turned water into wine at the Wedding Feast at Cana, transform your lives and make glad your hearts.

Amen

May God the Holy Spirit, who came upon the beloved Son at his baptism in the river Jordan, pour out his gifts on you who have come to the water of new birth.

Amen

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen

Dismissal

We have seen his glory, the glory revealed to all the nations. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen

Recessional

Cantor (from the back): Faithful Vigil Ended

Congregation leave with candles lit.

