



Blyth Valley Team Ministry

## St. Mary's Church Halesworth



# Town Carol Service

A FESTIVAL OF  
NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

## *A rumour of Christmas*

*Is this the moment  
When the cosmic wonders of starlight  
And the little beauties of candlelight  
Might touch the minds of the few  
With incomprehensible longings  
And trust in transience—almost hidden  
By the vanity of tinsel and fairy lights,  
The false strength of neon lights,  
The deceptive durability  
Of plastic trees and moon-cold bauble?*

*Is this the moment  
When a birth and a promise  
Put out the brash lights  
And the pale trash,  
Let in the rumour:  
A whisper of joy,  
A faint flicker of hope,  
A murmur of angels singing  
For shepherds and war-worn travellers,  
Kings and troubled bishops,  
Mary, and all women  
Who, in the bleakness of winter  
Worship with a kiss*

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**Thank you to everyone who has contributed this evening**

**From our readers to the choir & organist**

**...and to you for coming!**

This is **your town church, and your church family**.  
You are **ALWAYS** welcome to join us at any service, concert,  
event or just to spend time here in peace and quiet



Please feel free to stay on after the service to reflect or to light candles in the Lady Chapel. There will be an opportunity to make a donation to the work of the Church as you leave, either in cash or using the contactless giving terminal.  
Please use the Gift Aid envelopes if you are able.

[www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk](http://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk)

**HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING** *(please stand)*  
*words: Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, Martin Maden & others*  
*music: Felix Mendelssohn, descant and organ, David Willcocks*

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

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

## **THE BIDDING PRAYER**

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas season our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; 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.

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; and let us make this Chapel, dedicated to Mary, his most blessed Mother, glad with our carols of praise:

But first let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and health over all the earth; for unity and goodwill within the Church he came to build, and especially in the dominions of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth:

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold and the hungry, the abused, the exploited and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the isolated, the lonely and the unloved; the elderly and the little children; all 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 one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

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

**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.**

The Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen**

**ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY** (*please stand for v. 3*)

*words: Mrs CF Alexander*

*music: HJ Gauntlett harmonised by AH Mann*

*v.1 Solo*

*v.2 Choir*

*v.3 All*

**And through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the lowly maiden,  
in whose gentle arms he lay:  
Christian children all must be  
mild, obedient, good as he.**

**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.**

**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.**

**FIRST LESSON - GENESIS 3. 8-15**

*God announces in the Garden of Eden that the  
seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head*

**THE COLLECT AND BLESSING**

Rector            The Lord be with you.

**All                And with thy spirit.**

Rector            Let us pray.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only son, Jesus Christ: grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

**All                Amen.**

Rector            Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with 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 amongst you and remain with you always.

**All                Amen.**



**O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL** (*Please Stand*)  
*Words and melody by J F Wade (c. 1711-1786)*

**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:  
*O come...***

**See how the shepherds  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come...***

**Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing all ye citizens of heaven above:  
"Glory to God  
in the highest:"  
*O come...***

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born on Christmas morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;  
Words of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing:  
*O come...***

**THE FIRST NOWELL** (*please stand*)  
*words: from William Sandys' 'Christmas Carols Ancient & Modern'  
music: Traditional English Melody arranged by Sir John Stainer*

**The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields as 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. *Chorus***

**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. *Chorus***

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

**Then entered in those wise men three  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. *Chorus***

**Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
and with his blood mankind hath bought. *Chorus***

**SECOND LESSON - GENESIS 22. 15-18**  
*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his  
seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.*

**THE CHOIR WILL SING**

**SILENT NIGHT** (*remain seated*)

*Words: Josef Mohr tr. Anon. Music: Franz Gruber (1787-1863)*

**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;  
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, oh, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth**

**THIRD LESSON - ISAIAH 9. 2b, 6-8**

*Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah*

**THE CHOIR WILL SING**

**FOURTH LESSON - ISAIAH 11.**

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown*

**THE HOLLY AND THE IVY** (*please stand*)

*Words: English Traditional*

*Music: French Traditional Carol, arr.: W. Lutoslawski (1913-1994)*

**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.**

**WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE**

**All: We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.**

*Everyone Refrain:*

**O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.**

**Men: Born a King on Bethlehem plain,  
gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign.  
(Refrain)**

**Women: Frankincense to offer have I;  
incense owns a deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship him, God most high.  
(Refrain)**

**Choir: Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.  
(Refrain)**

**All: Glorious now behold him arise;  
King and God and sacrifice:  
Heaven sings: 'Alleluia',  
'Alleluia', the earth replies.  
(Refrain)**

**NINTH LESSON - ST JOHN 1. 1-14**

*St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation*

## SEVENTH LESSON - ST LUKE 2. 8-16

*The shepherds go to the manger*

### WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS *(please stand)*

*words: Nahum Tate (1653-1715)*

*music: Este's Psalter, 1592*

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.**

**'Fear not', said he (for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind);  
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and all mankind.**

**'To you in David's town this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:**

**'The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid.'**

**Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:**

**'All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to men  
begin and never cease.'**

## EIGHTH LESSON - ST MATTHEW 2. 1-11

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus*

**The holly bears a blossom  
As white as the lily flower,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet saviour:  
*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 berry  
As red as any blood,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
To do poor sinners good:  
*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 prickle  
As sharp as any thorn,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
On Christmas Day in the morn:  
*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 bark  
As bitter as any gall,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to redeem us all.  
*O the rising of the sun,  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.***

## FIFTH LESSON - ST LUKE 1.26-38

*The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary*

## **THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME**

*Words: Basque Traditional Music: P. Moore*

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady,' *Gloria!***

**'For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,  
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.  
Most highly favoured lady,' *Gloria!***

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'to me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,  
'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy name.'  
Most highly favoured lady, *Gloria!***

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever  
say: 'most highly favoured lady', *Gloria!***

## **SIXTH LESSON - ST MATTHEW 1. 18-23**

*St Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.*

### **ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING** *(please stand)*

*words: traditional English*

*music 'The Sussex Carol'*

*arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams*

***During the singing of this carol the candles are lit***

**On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring;  
On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring:  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.**

**Then why should men on earth be sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad:  
Then why should we on earth be sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad:  
When from our sin He set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty.**

**When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
Angels and men with joy may sing,  
All for to see the newborn King.**

**All out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night;  
All out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night:  
"Glory to God and peace to men,  
Now and forevermore. Amen."**

### **AWAY IN A MANGER** *(sung seated by candle light)*

*words: anon, music: WJ Kirkpatrick arranged by David Willcocks*

**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 in 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.**