

*The Parish Church of
St. Mary and St. Nicholas,
Wilton*



*Christmas Carol Service
Monday 22nd December 2025*

A service of Readings and Carols

Welcome – The Revd Professor Deborah Mackay

Processional Carol:

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.

Choirs: 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 meek, and lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

**All And our eyes at last shall see Him,
through His own redeeming love;
for that Child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n 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;
when like stars His children crowned
all in white shall wait around.**

Introduction and Bidding Prayer

We have come together as the family of God,
in our Father's presence,
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 the name of Christ,
we pray for the world he came to save:
for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation
to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom,
and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;
for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples
may recognize their responsibility for its future,
and may be inspired by the message of Christmas
to work together for the establishment of justice,
freedom and peace everywhere;
for all in special need,
the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved,
that the peace and light of the Christ-child
may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.
We commend all whom we love,
or who have asked for our prayers,
to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father,
and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

All **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.**

Choirs: Veiled in Darkness – Glenn Rudolph (*b. 1951*)

Veiled in darkness Judah lay,
Waiting for the promised day,
While across the shadowy night
Streamed a flood of glorious light,
heavenly voices chanting then,
'Peace on earth, good will to men'.

Still the earth in darkness lies,
up from death's dark vale arise
Voices of a world in grief,
Prayers of men who seek relief;
Now our darkness pierce again,
'Peace on earth, good will to men'.

Light of light, we humbly pray,
Shine upon thy world today;
Break the gloom of our dark night,
Fill our souls with love and light,
Send thy blessed word again.
'Peace on earth, good will to men'.

1st Reading – Isaiah 11: 1 - 9
Christ's birth is foretold

Parish Choir: A Tender Shoot – Ben Panniah (*b. 1984*)

A tender shoot has started
up from a root of grace,
as ancient seers imparted
from Jesse's holy race;
It blooms without a blight,
blooms in the cold bleak winter
turning our darkness into light.

This shoot, Isaiah taught us,
from Jesse's root should spring;
the Virgin Mary brought us
the branch of which we sing:
our God of endless might
gave her this child to save us,
thus turning darkness into light.

Congregational Carol:

**'
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.**

**By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.**

**This is he, whom seer and sibyl
Sang in ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealed
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.**

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

2nd Reading – Luke 1: 26 – 38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

Schola Cantorum: Ave Maria – Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus fructus ventris
Ventris tuae, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. Amen.

Translation:

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our death.
Holy Mary, pray for us. Amen.

Congregational Carol:

***For Mary, Mother of our Lord
God's holy name be praised,
who first the Son of God adored,
as on her child she gazed.***

***Brave, holy Virgin, she believe,
though hard the task assigned,
and by the Holy Ghost conceived
the Saviour of mankind.***

***She gave her body as God's shrine,
her heart to piercing pain;
she knew the cost of love divine,
when Jesus Christ was slain.***

***Dear Mary, from your lowliness
and home in Galilee
there comes a joy and holiness
to every family.***

***Hail, Mary, you are full of grace,
above all women blest;
and blest your Son, whom your embrace
in birth and death confessed.***

3rd Reading - Luke 2: 1 – 7
The birth of Jesus

Parish Choir: Suo Gan (Welsh traditional) – arr Mark Wood

Sleep my darling, on my bosom,
Here no harm can come to you.
Mother's arms enfold you safely,
Mother's heart is ever true.
As you sleep there's naught to scare you,
Naught to wake you from your rest.
Close your eyelids, little angel.
Sleep upon your mother's breast.

Sleep my darling, night is falling,
Rest in slumber sound and deep.
I would know why you are smiling,
Smiling sweetly as you sleep!
Do you see the angels smiling
As they see your rosy rest.
Now must you give back and answer,
As you slumber on my breast.

Slumber, slumber,
Naught can harm you,
Nothing bring you harm or fright.
Slumber, darling, smiling sweetly
At the angels robed in white.

Congregational Carol:

1. **Unto us is born a son,
King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal,
Of lords the Lord eternal.**
2. **Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their Owner know,
Becradled in a manger,
Becradled in a manger.**

(Men only)

3. **This did Herod sore affray
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer,
And slew the little childer.**

(Women only)

4. **Of His love and mercy mild,
This the Christmas story:
O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory,
Might lead us up to glory!**

5. **O and A and A and O,
Cum cantemus in choro,
Let the merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino,
*Benedicamus Domino.***

4th Reading - Luke 2: 8 - 16
Shepherds go to the Manger

Choirs: O little town of Bethlehem – Henry Walford Davies
(1869 – 1941)

*Unto you is born this day
in the city of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord..
And this shall be the sign to you;
Ye shall find the Babe,
wrapped in swaddling clothes,
and lying in a manger.*

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.

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 to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Congregational Carol:

**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 swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid."**

**Thus spoke 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 on the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease."**

5th Reading: Matthew 2: 1 – 11
The magi are led by a star to Jesus

Congregational Carol:

**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..***

**See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:
 *O come, let us adore Him..***

**Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations:
 *O come, let us adore Him..***

**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..***

6th Reading: John 1: 1 – 14 **(Please remain standing)**
The mystery of Christ's Incarnation

Schola Cantorum: "Logos" – Philip Stopford (*b. 1977*)

And the Word became flesh,
Alleluia,
And dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth,
Alleluia.

We have beheld his glory,
Glory as of the only Son from the Father.

And the Word became flesh,
Alleluia,
And dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth,
Alleluia.

A Prayerful Thought for Christmas

Congregational Carol:

**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 Godhead see:
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

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

**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.**

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

The Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ-child
be yours this Christmas;
and may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Organ Voluntary:

Variations on 'In Dulci Jubilo' - Denis Bédard (*b. 1950*)

*The Parish Choir and Schola Cantorum are directed by
The Revd Mark Wood (Rector)
Organ played by Dr Nigel Allison (Organist and Director of Music)*

Christmas Services

Wednesday 24th December

4pm – Crib Service

11pm – Midnight Mass

*Atmospheric First Eucharist of Christmas,
timed so that we receive Communion
just as Christmas day begins.*

Thursday 25th December

10.45am – Sung Eucharist

*For all the family.
Bring a present to show us!*



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and the community we serve.**

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or from the Church of England, and so depend on
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