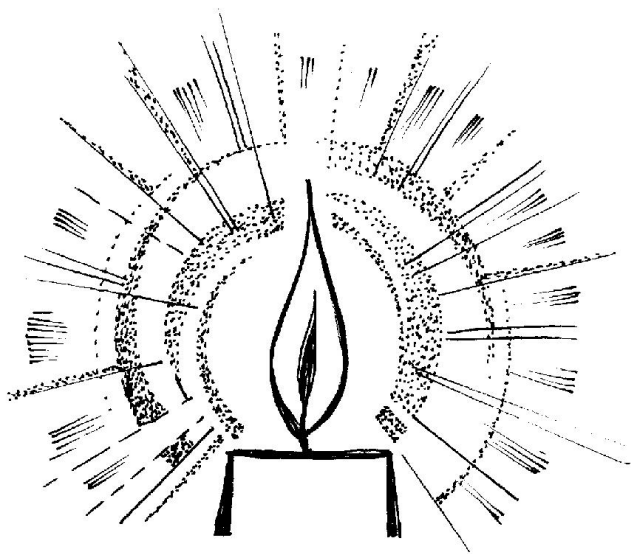


Holy Trinity  
Headington Quarry



Christmas Carol Service  
Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024

**Music before the service:** Organ Suite “In Dulci Jubilo”

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

**Choir Introit**

*Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*

The tree of life my soul hath seen,  
Laden with fruit and always green:  
The tree 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 have I 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.

Words: attrib. Richard Hutchings (18<sup>th</sup> century)

Music: Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)

**Carol:** Once in Royal David's city

*Processional Carol: (first verse choir only)*

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.

*All sing:*

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.

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 lonely 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.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Music: Henry Gauntlett (1805-1876)

## **Welcome and Bidding Prayer**

*Please remain standing*

*The prayer concludes:*

**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.**

*Please sit*

**Choir Anthem**      *Carol of the Bells*

Hark! how the bells  
Sweet silver bells  
All seem to say  
'throw cares away.'  
Christmas is here  
Bringing good cheer  
To young and old  
Meek and the bold

Ding, dong, ding, dong  
That is their song  
With joyful ring  
All carolling  
One seems to hear  
Words of good cheer  
From ev'rywhere  
Filling the air

Oh how they pound  
Raising the sound  
O'er hill and dale  
Telling their tale  
Gaily they ring  
While people sing  
Songs of good cheer  
Christmas is here  
Merry, merry, merry,  
merry Christmas  
Merry, merry, merry,  
merry Christmas  
On, on they send  
On without end  
Their joyful tone  
To ev'ry home

Words: Traditional Ukranian, tr. Peter Wilhousky (1902-1978)  
Music: Mykola Leontovych (1877-1921)

**Reading:** 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.

*Please stand*

**Carol:** Of the Father's heart begotten

Of the Father's heart begotten  
ere the world from chaos rose,  
he is Alpha: from that Fountain,  
all that is and hath been flows;  
he is Omega, of all things  
yet to come the mystic Close,  
evermore and evermore.

He assumed this mortal body,  
frail and feeble, doomed to die,  
that the race from dust created  
might not perish utterly,  
which the dreadful Law had sentenced  
in the depths of hell to lie,  
evermore and evermore.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,  
when the Maid the curse retrieved,  
brought to birth mankind's salvation,  
by the Holy Ghost conceived,  
and the Babe, the world's Redeemer,  
in her loving arms received,  
evermore and evermore.

This is he, whom seer and sybil  
sang in ages long gone by;  
this is he of old revealèd  
in the page of prophecy;  
lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;  
let the world his praises cry!  
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;  
Angels and Archangels, sing!  
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,  
let your joyous anthems ring,  
every tongue his name confessing,  
countless voices answering,  
evermore and evermore.

Words: Prudentius tr. R.F. Davis (1866-1937)

Music: arr. Winfred Douglas (1867-1944)

*Please sit*

**Reading:** 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.



**Choir Anthem**      *A Maiden Most Gentle*

A maiden most gentle and tender we sing  
Of Mary the mother of Jesus our King  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

How blest is the birth of her heavenly child  
Who came to redeem us in Mary so mild  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

The archangel Gabriel foretold by his call  
The Lord of creation and Saviour of all  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

Three kings came to worship with gifts rich and rare  
And marvelled in awe at the babe in her care  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

Rejoice and be glad at this Christmas we pray  
Sing praise to the Saviour, sing endless 'Ave'  
*Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

Words: Andrew Carter (b.1939)  
Music: Traditional French arr. Carter

**Poem**

Extract from *Annunciation*

Denise Levertov

She had been a child who played, ate, slept  
like any other child – but unlike others,  
wept only for pity, laughed  
in joy not triumph.  
Compassion and intelligence  
fused in her, indivisible.

Called to a destiny more momentous  
than any in all of Time,  
she did not quail,  
only asked  
a simple, 'How can this be?'  
and gravely, courteously,  
took to heart the angel's reply,  
perceiving instantly  
the astounding ministry she was offered:  
to bear in her womb  
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry  
in hidden, finite inwardness,  
nine months of Eternity; to contain  
in slender vase of being,  
the sum of power –  
in narrow flesh,  
the sum of light.  
Then bring to birth,  
push out into air, a Man-child  
needing, like any other,  
milk and love –  
but who was God.  
This was the moment no one speaks of,  
when she could still refuse.  
A breath unbreathed,  
                    Spirit,  
                                    suspended,  
  waiting.  
She did not cry, 'I cannot. I am not worthy,'  
Nor, 'I have not the strength.'  
She did not submit with gritted teeth,  
                                    raging, coerced.

Bravest of all humans,  
  consent illumined her.  
The room filled with its light,  
the lily glowed in it,  
  and the iridescent wings.  
Consent,  
                                courage unparalleled,  
opened her utterly.

*Please stand*

**Carol:** In the bleak mid-winter

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, Heaven cannot hold Him  
  Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven 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 breast-ful of milk  
And a manger-ful 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.

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)  
Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

*Please sit*

## Reading: 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.'

*Please stand*

### **Carol:** O Little town of Bethlehem

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 men 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 giv'n.  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heav'n.  
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.

Words: Philips Brooks (1835-1893)  
Music: arr. R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

*Please sit*

## Poem

*O Emmanuel*

Malcolm Guite

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us  
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,  
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.  
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name  
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,  
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,  
Be folded with us into time and place,  
Unfold for us the mystery of grace  
And make a womb of all this wounded world.  
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,  
O tiny hope within our hopelessness  
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,  
To touch a dying world with new-made hands  
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

## Music Group Anthem      *Dayspring*

Awake my soul, awake my tongue, my glory wake and sing  
and celebrate the holy birth, the birth of Israel's King.

*Oh happy night that brought forth light,  
which makes the blind to see  
The dayspring from on high came down,  
to cheer and visit thee.*

The careful shepherds with their flocks  
were watching for the morn  
But better news from heaven was brought,  
your saviour now is born.

In Bethlehem the infant lies, all in a place obscure  
Your saviour's come, oh sing God's praise, oh sing  
forevermore.

Words & Music: Traditional, arr. C. Kelly

### **Reading: Luke 2.8-15**

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."

*Please stand*

### **Carol: Angels from the realms of glory**

Angels from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:



*Come and worship  
Christ the new-born King,  
come and worship,  
worship Christ the new-born King.*

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing;  
yonder shines the infant light:  
*Come and worship...*

Sages, leave your contemplations;  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of Nations;  
ye have seen his natal star:  
*Come and worship...*

Though an infant now we view him,  
he shall fill his Father's throne,  
gather all the nations to him;  
every knee shall then bow down:

*Come and worship  
Christ the new-born King,  
come and worship,  
worship Christ the new-born King.*

Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)  
Music: arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

*Please sit*

## Poem

### *Song of the Shepherds*

Richard Bauckham

We were familiar with the night.  
We knew its favourite colours,  
its sullen silence  
and its small, disturbing sounds,  
its unprovoked rages,  
its savage dreams.

We slept by turns,  
attentive to the flock.  
We said little.  
Night after night, there was little to say.  
But sometimes one of us,  
skilled in that way,  
would pipe a tune of how things were for us.

They say that once, almost before time,  
the stars with shining voices  
serenaded  
the new born world.  
The night could not contain their boundless praise.

We thought that just a poem —  
until the night  
a song of solar glory,  
unutterable, unearthly,  
eclipsed the luminaries of the night,  
as though the world were exorcised of dark  
and, coming to itself, began again.

Later we returned to the flock.  
The night was ominously black.  
The stars were silent as the sheep.  
Nights pass, year on year.  
We clutch our meagre cloaks against the cold.  
Our aging piper's fumbling fingers play,  
night after night,  
an earthly echo of the song that banished dark.  
It has stayed with us.

**Choir & Music Group Anthem**     *Let us light a candle*

In a world where people walk in darkness  
Let us turn our faces to the light,  
to the light of God revealed in Jesus,  
to the Daystar scattering our night.

*For the light is stronger than the darkness  
And the day will overcome the night.  
Though the shadows linger all around us,  
Let us turn our faces to the light.*

In a world where suff'ring of the helpless  
Casts a shadow all along the way,  
Let us bear the Cross of Christ with gladness  
And proclaim the dawning of the day.

Let us light a candle in the darkness,  
In the face of death, a sign of life.  
As a sign of hope where all seems hopeless,  
As a sign of peace in place of strife.

Words & Music: Robert Willis (1947-2024)

**Reading:** Philippians 2.5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Reflection**

Revd Emily Hockliffe Essex

**Choir Anthem**

*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:  
*Repeat the hymn again...*

Since all he comes to ransom,  
by all he is adored,  
the Infant born in Beth'lem,  
the Saviour and the Lord:  
*Repeat the hymn again:*  
*'To God on high be glory,*  
*and peace on earth to men.'*

Words: St Germanus tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)  
Music: arr. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

*Please stand*

**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 th' angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

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

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb;  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see,  
Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man with dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

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

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris'n 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.*

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)  
Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

## **Blessing and Dismissal**

May the joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the magi,  
the love of Joseph and Mary  
and the peace of the Christ-child  
be yours this Christmas;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
Father Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

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

**Organ voluntary:** Carillon Sortie – Henri Mulet (1878 – 1967)

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*Poems from Sounding the Seasons and Waiting on the Word by Malcolm Guite (Canterbury Press 2012, 2015), also found at [www.malcolmguite.wordpress.com](http://www.malcolmguite.wordpress.com); and from A Door in the Hive (New Directions 1989).*

*Produced under CCL 234208.*

**We wish you all, your family, and friends, a very peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year! Please do stay and join us for seasonal refreshments at the back of church.**



## **Christmas Services**

You are very welcome at our forthcoming services, as we continue to celebrate the good news of Christmas.

### **Christmas Eve**

Christingle Service – 2.30pm and 4pm

Midnight Mass – 11.30pm

### **Christmas Day**

Traditional Language Communion — 8am

Family Communion – 10am

Our church is open every day as a place of peace and sanctuary. Wherever you are on your walk with God, please know that you are welcome in this place. If we can support you or pray with you about anything, please do get in touch.

### **Contact us**

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