

St Hilda's Church Warley Woods



**Christmas Eve
Lessons & Carols
by Candlelight
at 6.30pm
Live on YouTube**

*“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means,
“God is with us.”*

WELCOME TO YOU!

Welcome to St Hilda’s Christmas Eve traditional Lessons and Carols by Candlelight Service. We’re delighted that we can offer you a service this year to watch in your own homes and pray this would bring you and your families comfort and joy.

As we celebrate on this holy night, we join millions of Christians throughout the world to proclaim the birth of Christ, the Saviour of the world. Christians in every continent will be worshipping to hear again the good news that God came to live amongst us in his Son Jesus Christ ‘Emmanuel’, which means ‘God with us.’

We invite you to join in with the carols and prayers as we celebrate once again the good news of Christmas.

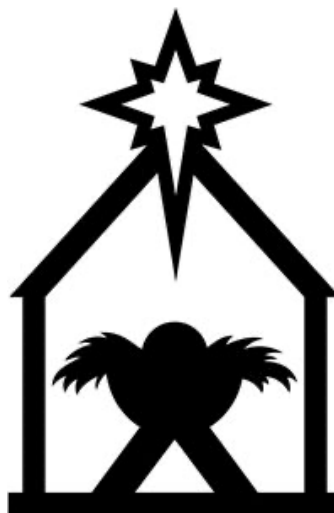
Opening Reading

‘Come and see’¹

Light to splinter darkness.
Hope to lift the soul.
Peace to ring the changes.
Grace resounds for all.

Night, the time for birthing.
Stars to guide us on.
Angels’ voices singing,
joining with our song.

Come and see the newborn.



¹ Stephen JMaunder, Come and See, Wild Goose Publications

Come with new-found joy.
Come, for heaven's rejoicing ...
Mary's infant boy!

Opening Carol: Once in Royal David's City

Solo 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 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 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.**

OPENING PRAYER

We join together as the family of God, in the presence of God,
to celebrate the great festival of Christmas.

In this service, we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ
and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in our homes across different communities
we pray for the world God loves:

God of our darkest nights and brightest days,
fill us with your hope as we celebrate with joyful hearts the birth of Christ.
May familiar words speak to us with a new voice,
and may the song of Bethlehem reach into our hearts.
This we ask in the name of Jesus, Light of the world. **Amen**

We commend all of creation, those who live close and those who live in distant lands,
and all those who have asked for our prayers,
to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father,
and say together, as Christ himself taught us, in our own mother tongue:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5: *In this reading we are told that God is the source of all life and light and that light is good.*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Carol: Like a Candle Flame

Like a candle flame
Flickering small
our darkness
Uncreated light
Shines through infant eyes
God is with us
Alleluia
Come to save us
Alleluia, alleluia



In

Stars and angels sing
Yet the earth
Sleeps in shadows
Can this tiny spark
Set a world on fire?
God is with us...

Yet His light will shine
From our lives
Spirit blazing
As we touch the flame
Of His holy fire
God is with us

Second Reading: Isaiah 9:2,6

In this reading we hear God's promise to send a Saviour to bring peace and light to a troubled world.

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.

Carol: Silent Night

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 Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born

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



Third Reading: Micah 5:2-4

The prophet Micah foretells that the smallest place, the most overlooked and the most unlikely, will be the birthplace of the Christ child.

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.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

⁴ 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;

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; *today.*
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.



The wall surrounding Bethlehem

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.

Fourth Reading: Luke 1: 26-38

The Angel Gabriel visits Mary with the incredible news that she would bear God's son. Mary's obedience contrasts with the disobedience of Adam and Eve and opens the way for the coming of the Saviour.

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with



you.' 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 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. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' 34 Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 35 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. 36 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. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.’ 38 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.

Reading: Christmas dreams²

Dreams fill these Christmas stories.

Dreams of blessing.

Dreams of warning.

Dreams of reassurance.

Real dreams.

In our world of ordered common sense dreams
are often forgotten
in the morning light.

But tonight, Nativity invites us
to open hearts
and souls and dream.

And in our dreaming we may find
the manger-child
reaching out to us.

Carol: It came upon the midnight clear

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
from heav’n’s all gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

² Stephen JMaunder, *Come and See*, Wild Goose Publications

**Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing;
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**



**Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

Fifth Reading: Luke 2:1-7

In this reading we learn about the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

Carol: Away in a manger

**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 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 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.**

Sixth Reading: Luke 2: 8-16

Luke describes the first and classic encounter with Jesus by humble shepherds who are drawn to see him. Their experience is one of amazement and they go on their way filled with wonder, love and praise.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

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 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;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.”**

Seventh reading: Matthew 2: 1-11

We learn of the seekers from the East, star-gazing wisdom-seekers from far away who have been drawn by the bright star and the mystery to the humble birthplace of the King of All - all people in all places in all time.

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 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.’ 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 “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.””

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 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.’ 9 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. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 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.



Reading: 'Where is he?'³

'Where is he?' we asked the king in
splendid palace dwelling.
We'd travelled far beneath the star whose
light was onward calling.

'When morning comes, I'll tell you, but
now you're here as guests – enjoy the feast
and find release and let your bodies rest.'

'Where is he?' the king enquired from
royal advisors wise.
'In David's town, we do believe, the new
Lord will arise.'

'Then I must pay him homage,' the king
with smile replied.
'Please tell me when you've found him and
where this newborn lies.'

He must have thought us so naive to listen
to his voice,
but years of star-led travelling brings
wisdom, insight, choice.

Fast we left the royal presence. Fast we
journeyed on.
Fast the star that filled the sky moved on
before the dawn.
Then, by its light, the child we found, no
palace-rest for him,
and having given all we'd brought we left
without a sound.

³ Stephen JMaunder, *Come and See*, Wild Goose Publications

Within his mother's arms held tight and
blessed by a father's inner sight this child is
safe
until he grows,
until his love and grace is known, until the powerful are brought to find
in him their wealth, their words, their mind, mere
nothings now before his light.

Power may be found in palaces, in lies
and twisted truth,
but wisdom's presence needs no show,
no pomp, no force,
for us to know
that here beneath the star-lit glow true love
lies waiting here below.

Carol: African Crib Song: *Traditonal arr. John Barber*

Bayou Christi bayou
Christi babanou
O Christi bayou.
Sleep little one sleep
sleep 'til the morning
hush now do not weep.
See Mary is near,
keeping you safe
nothing shall harm you,
fright nor alarm you,
O Christi bayou.



Bayou Christi bayou
Christi babanou
O Christi bayou.
Sleep little one sleep
sleep 'til the morning
hush now do not weep.
Hush shepherds draw near
wise men shall knee

homage to bring you.
Angels shall sing you
so softly to sleep.
Bayou O Christi bayou.

Eighth Reading: John 1:1-14

This passage interprets the Christmas story by echoing the book of Genesis: “In the beginning”. Jesus, the new Adam, the one human being in perfect fellowship with his heavenly Father, completes God’s purposes; and through Jesus, because of Jesus, each one of us can likewise tonight, be God’s child. God seeks you.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ 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.



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, (three times)
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, (three times)
Christ the Lord!**



**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, (three times)
Christ the Lord!**

PRAYER

One: In our journeying we find you,
God of the unexpected places.
We find you there – in our doubts
as well as our certainties,
in our fears as well as our courage,
in our questions as well as our wonder,
and in our turning to others to care.
Help us to journey on,
Looking expectantly to find you.

All: Amen

Lynda Wright

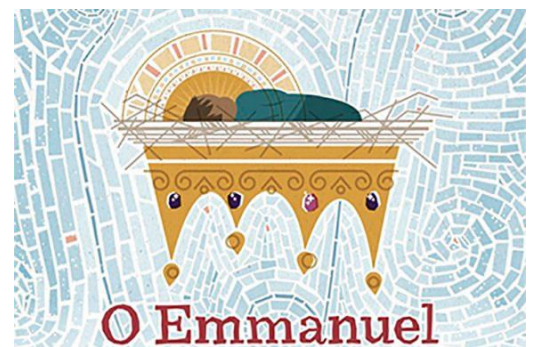
Song: Christmas blessing *Music: Philip Stopford*
May the joy of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
the worship of the wise men

and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas.
May Christ, who by his incarnation
gathered into one all things earthly,
all things heavenly,
and fill you with joy and peace.
And the blessing of God,
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and remain with you always.
Amen.

A BLESSING

One: May the song of the angels,
the joy of the shepherds,
the wonder of the wise men,
and the peace of the newborn king
fill our hearts and homes
this Christmastime and always.
And the blessing of God
the Father
the Son
and the Holy Spirit
be with you and all those we love, now and forever.

Many: **Amen**



Ruth Burgess

Organ Voluntary: Allegro from Handel's Royal Fireworks Music
played by David Ellis

Charitable Giving

It has been difficult to sustain our normal charitable giving through the church in 2020 while services and meetings have been disrupted. Despite our own deficit each month, the PCC has resolved to pay the £500 each that we normally send to The Children's Society, Christian Aid, The Diocesan Malawi Fund, and the Mission to Seafarers. Should members wish to give at Christmastide, we would suggest Christian Aid and Smethwick Foodbank as appropriate organisations. Their details are:

Christian Aid

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/ways-to-donate>

Unfortunately under the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, there is a delay to processing donations by post. Please give via the website where possible or call **020 7523 2269** to donate by telephone.

Smethwick Foodbank

Send cheques made payable to Smethwick CAN to Smethwick CAN Office, C/O Holy Trinity Church, Church Hill Street, Smethwick, B67 7AH

BANK TRANSFER:

Unity Trust Bank, Smethwick Church Action Network, 20219583, 60-83-01 reference foodbank

Online giving

<https://localgiving.org/charity/smethwickcan/>

MIDNIGHT MASS 11:30pm

Our midnight mass service will be live-streamed this evening. To watch it follow us on instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/sthildasc/>