



The Parish Church of St Thomas of Canterbury
Brentwood



THE FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday 21st December 2025

6.00pm

This service follows a traditional pattern, first created for use in Truro Cathedral in 1880. It was adopted by King's College, Cambridge and has been popularised by their annual radio broadcasts since 1928. The service is now enjoyed in many cathedrals and churches.

Through readings from scripture, the congregational hymns and choir carols, we follow the story of God's love and hear again the Good News of a holy birth.

May this time of worship bring each of us closer to that joy and peace of which the angels sing.

Music before the service is played by Alex Evans (Organist) and
Oliver Parker (Senior Organ Scholar)

ORDER OF SERVICE

Please stand as the bell is rung and the procession enters

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.

(Choir only)

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. (All)

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.

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;
Where like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

CF Alexander Tune: Irby harmonised AH Mann arranged David Willcocks

THE BIDDING PRAYER

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.

Please sit

Choir People look East - *Paul Trepte*

First Lesson - Genesis 3

A Chorister

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the
seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

Choir Adam lay ybounden - *Philip Ledger*

Second Lesson - Genesis 22

A Gentleman of the Choir

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his
seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed

Please stand

All O come, O come, Emmanuel!
 Redeem thy captive Israel,
 That into exile drear is gone
 Far from the face of God's dear Son.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Branch of Jesse! Draw
The quarry from the lion's claw;
From the dread caverns of the grave,
From nether hell, thy people save.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright!
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

O come, thou Lord of David's Key!
The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heav'nward road,
And bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

O come, O come, Adonai,
Who in thy glorious majesty
From that high mountain clothed with awe
Gavest thy folk the elder law.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

18th Century words tr. T. A. Lacey Tune: 15th century French Franciscan arr. David Willcocks

Please sit

Third Lesson - Isaiah 9

Lesley Garwood

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah

Choir The Holly and the Ivy - *Matthew Owens*

Fourth Lesson - Micah 5

Glyn Allen

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem

Please stand



All

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.

All **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 wondering love.**

Choir 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.

All **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.**

Phillips Brooks Tune: Forest Green - verse 3 arr. Philip Ledger Descant: Thomas Armstrong

Please sit

Fifth Lesson - St Luke 1 Michelle Jackson
The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

Choir I Sing of a Maiden - *Brian Lynn* (First performance)

Sixth Lesson - St Luke 2. Peter Furness
St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

Choir O holy night - *Adolphe Adam arr. Kevin Norbury*

Seventh Lesson - St Luke 2

Sarah Howard

The shepherds go to the manger

Please stand

All

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 on the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease."

Nahum Tate

Tune: Winchester Old

Descant: Alan Gray

Please sit

Eighth Lesson - St Matthew 2

Lesley Lynn

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

Choir Candlelight Carol - *John Rutter*

Please stand

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And with thy Spirit.**

Priest Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Ninth Lesson - St John 1

Fr Mark

St John unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation

Priest This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

All 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

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

Latin tr Frederick Oakley and others Tune: Adeste Fideles arranged David Willcocks

Priest Let us pray

Please remain standing

THE COLLECT

THE BLESSING

All

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.
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.

Charles Wesley & others Tune: Mendelssohn Descant: David Willcocks

Organ: In dulci jubilo BWV 729 - J S Bach
Played by Isabella Patrick - Junior Organ Scholar



Everyone is invited to join the choir for seasonal refreshments in the church