



Clontarf Parish, Church of St. John the Baptist
Carol Service



24th December 2023

Processional Carol – 177 Once in Royal David's City
(verse 1 solo)

1 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.

2 He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3 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 should be
kind, obedient, good as he.

5 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.

6 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.

Greeting & Bidding Prayer

Bidding Prayer

Dear People of God: In this season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger. Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from ancient times until the glorious redemption brought to us by his Holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with carols and songs of praise. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world: for peace and goodwill among all nations; for unity and fellowship within the Church of Christ our Lord, for love and harmony in our communities, our families and our homes; for a blessing on all children dear to us, and on loved ones absent from home. Let us also remember at this time those for whom Christmas brings little joy: the poor and homeless, the hungry and destitute, the sick and those who mourn; and all the victims of human tyranny, cruelty and oppression. Lastly, let us remember with thanksgiving those who shared our Christmases in years gone by and who now rejoice with us in the greater light of God's heavenly kingdom. To their company, and the fellowship of all the citizens above, may God in his mercy bring us all.

And now, to sum up all these petitions, let us pray the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying: **Our Father...**

Children's Nativity Sketch

Advent Candle Liturgy: Fourth Sunday of Advent

We have lit three candles—for hope, for peace, and for joy. Today we light the fourth candle—the candle of love. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, but that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death. We love, because God loves us.

(Four candles are lit.)

Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.
As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.

Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.
Magnify your love within us.
Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,
That we may walk in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

First Reading – God will comfort his people

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

158 God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

1 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 had gone astray:

*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

2 From God our heavenly Father
a blessed angel came;
the unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same;
how that in Bethlehem was born
the Son of God by name:

3 The shepherds at those tidings
rejoiced much in mind,
they left their flocks a-feeding
in tempest, storm and wind;
and went to Bethlehem straightway
this blessed babe to find:

4 But when to Bethlehem they came
whereat this infant lay;
they found him in a manger
where oxen fed on hay,
his mother Mary, kneeling down,
unto her Lord did pray:

5 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 efface:

Second Reading – A child has been born for us Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

199 The People that in Darkness Walked

1 The people that in darkness walked
a glorious light have see;
the light has shined on them who long
in shades of death have been.

2 To hail thee, Sun of righteousness,
the gathering nations come;
they joy as when the reapers bear
their harvest treasures home.

3 For unto us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given;
and on his shoulder ever rests
all power in earth and heaven.

4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
for evermore adored;
the Wonderful, the Counsellor,
the Everlasting Lord.

5 His power, increasing, still shall spread,
his reign no end shall know;
justice shall guard his throne above,
and peace abound below.

Third Reading – The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

174 O Little Town Of Bethlehem

1 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.

2 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 wondering love.

3 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.

4 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!

Fourth Reading – A child will be born : Emmanuel, God with us

Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God;
let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: `Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

135 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verses 1, 2 & 7)

1 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.*

2 O come, thou Wisdom from above,
who ord'rest all things through thy love;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in her ways to go:

7 O come, Desire of Nations, bring
all peoples to their Saviour King;
thou Corner-stone, who makest one,
complete in us thy work begun:

Fifth Reading – The annunciation Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'

The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

183 The Holly and the Ivy

1. The holly and the ivy
When they are both full grown
Of all 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 quire*

2. The holly bears a blossom
As white as lily flower
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To be our sweet Saviour

3. The holly bears a berry
As red as any blood
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good

4. The holly bears a prickle
As sharp as any thorn
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas Day in the morn

5. The holly bears a bark
As bitter as any gall
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all

6. The holly and the ivy
When they are both full grown
Of all trees that are in the wood
The holly bears the crown

Sixth Reading – The birth of Jesus Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

182 Silent Night

1 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

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born

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

Seventh Reading – The Angel and the Shepherds ***Luke 2:8-20***

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

188 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

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

2 "Fear not," said he for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind
"glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

3 "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:

4 "The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all simply wrapped in swaddling clothes
and in a manger laid."

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

6 "All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace!
goodwill henceforth from heaven to earth
begin and never cease."

Eighth Reading – The visit of the Wise Men Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."' 'Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Choir: There is a Song

Ninth Reading – The Incarnate Word

John 1:1-14

remain standing

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

172 O come all ye faithful (verses 1, 2, 6 & 7b)

1 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!*

2 God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten, not created:

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

7b Yea, Lord, we bless thee,
born for our salvation,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:

Closing Prayer, Blessing & Announcements

Christ the sun of righteousness shine upon you, gladden your hearts and scatter the darkness from before you: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

160 Hark the Herald-Angels sing

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all you nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"*

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

3 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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth.

