

All Saints' Margaret Street

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

18th December, 2022, 6pm



PRELUDE: Olivier Messiaen (1902-92), No. 3: *Desseins éternels* from *La nativité du Seigneur*
Candles are lit during the organ prelude. All stand when the bell rings.

CAROL: Once in royal David's city

Soloist: 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.

Choir: 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 must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

(Text: C. F. Alexander, 1818-95; Tune: Irby)

4. **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.

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.

THE BIDDING AND LORD'S PRAYER

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and 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.

Therefore 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 Church glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his people; for peace upon the earth he came to save; for love and unity within the one church he did build; for brotherhood and goodwill amongst all men, and especially within our city of London and our parish of All Saints', Margaret Street.

And particularly at this time let us remember before him the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all those 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 man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever 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, 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.**

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.**

All sit.

MOTET: John Rutter (b.1945), *What sweeter music*

What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!
Heart, ear, and eye, and everything.
Awake! the while the active finger
Runs division with the singer.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honor to this day,
That sees December turned to May.

If we may ask the reason, say
The why, and wherefore, all things here
Seem like the springtime of the year?

Why does the chilling Winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell, like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus, on the sudden?

Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and luster, public mirth,
To heaven, and the under-earth.

We see Him come, and know Him ours,
Who, with His sunshine, and His showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome Him. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart,

Which we will give Him; and bequeath
This holly, and this ivy wreath,
To do Him honor; who's our King,
And Lord of all this reveling.

(Text: 'A Christmas Carol', Robert Herrick, 1591-1674)

THE FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3.8-14

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'

MOTET: Elizabeth Poston (1905-87), Jesus Christ the apple tree

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green;
The trees of nature fruitless be,
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel,
By faith I know but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see,
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed of all but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil -
Here I will sit and rest awhile,
Under the shadow I will be,
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

(Text: from Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs, Joshua Smith, 1784)

THE SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22.15-18

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

MOTET: Paul Manz (1919-2009), E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come

Peace be to you and grace from him
Who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed his blood
That we might saved be.

Sing holy, holy to our Lord,
The Lord, Almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come;
Sing holy, holy, Lord!

(Text: Ruth Manz, after Revelation 22)

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon,
For Christ is coming soon!

E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come,
And night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun,
For Christ will be their All!

THE THIRD LESSON: 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.

CAROL: God rest you merry, gentlemen

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:

The Shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessed babe to find:

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:

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:

(Text: Traditional; Tune: God rest you merry)

THE FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11.1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

MOTET: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93), *The Crown of Roses*

When Jesus Christ was yet a child
He had a garden small and wild,
Wherein He cherished roses fair,
And wove them into garlands there.

Now once, as summer time drew nigh,
There came a troupe of children by,
And seeing roses on the tree,
With shouts they plucked them merrily.

"Do you bind roses in your hair?"
They cried, in scorn, to Jesus there.
The Boy said humbly: "Take, I pray,
All but the naked thorns away."

Then of the thorns they made a crown,
And with rough fingers pressed it down,
Till on His forehead fair and young,
Red drops of blood like roses sprung.

(Text: Geoffrey Dearmer, 1883-1996 after Aleksey Pleshcheyev)

THE FIFTH LESSON: 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.

MOTET: John Joubert (1927-2019), There is no rose of such virtue

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu;
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda.

[Wonderful thing]

By that rose we may well see¹
That he is God in persons three,
Pari forma.

[Equal in form]

Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus.

[Let us travel on]

(Text: Medieval carol)

THE SIXTH LESSON: Matthew 1.18-23

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

CAROL: A great and mighty wonder

**A great and mighty wonder,
A full and holy cure!
The Virgin bears the Infant
With virgin-honour pure:
*Repeat the hymn again:
'To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men.'***

**The Word becomes incarnate,
And yet remains on high!
And Cherubim sing anthems
To shepherds from the sky.**

**While thus they sing your Monarch,
Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, ye vales and mountains,
Ye oceans, clap your hands.**

**Since all he comes to ransom,
By all be he adored,
The Infant born in Bethl'em,
The Saviour and the Lord.**

**And idol forms shall perish,
And error shall decay,
And Christ shall wield his sceptre,
Our Lord and God for ay.**

(Text: J.M. Neale, 1818-66; Tune: Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen)

THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2.8-16

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.

CAROL: Hark! the herald angels sing

**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:**

**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:**

(Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88; Tune: Mendelssohn)

THE EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2.1-11

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.

MOTET: William Mathias (1934-92), A babe is born

A babe is born all of a may,
To bring salvation unto us.
To him we sing both night and day.

Veni creator Spiritus.

[Come, creator Spirit]

At Bethlehem, that blessed place,
The child of bliss now born he was;
And him to serve God give us grace,

O lux beata Trinitas.

[O blessed light, the Trinity]

There came three kings out of the East,
To worship the King that is so free,
With gold and myrrh and frank incense,

A solis ortus cardine.

[From the rising of the sun]

The angels came down with one cry,
A fair song that night sung they
In worship of that child:

Gloria tibi Domine.

[Glory to thee, O God]

A babe is born all of a may,
To bring salvation unto us.
To him we sing both night and day.

Veni creator Spiritus,

O lux beata Trinitas,

A solis ortus cardine,

Gloria tibi Domine.

Noel!

(Text: Fifteenth-century)

The Lord be with you. **And with thy spirit.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

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 were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not.

He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not. 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 nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

Please extinguish your candles now.

CAROL: O come, all ye faithful

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:

See how the Shepherds
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:

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?

Sing, choirs of Angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the Highest:
 O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

(Text: Frederick Oakeley, 1802-80; Tune: *Adeste fidelis*)

THE COLLECT, BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The Lord be with you. **And with thy spirit.**

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 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. **Amen.**

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 among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

ORGAN VOLUNTARY: Henri Mulet (1878-1967), *Carillon-Sortie*

A retiring collection is raised. Please make donations in the collection plate or tap your debit or credit card on the machine. Please do join us for seasonal refreshments after today's service.