

The Benefice of Flitton, Pulloxhill and Silsoe  
*Growing as beacons of Christ's light in our communities*



A Virtual Carol Service for 2021 with Rev Anna Garvie  
and members of the congregations from Flitton, Pulloxhill & Silsoe.

*Inspired by the Stations of the Cross, this service encourages you to reflect on the events that led up to the wonderful birth of our Saviour and to listen and join in with the carols.*

### Opening Carol:

**Long ago prophets knew** - sung by St Martin's Voices

**1** Long ago, prophets knew  
Christ would come, born a Jew,  
come to make all things new;  
bear his People's burden,  
freely love and pardon.

**Chorus:** Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
when he comes,  
who will make him welcome?

**2** God in time, God in man,  
this is God's timeless plan:  
he will come, as a man,  
born himself of woman,  
God divinely human.  
*Chorus*

**3** Mary hail! Though afraid,  
she believed, she obeyed.  
In her womb, God is laid:  
till the time expected,  
nurtured and protected,  
*Chorus*

**4** Journey ends! Where afar  
Beth'lem shines, like a star,  
stable door stands ajar.  
unborn Son of Mary,  
Saviour, do not tarry!

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!*  
*Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!*  
*Jesus comes!*  
*Jesus comes!*  
*We will make him welcome!*

*Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) © 1971 Stainer & Bell Ltd (CCLI 4944078)*

**Welcome** – Rev Anna Garvie

## Prologue - John 1: 1 – 5

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 came into being through him,  
and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.

## Station 1 - Annunciation – Liz Coulson

*"Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:  
'Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty,  
beautiful inside and out! God be with you.'"*

*Luke 1:*

### Meditation:

Just as Mary, with great humility, says  
"Here I am, the servant of the Lord;  
let it be with me according to your word",  
so do we, like Mary, accept the work of the Holy Spirit  
who grows Jesus in us from a tiny bundle of cells  
to a fully-grown man,  
so that "it is no longer I who live,  
but it is Christ who lives in me."

### Carol:

#### **The Angel Gabriel from heaven came** - *sung by St Martin's Voices*

**1** The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady.'  
Gloria!

**3** Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,  
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy  
name':  
most highly favoured lady.  
Gloria!

**2** 'For known a blessed mother thou shalt  
be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,  
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;  
most highly favoured lady.'  
Gloria!

**4** Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will  
ever say,  
'Most highly favoured lady.'  
Gloria!

*Birjina gastettobat zegoen*

*Basque Carol, Charles Bordes (Collector) (1863-1909), Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)*

## Station 2 - Pilgrimage – Simon Stranks

*And Joseph also went up from Galilee,  
out of the city of Nazareth,  
into Judaea, unto the city of David,  
which is called Bethlehem;  
(because he was of the house  
and lineage of David:)  
to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife,  
being great with child."*

Luke 2:4–5

### Meditation:

God is on the move;  
hidden in the womb of a teenage peasant  
on an arduous four day journey  
from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Might this be how God moves through the world  
– seemingly hidden yet amongst us;  
God in the unlikely?

### Carol:

**O little town of Bethlehem** - sung by St Martin's Voices

**1** 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.

**3** 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.

**2** 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.

**4** 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.

*Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) (CCLI 7004604)*

## Station 3 - Nativity – Jo Holt

*"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."*

Luke 2:7

## Meditation:

What were Mary's thoughts as she wrapped her precious new born son in bands of cloth?

Did she marvel at the tiny hands that would one day stretch out to save us?

Did she catch her breath as she looked into the loving eyes of her saviour for the first time?

Did she find it hard to lay him in that manger, wanting to hold on to him but knowing that some day she would need to let him go?

Did she stay silent or did she find that she couldn't help but sing praises?

What are your thoughts as you look into your saviour's eyes this Christmas?

Come let us adore him!

## Carol:

**Away in a manger** - sung by Westbury-on-Trym Parish Church Choir

**1** 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.

**2** 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.

**3** 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.

*Sometimes attributed to John Thomas Macfarland (1851-1913), Gabriel's Vineyard Songs (1892 Louisville), Little Children's Book: For Schools and Families (1885 Philadelphia) (CCLI 4521996)*

## Station 4 - The Angels – Maggie Jeeves

*"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!'"*

*Luke 2:13-15*

### Meditation:

The heavenly host, those who are in on the secret of God becoming a man, are the first to shout forth praise to the newborn Lord and preach the good news of his Incarnation.

We in our current time, we who have been let in on the secret, take on this angelic messenger role today; celebrating, worshipping, and proclaiming the good news to all.

### Carol:

**Hark! the herald angels sing** - sung by *St Martin's Voices*

**1** 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!

**2** Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of the 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!

**3** Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Son 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 (1707-1788) (CCLI 5386491)*

### Station 5 - The Shepherds – Nick Thompson

*"Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."*

*Luke 2:15*

### Meditation:

The shepherds, a group on the edge of first-century Jewish society, were chosen to be the first to hear the universe-transforming news of Jesus' birth.

If Jesus were born today, would God choose to tell first refugees, prisoners or homeless people?

Help us, Lord Jesus, to remember those on the margins of our society and to put them first, as you did – the preacher who told us that "the last shall be first".

## Carol:

**O come all ye faithful** - sung by St Martin's Voices

**1** 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.

**2** God of God,  
Light of Light;  
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;  
very God,  
begotten not created;

*Refrain:*  
*O come, let us adore him,*  
*O come, let us adore him,*  
*O come, let us adore him,*  
*Christ the Lord.*

**3** Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest:

*Translated from the Latin (18th century) by Frederick Oakely (1802-1880) (CCLI 5386491)*

## Station 6 - The Magi – Niamh Shattock

*"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."*

*Matthew 2:11*

### Meditation:

The magi left behind their comforts to seek out the One who gave up everything.

The only right response for the magi was to offer their gifts and worship.

So we too are invited to seek afresh, to offer our lives anew  
and to worship wholeheartedly.

## Carol:

**We three kings of Orient are** - sung by St Martin's Voices

**1** We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star:

*Melchior:* **2** Born a king on Bethlehem plain,  
gold I bring, to crown him again,  
King for ever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign:

*Balthazar:* **4** Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom,  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.*

*Caspar:* **3** Frankincense to offer have I;  
incense owns a deity nigh:  
prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship him, God most high:

**5** Glorious now, behold him arise,  
King and God, and sacrifice!  
heaven sings alleluia,  
alleluia the earth replies.

*John Henry Hopkins (1820-1891)*

## Station 7 - The Flight to Egypt – Roy Pinnock

"Then Joseph got up,  
took the child  
and his mother by night,  
and went to Egypt"

Matthew 2:14

### Meditation:

This child, the world's most precious gift, the Prince of Peace,  
is carried into exile amid the threat of ruthless violence, fear and death.

Yet this same child will return, a new Exodus, bearing hope for the world.  
He will not take flight in the face of cruelty and death  
and by his resurrection he will triumph over the powers of darkness.

### Prayers – Margaret Butt

From 'The Second Intercessions Handbook', by John Pritchard

*The response to the words 'In this season of light' is **be light for the world** '*

In this season of gifts, we celebrate your coming as the only gift we really need.  
As we enjoy the surprises and the imagination of those who give us presents,  
may the child in the straw be the gift that really overwhelms us.  
And may our giving to others flow from hearts motivated by gratitude for your glorious  
gift.

*In this season of light, **be light for the world***

In this season of family gatherings, we celebrate your coming to be part of a human  
family. As we experience the delights and the frustrations of family life this Christmas,  
especially the fact that we may not be able to meet with all our family because of Covid,  
may the child in the straw be the still life who holds us together.  
And may our care for each other reflect your profound care for us all.

*In this season of light, **be light for the world***

In this season of memories, we celebrate our corporate memory of your arrival in  
darkness, a sharp cry in the night air, animals shuffling nearby, rough shepherds from the  
hills, a star, strange Visitors from the east.  
And our own individual memories take us back to distant times of greater innocence and  
less cluttered lives, of other relationships and different places.  
May the child in the straw be the continuity we need, the thread of gold that holds past  
and present in a single story.

*In this season of light, **be light for the world.***

In this season of peace, we celebrate the peacemakers who listen to the angels' song and  
seek to bring peace to your people on earth. And yet we stand on the vulnerable edge of  
violence in many parts of the world;  
May the child in the straw be a reminder of another way and a greater light, one that  
unites every race under heaven.

*In this season of light, **be light for the world.***

In this season of hope, we celebrate your coming like the dawn after a long night.  
As we struggle with our personal darkness, the issues and conflicts,  
the temptations and confusions,  
so may the child in the straw draw us into a larger and safer space, where complexity  
dissolves into simplicity, and your light shines for ever.

*In this season of light, **be light for the world.***

Lord of light,  
you have come to draw us out of darkness into your glorious light.  
We come to you afresh this Christmas, longing for a new start and another chance.  
Take our Christmas celebrations and fill them with golden, glowing hope to sustain us  
through this coming year.  
We ask this in the new-born name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### **A prayer concerning Coronavirus**

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
in their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Station 8 - To Nazareth** – Liz Shortland

*"And the child grew,  
and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom:  
and the grace of God was upon him."*

*Luke 2:40*

#### **Meditation:**

Joseph, relieved by Herod's death, reassured by the angelic dream, takes his  
family home again, a new Exodus from Egypt.

But the chill finger of fear finds him afresh:  
the name of Archelaus is enough in itself to send him north to Nazareth.

But even fear serves the purposes of God.  
Jesus, raised in Nazareth, becomes the prophesied Nazarene:  
one step further on the road to all the promises of God being fulfilled in him.



## Carol:

**Once in royal David's city** - sung by St Martin's Voices, with soloist Victoria Meteyard

**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.

**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.

**4** 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.

*Cecil Frances Alexander (née Humphreys) (1818-1895) (CCLI 4756015)*

## Closing Prayers & Blessing – Rev Anna Garvie

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

The Lord bless you, the Lord keep you,  
the Lord make His face to shine upon you,  
and grant you His peace.  
And the blessing of God the Father,  
God the Son and God the Holy Spirit  
be with each one of you  
and those you love  
today and forever.  
**Amen**

Let us proclaim  
that we have seen the glory of God  
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness  
Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator  
The joy of the Spirit  
And the peace of the Christ-child  
Be with you this Christmas, and for evermore  
**Amen.**

### **Closing Music**

**Joy to the World** – played by Ben Giddens

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*

***MERRY CHRISTMAS and a  
HEALTHY, HAPPY & PEACEFUL NEW YEAR***

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*The video was conceived and created by Gillian Chapple*