

ADVENT-CHRISTMAS

CAROL SERVICE



St. Helen's Church Barry

Sunday

20th December 2020

At 3:00PM

Live Stream via our website:

sthelensrcchurch.co.uk



Welcome

Advent Introduction -

*The Time Draws Near—Fr Pat
Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-92)*

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
the moon is hid; the night is still;
the Christmas bells from hill to hill
answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
from far and near, on mead and moor,
swell out and fail, as if a door
were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
that now dilate, and now decrease,
“Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
peace and goodwill, to all mankind.”

Opening Carol Come, Come, Come To The Manger

Come, come, come to the manger,
children, come to the children's King;
sing, sing, chorus of angels,
star of morning o'er Bethlehem sing.

He lies 'mid the beasts of the stall,
who is Maker and Lord of us all;
the wintry wind blows cold and dreary,
see, he weeps, the world is weary;
Lord, have pity and mercy on me!

He leaves all his glory behind,
to be born and to die for mankind,
with grateful beasts his cradle chooses,
thankless man his love refuses;
Lord, have pity and mercy on me!

To the manger of Bethlehem come,
to the Saviour Emmanuel's home;
the heavenly hosts above are singing,
set the Christmas bells a-ringing;
Lord, have pity and mercy on me!

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you

And with your spirit.

An Advent Prayer

Adapted from the Roman Liturgy Advent Preface II

In praise and thanksgiving,
let us rejoice as we await our Saviour,
Christ the Lord, God-with-us, Prince of peace.
For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him;
the Virgin Mary longed for him
with love beyond all telling;
John the Baptist sang of his coming
and proclaimed his presence when he came.
It is by his gift that we already rejoice
at the mystery of his nativity,
so that he may find us watchful in prayer
and exultant in his praise.

Reflection

Alfred Delp SJ was a German Jesuit priest and philosopher of the German Resistance. A member of the inner Kreisau Circle resistance group, he is considered a significant figure in Catholic resistance to Nazism. Falsely implicated in the failed 1944 July Plot to overthrow Adolf Hitler, Delp was arrested and sentenced to death. He was executed in 1945.

Advent Angels -*Alfred Delp SJ (1907-45)*

I see Advent with greater intensity and anticipation than ever before. Walking up and down in my cell, three paces this way and three paces that way, with my hands in irons and ahead of me an uncertain fate, I have a new and different understanding of God's promise of redemption and release.

Two years ago I was given a little angel for Advent. It bore the inscription, 'Rejoice, for the Lord is near.' A bomb destroyed the angel and killed the man who gave it to me. I feel he is doing me the service of an angel now.

The horror of war would be unendurable unless we kept being encouraged by the promises that have been spoken. There always are angels of annunciation, speaking their message of good news into the midst of anguish, scattering their seed of blessing that will spring up one day in the midst of the night. They call us to hope. These are not yet the loud angels of rejoicing and fulfilment that come out into the open, like the angels of the first Christmas. Quiet, inconspicuous, they come into rooms and hearts as they did then. Quietly they bring God's questions and proclaim to us the wonders of God, for whom nothing is impossible.

If we want to be alive, then we must first believe in the golden seed of God that the angels have scattered and are still offering to open hearts. Then we must walk through the grey days of our time as announcing messengers. So many need their courage strengthened, so many are in despair and in need of comfort, there is so much harshness that needs a gentle hand and an illuminating word, so much loneliness crying out for a word of release, so much loss and pain in search of inner meaning! God's messengers know that the Lord is casting seed of blessing into these hours of history as well.

Understanding this world in the light of Advent means to endure in faith, waiting for the fertility of the silent earth, the abundance of the coming harvest—not because we put our trust in the earth but because we have heard God's message and have met one of God's angels ourselves.

Advent is the time of promise; it is not yet the time of fulfilment. From afar sound the first notes, not yet discernible as a song or melody. The new song of God's future is still far off and only just announced and foretold. But fulfilment is happening. It is occurring today. And tomorrow the angels will tell what has happened with loud, rejoicing voices, and we will know it and be glad.

(Pause)

First Reading- *Isaiah 9:1-6 JB*

The prophet Isaiah foretells the birth of a Messiah, from the royal line of David, the Christ who will rule in peace without end.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt, and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Carol: The Gift

Nearly two thousand years ago,
under a starlit sky,
many events were taking place
as the ancients had prophesied.

(Refrain)

*And a gift was given
from heaven to earth,
the everlasting light,
so let us adore the Saviour born,
Emmanuel here tonight.*

Heavenly hosts of angels,
praising God on high,
sang of the promised child to come
the Saviour Jesus Christ.

(Refrain)

Darkness was over Bethlehem,
brightly the star did shine,
showing the way to where he lay
in a manger for all to find.

(Refrain)

Never before in history,
had there been such a sign,
for God was born in human form
for the sake of all mankind.

(Refrain)

Prayer after first reading and carols

Let us pray.
Father, through all the ages you have called your
people from darkness into light,
making their gladness greater and their joy increase.
As we celebrate a child born for us, a son given to us,
make the light of Christ bright in our own hearts
that we may once more bring peace and reconciliation
to our families, our communities, and to our world.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(Pause)

Christmas



Introduction

Once again, Christmas is with us. Christians the world over are re-reading the story of their Saviour's birth 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

There has never been a time
when God has not told people that he loves them.
Right from the beginning,
and through all the ages,
that is what he has told all people everywhere

But not all people have understood
what God was telling them,
even when God was saying, in so many words:
'Come and be members of my family.'

So this Word of God became a human being
and lived a human life like ours,
so that we could touch and feel what God was telling us.
The Word was made flesh and Dwelt among us.
In him we see God who can't be seen.
In him we see that God loves us

A reading from the Gospel of St. John Chapter 1 versus 1-18

In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself.
The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us, and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John appears as his witness. He proclaims:
This is the one of whom I said:
He who comes after me
ranks before me
because he existed before me'.

Indeed, from his fulness we have, all of us, received –
yes, grace in return for grace,
since, though the Law was given through Moses,
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.
No one has ever seen God;
it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart,
who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord

Carol: The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came

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 know, 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," said she,
"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.

THE CRIB

In celebrating Christmas we celebrate the mystery of God's love in human form.

The crib helps us to focus on the marvellous things that happened in Bethlehem and reminds us of the part we have to play in making God's love and action visible to others.

Throughout the ages, carols have been sung to express man's joy at the birth of Christ and to bring out the meaning of the mystery of his incarnation.

It was St Francis of Assisi who first joined the singing of carols to the Christmas Crib. He organised people to act out the Christmas story by the side of the crib and to compose and sing carols to express their happiness.

St Francis used live creatures. Today we use figures to help us to focus on the mystery of God's love being offered to all.

THE OX

For the People of God the ox was a symbol of strength, ruggedness and power, all of which could be harnessed to the service of mankind.

God asks his people to harness their power to his service.

Let us pause and ask ourselves how we serve God in our lives.....

(pause for silent reflection)

THE ASS

The donkey is a wanderer, a symbol of freedom and free choice, but it is also a reminder of the aimless wandering of God's chosen people when they chose to reject God and his covenant.

Donkeys were uncommon in Israel, they were ritually unclean, yet a donkey carried both our Saviour and his mother – reminding us God often chooses the most unlikely to carry out his work.....

(pause for silent reflection)

Carol 2: Away In A Manger

(William James Kirkpatrick)

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,
and 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 forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

THE SHEPHERDS

Shepherds, especially the night workers, were among the lowest in Palestinian society,. These were the very men, unwanted by society, whom God chose to be the first to receive the message of the Saviour's birth.

Let us pause to reflect on those who are rejected by today's society and on our own attitude to them.....

(pause for silent reflection)

Carol: While Shepherds Watched

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 minds
“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
The Saviour who is Christ the Lord
And this shall be the sign

“The heavenly Babe
You there shall find
To human view displayed
And 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;
Goodwill henceforth
From heaven to men
Begin and never cease!”

JOSEPH

Joseph has a lesson for us all – the quiet man of faith. Always in the background, never seeking recognition but always willing to do what God might ask of him.

Let us pause and reflect ... how willing are we to do God’s bidding, especially if it involves making sacrifices?....

(pause for silent reflection)

Carol 4: O little town of Bethlehem. (*Phillip Brooks*)

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet, in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

MARY

The angel greeted Mary with the words, “Blessed are you among women”. Mary was blessed because she trusted in God, never looking for assurance. She firmly believed that God would do whatever was best for her. How willing are we to put our life into God’s hands?

Carol: My Soul Is Filled With Joy

My soul is filled with joy
as I sing to God my Saviour:
he has looked upon his servant,
he has visited his people

*And holy is his name
through all generations!
Everlasting is his mercy
to the people he has chosen,
and holy is his name!*

I am lowly as a child,
but I know from this day forward
that my name will be remembered
and the world will call me blessed.

I proclaim the pow’r of God!
He does marvels for his servants;
though he scatters the proud hearted
and destroys the might of princes.

To the hungry he gives food,
sends the rich away empty.
In his mercy he is mindful
of the people he has chosen.

In his love he now fulfils
what he promised to our fathers.
I will praise the Lord my Saviour.
Everlasting is his mercy.

Pause for reflection

It seems hardly credible that this child born in such simplicity ... recognised only by a handful of shepherds... should be Saviour... Son of God...God with us...but so he is.

We need to understand that God reveals himself to the poor and simple... that it is in the ordinary things of life - a smile – a word – forgiveness – freedom – life itself and the whole of creation... which show the grandeur of God.

It is because he was born in poverty and simplicity that we have the courage to approach him. He is like us in all things except sin. Let us try to become better witnesses to God's presence, to see him in the world he has made....to meet him in others....to know him through his eternal word...and so to proclaim him by our daily living.

Lord of Surprises

Lord Jesus Christ,
you came to a stable
when men looked in a palace;
you were born in poverty
when we might have anticipated riches;
King of all the earth,
you were content to visit one nation.
From beginning to end
you up turned our human values
and held us in suspense.
Come to us, Lord Jesus.
Do not let us take you for granted
or pretend that we ever fully understand you.
Continue to surprise us
so that, kept alert,
we are always ready
to receive you as Lord and to do your will.

Acclamation of the nativity

Fr. Pat: A hallowed day has dawned upon us.
Come and worship the Lord:

People: **For a great light has shone on the earth.
A light no darkness can overcome.**

Fr. Pat: As we stand at the place of the manger, and call to mind the stable, let us remember how a place never meant to be an infant's bed became the home of our Lord.

People: **Let us pray that our homes will be places of hospitality for all who enter them.**

Fr. Pat: As Mary opened herself to the miraculous working of God through her,

People: **May we be instruments of God's love in whatever humble way God summons us.**

Fr. Pat: As Joseph wondered, then obeyed, where he could not understand,

People: **May we be obedient—even in the face of our own lack of understanding.**

Fr. Pat: As the angel proclaimed the tidings of God,

People: **May we be open to hear God calling us to be a part of God's plan.**

Fr. Pat: As sheep and donkey, oxen and lamb looked on the holy miracle in wonder and sang the new-born child to sleep,

People: **May we too stand in awe before each miracle, wondrous or simple, which our God will work.**

Fr. Pat: As the shepherds were the most common of old and yet the only ones to be summoned by angels,

People: May we never forget that God calls the simplest among us to tasks of great glory.

Fr. Pat: As the star shone to give directions to the Magi,

People: Let our faith in Christ give our lives direction.

Fr. Pat: As the Magi moved in the deep belief that God was acting in this world,

People: May we always look for God's redemptive activity and never be so proud that we fail to seek our Lord in faith and trust.

Fr. Pat: As God was in Christ, reconciling the world, may we in prayer kneel before the manger and wonder again at the miracle of Christmas.

All Amen.

*****Fr Pat & Kirsty to place Jesus In Crib*****

Blessing of a Crib

Fr. Pat: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Saviour was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.

To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise up our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

Carol: O Come, All Ye Faithful - (*John F Wade*)

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, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God all glory in the highest
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!



Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

Mass 2.00pm- Vigil Mass

Mass 5.00pm- Vigil Mass

Mass 8.00pm- First Mass of Christmas

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

Mass 8.30am- Dawn Mass

Mass 10.30am- Mass During the Day

**All Masses can be live streamed via our website:
sthelensrcchurch.co.uk**