

The **Methodist Church**



**Barton on Sea**

CLIFFE ROAD, BARTON ON SEA, NEW MILTON, HAMPSHIRE, BH25 7PA

**WORSHIP4YOU**



**A Service of Lessons and Carols for 2020**

**Welcome** - An introit for Advent in words and song here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnCkAOdJEV4>

### **Opening Prayer**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He who comes  
comes to us now  
in the silence  
in the darkness  
in the confusion  
in the loneliness  
as Word and as Light  
as Truth and as Love  
Emmanuel  
God-with-us  
Now

**Carol:** Once in royal David's city (StF 214)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw6IjbOUaJ4>

- 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 needy, poor and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.
  
- 3 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.
  
- 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;  
there his children gather round  
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

*Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)*

## The fall

From the very beginning  
nothing was ruled out  
and nothing ruled in  
except choice,  
but every choice  
rules out another.

And so we are excluded  
from the garden.  
Pain is included.  
Sacrifice  
remains a choice  
without limitation.



## **First Lesson:** Genesis 3:1-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”



**Carol:** People, look east. The time is near  
Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8GNIRcBdvs>

People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
One more seed is planted there:  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
That in course the flower may flourish.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build,  
Guard the nest that must be filled.  
Even the hour when wings are frozen  
God for fledging time has chosen.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim  
One more light the bowl shall brim,  
Shining beyond the frosty weather,  
Bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
Christ who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming  
With the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

*Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)*



**Choral item:** This is the truth sent from above

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkJkiDcJ8lw>

This is the truth sent from above,  
The truth of God, the God of love;  
Therefore don't turn me from your door,  
But hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate  
Is that God did man create;  
The next thing which to you I'll tell  
Woman was made with man to dwell.

And we were heirs to endless woes,  
Till God the Lord did interpose;  
And so a promise soon did run  
That he would redeem us by his Son.

And at that season of the year  
Our blest Redeemer did appear;  
He here did live, and here did preach,  
And may thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,  
To show us how we must be saved;  
And if you want to know the way,  
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

*English traditional carol*

## **The promise**

The damage spreads quickly.  
As the sun of his presence  
slips away, dark fingers  
spread their dismal grasp  
into every corner of our lives.

Still we call to one another  
like children, lost upon a midnight moor,  
piping up at any distant glimmer  
that might be lights, or torches,  
expecting at last  
the footsteps of our father,  
come to find and bring us home.





## **Second Lesson:** Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.



**Carol:** Lo! He comes with clouds descending (StF 177)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-5ACjv23-Q>

- 1 Lo, he comes with clouds descending,  
once for favoured sinners slain;  
thousand thousand saints attending  
swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluia!  
God appears on earth to reign.

- 2 Every eye shall now behold him  
robed in glorious majesty;  
we who set at nought and sold him,  
pierced and nailed him to the tree,  
deeply wailing,  
shall the true Messiah see.
  
- 3 Those dear tokens of his passion  
still his dazzling body bears;  
cause of endless exultation  
to his ransomed worshippers:  
with what rapture  
gaze we on those glorious scars.
  
- 4 Sing, amen, let all adore thee,  
high on thine eternal throne;  
Saviour, take the power and glory,  
claim the kingdom for thine own:  
come, Lord Jesus!  
Everlasting God, come down!

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

### **Prayer:**

Father, through all the ages you have called your people from darkness into light, making their gladness greater and their joy increase. As we celebrate a child born for us, a son given to us, make the light of Christ bright in our own hearts that we may once more bring peace and reconciliation to our families, our communities, and to our world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Choral item:** Come thou Redeemer of the earth

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLAzsIdjgAU>

Come thou Redeemer of the earth,  
Come, testify thy wondrous birth:  
All lands admire, all times applaud:  
Such is the birth that fits our God.

Forth from His chamber goeth He,  
That royal home of purity,  
A giant in twofold substance one,  
Rejoicing now His course to run.

From God the Father He proceeds,  
To God the Father back He speeds;  
Runs out his course to death and hell  
Returning on God's high throne to dwell.

O equal to the Father, Thou!  
Gird on Thy fleshly mantle now;  
The weakness of our mortal state  
With deathless might invigorate.

Thy cradle here shall glitter bright,  
And darkness breathe a newer light,  
Where endless faith shall shine serene,  
And twilight never intervene.

All laud eternal Son, to Thee;  
Whose advent sets thy people free  
Whom with the Father we adore,  
And Holy Ghost, for evermore.

*Latin hymn translated by John Mason Neale (1811 – 1866)*



### **Third Lesson:** Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord – and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put  
its hand into the viper's nest.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the  
earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover  
the sea.



**Carol:** Long ago prophets knew (StF 178)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeLA1LhqFA4>

- 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:

*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:  
*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!....*

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

4 Journey ends! Where afar  
Bethlem 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!*



## **The annunciation**

Angels move  
like electricity  
and do not wear watches.  
They are in the communications business.  
They attend training courses  
in calming startled humans.  
They visit often  
but are usually well disguised.  
They have their work to do.  
But now and then  
they let the mask slip  
to show their true identities.  
They do this when it matters  
that there should be no misunderstanding.  
Some have seen angels.  
Be humble and expect them  
and they will come  
in their own good time  
or rather in God's time.



#### **Fourth Lesson:** Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is



going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.



**Carol:** The Angel Gabriel from heaven came (StF 187)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5oA29INBH8>

- 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!

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!

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!

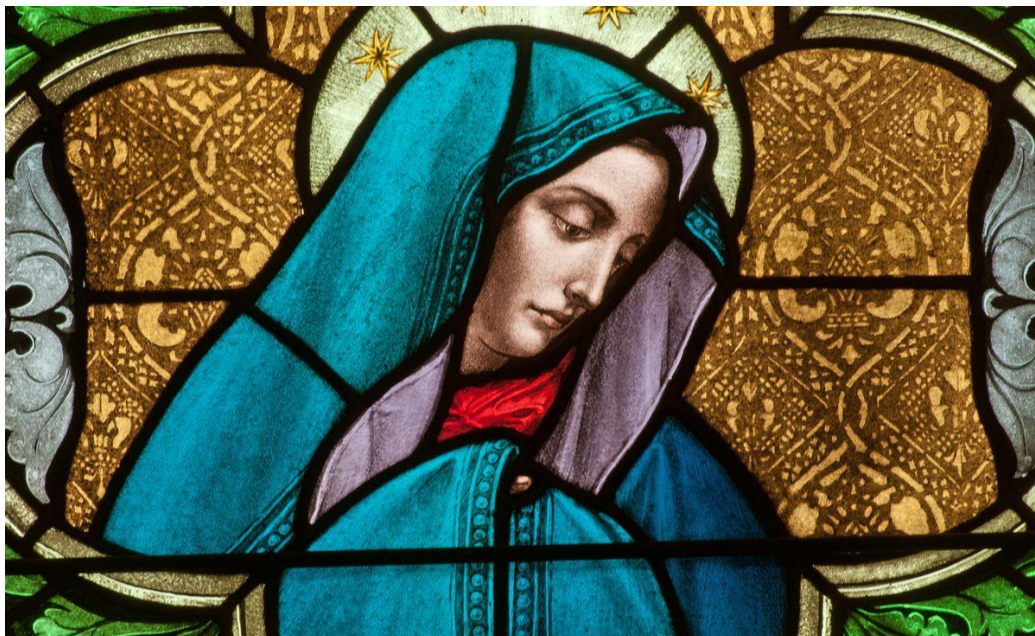
4 Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,  
'Most highly favoured lady.'

Gloria!

*Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)*

**Choral item:** Ave Maria (Schubert)

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H5rusicEnc>



## The nativity

Was it necessary  
to go to this extreme?  
To take for a carrier  
a village girl  
unmarried and disgraced,  
nine months pregnant  
on an exhausting journey  
to a strange town  
with nowhere to stay,  
in a century  
with no healthcare  
or sanitation?

What purpose was achieved,  
except to show  
how the weight of his love  
is so exhausting  
it will break the back  
of our most stubborn pretensions  
and how in a manger  
would be the last straw to do it?



## **Fifth Lesson:** Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.



**Carol:** All my heart this night rejoices  
Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvh2FN0jG00>

1 All my heart this night rejoices  
as I hear far and near  
sweetest angel voices.  
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing  
'til the air ev'rywhere  
now with joy is ringing.

2 Forth today the Conqu'ror goeth,  
who the foe, sin and woe,  
death and hell, o'erthroweth.  
God is man, man to deliver;  
his dear Son now is one  
with our blood forever.

3 Shall we still dread God's displeasure,  
who, to save, freely gave  
his most cherished Treasure?  
To redeem us, he hath given  
his own Son from the throne  
of his might in heaven.

4 He becomes the Lamb that taketh  
sin away and for aye  
full atonement maketh.  
For our life his own he tenders;  
and our race, by his grace,  
fit for glory renders.

5 Hark! a voice from yonder manger,  
soft and sweet, doth entreat,  
"Flee from woe and danger.  
Brethren, from all ills that grieve you,  
you are freed; all you need  
I will surely give you."

6 Come, then, banish all your sadness,  
one and all, great and small;  
come with songs of gladness.  
Love him who with love is glowing;  
hail the star, near and far  
light and joy bestowing.

7 Dearest Lord, thee will I cherish.  
Though my breath fail in death,  
yet I shall not perish,  
but with thee abide forever  
there on high, in that joy  
which can vanish never.

*Translator: Catherine Winkworth; Author: Paul Gerhardt (1656)*



**Choral item:** O, Holy Night

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4fvMgNfNOI>

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;  
Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!  
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.  
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;  
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:  
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from Orient land,  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our friend;  
He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!  
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!  
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in his name all oppression shall cease,  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise his Holy name!  
Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!  
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!

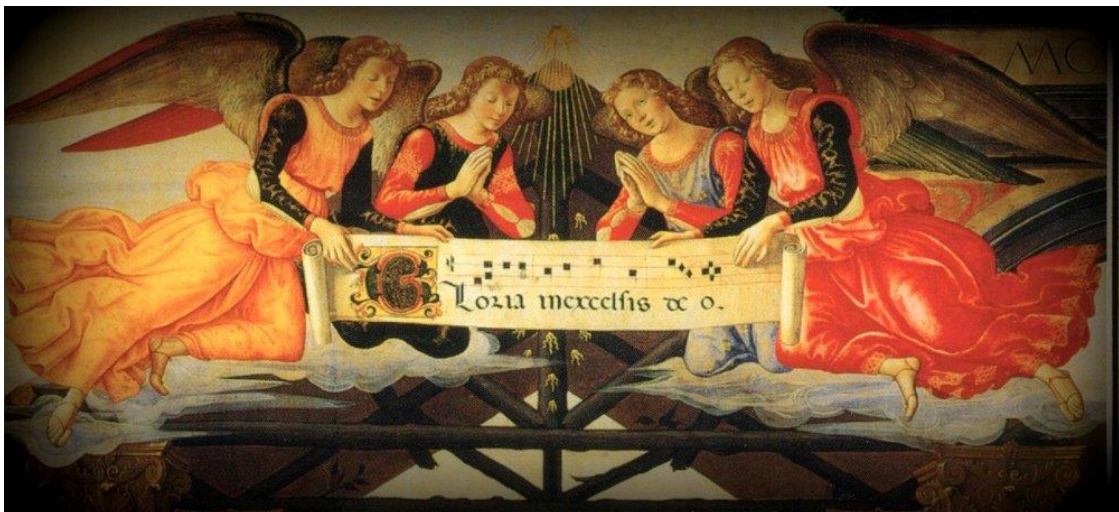


**Choral item:** Angels' Carol (Rutter)

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAln0aqYMRk>

The lyrics of this carol are subject to copyright, however if you would like to read them the full text can be found if you click here:

<https://lyrics.az/john-rutter/the-john-rutter-songbook/angels-carol.html>





## **The shepherds**

It was done plainly enough.  
The night sky was a perfect billboard,  
the sound effects spectacular.

Only a few were awake  
and in the right place  
at the right time when heaven,  
unable to contain its amazement any longer,  
spilled out momentarily into earth  
and explained itself.

The message was clear as day  
but his timing was, as always, surprising,  
and the show ran  
for one performance only.



## **Sixth Lesson:** Luke 2:8-20

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



**Carol:** While shepherds watched (StF 221)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvegJ3wRLFE>

- 1 While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.
- 2 'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind),  
'glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and humankind.
- 3 '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:
- 4 'The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,  
and in a manger laid.'
- 5 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, and thus  
addressed their joyful song:
- 6 'All glory be to God on high,  
and to the world be peace;  
goodwill henceforth from heaven to earth  
begin and never cease.'

*Nahum Tate (1652-1715)*



**Choral item:** Shepherd's pipe carol (Rutter)

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmeoDpqkG-k>

The lyrics of this carol are subject to copyright, however if you would like to read them the full text can be found if you click here:

<https://lyrics.az/john-rutter/the-john-rutter-christmas-album/shepherds-pipe-carol.html>



## The magi

Will you study these signs  
as carefully  
as you study the prices  
in the Christmas catalogues?

Will you seek out the manger  
as diligently  
as you search for the right scarf  
or this year's toy?

Will you examine  
your heart's pilgrimage  
and be sure towards what stable  
it carries its precious gifts?

Will you be a wise fool  
to find and follow  
the strange star of truth  
in a sky full of glittering lies?



## **Seventh Lesson: Matthew 2:1-12**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



**Carol:** As with gladness men of old (StF 224)  
Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sp52sx2\\_GYs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sp52sx2_GYs)

- 1 As with gladness men of old  
did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright,  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led to thee.
  
- 2 As with joyful steps they sped,  
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
thee, whom heaven and earth adore,  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

- 3 As they offered gifts most rare  
at thy cradle rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.
- 4 Holy Jesus, every day  
keep us in the narrow way;  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds thy glory hide.
- 5 In the heavenly country bright  
need they no created light;  
thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
thou its sun which goes not down;  
there for ever may we sing  
alleluias to our King.

*William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)*





## **Choral item:** The Three Kings

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1R62jbv8MU>

Three Kings from Persian lands afar  
To Jordan follow the pointing star:  
And this the quest of the travellers three,  
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.  
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;  
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;  
The kings to Bethlehem make their way,  
And there in worship they bend the knee,  
As Mary's child in her lap they see;  
Their royal gifts they show to the King;  
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem  
The Kings are travelling, travel with them!  
The star of mercy, the star of grace,  
Shall lead thy heart to its resting place.  
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;  
Offer thy heart to the infant King.

*Peter Cornelius (1824 – 1874), translated by H N Bate*

## **The flight into Egypt**

A fairytale would end here  
but this is not a fairytale.

The hunt begins  
for this intruder  
who has disturbed the balance  
of heaven and earth.

Herod is only the first  
to make him a refugee,  
the infant boys of Bethlehem  
only the first blood spilled  
in the bloody pilgrimage  
of heaven's exile  
living rough and dying rough  
from the borrowed stable  
to the borrowed tomb.

### **Eighth Lesson:** Matthew 2:13-18

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the

time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."



**Carol:** Joy to the world, the Lord is come! (StF 330)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpgaWm2pnNs>

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

- 2 Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*



**Choral item:** Lully lullay

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7qYeZcOioI>

Lully, lulla, Thou little tiny Child,  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

O sisters too, how may we do,  
For to preserve this day  
This poor youngling for whom we sing  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

Lully, lulla, Thou little tiny Child,  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

Herod, the king, in his raging,  
Charged he hath this day  
His men of might, in his own sight,  
All young children to slay

Lully, lulla, Thou little tiny Child,  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

That woe is me, poor Child for Thee!  
And ever morn and day,  
For thy parting neither say nor sing,  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

Lully, lulla, Thou little tiny Child,  
Bye, bye, lully, lullay

## **The word**

Sometimes  
words are not enough  
for everything we have to say.

Words can't beat like a heart.  
A verb won't sweat or bleed.  
A noun doesn't get thirsty.  
An adjective cannot feel pain.  
Something gets lost  
in translation into words.

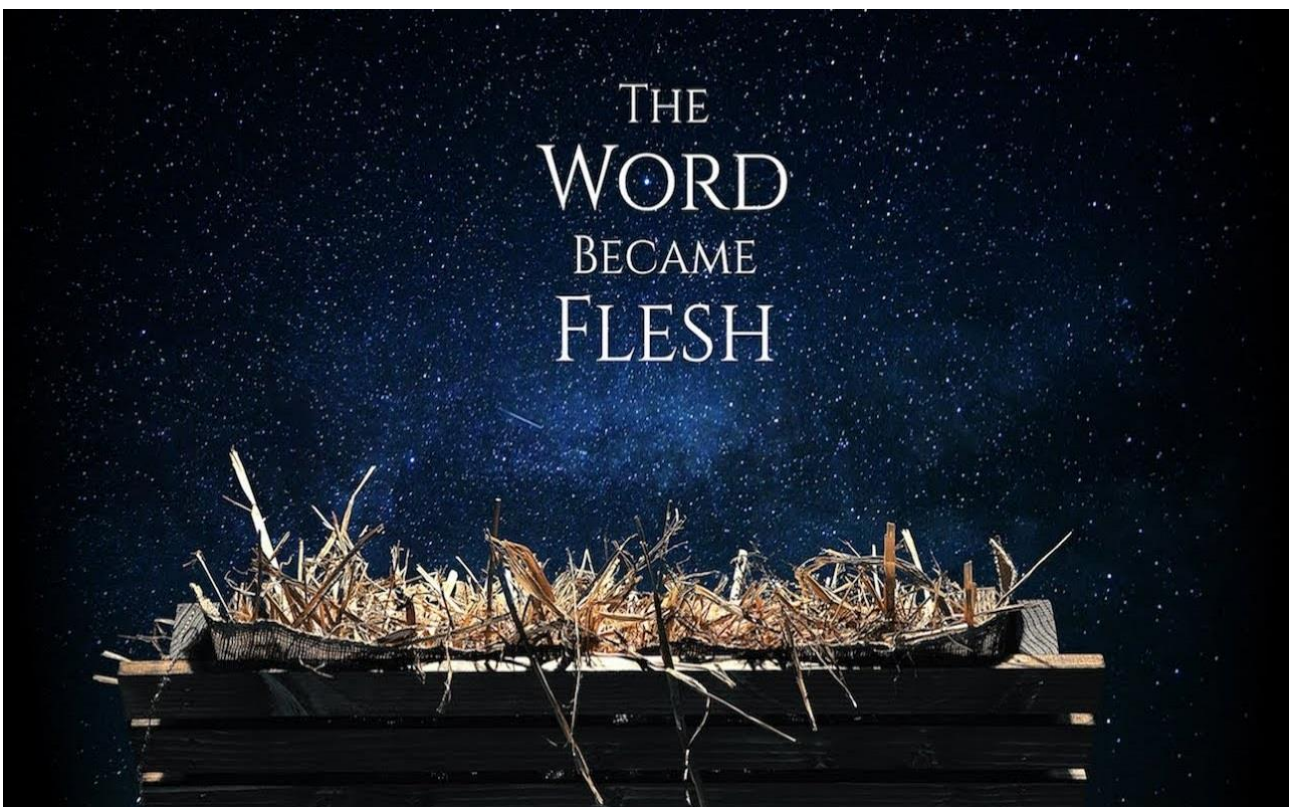
So when God  
needed to express  
a love deeper than words  
he used body language  
of a kind not known on earth before.

## **Ninth Lesson:** John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.



**Prayer:** Father,  
from all eternity  
your Word is with you  
and is you,  
and all that is  
came into being through your Word.  
Yet, in the fullness of time,  
this same word became flesh,  
one like us,  
and lived among us,  
the glory of a father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth.  
May we, once again this Christmas,  
come silently in wonder and awe  
as your life and light,  
is given to us:  
Jesus the Lord.  
  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**Carol:** O come, all ye faithful (StF 212)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8dgI4-bVPU>

- 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:  
*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

- 2 True God of true God,  
Light of Light eternal,  
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Son of the Father,  
begotten, not created:  
*O come, let us adore him.....*
  
- 3 See how the shepherds,  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come, let us adore him.....*
  
- 4 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.....*
  
- 5 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, 18th century, possibly by John Francis Wade (c. 1711-1786) and others*

**Choral item:** All bells in paradise

Click here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svR7lxMja\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svR7lxMja_0)

The lyrics of this carol are subject to copyright, however if you would like to read them the full text can be found if you click here:

[https://www.elyricsworld.com/bells\\_of\\_paradise\\_lyrics\\_john\\_rutter.html](https://www.elyricsworld.com/bells_of_paradise_lyrics_john_rutter.html)



## **Martin's Message**

It all began with us wanting to become like God (Genesis 3:5-6) and the solution was for God to become like us (Philippians 2:5-8).

Who would have thought it? We know that this is the main problem with the human race: everyone wants to be God. 'I will decide what is right and wrong'; 'More, much more than this, I did it my way'. And so we really do make God in our own image - just like that reflection in the mirror.

And that is why it was impossible for any religion to solve the problem. Everyone is religious. I'm always amused when people tell me that they are not - we all are, unless we know Jesus. It's the default position of the human race. We are designed to worship. Some of us worship our selves, others worship their success, wealth, position, family etc. And so we cannot find a way out. The disease of sin has infected the whole human race.

This has been the year of the pandemic. It has the name Covid-19 because it was discovered in 2019, but it seriously affected 2020. And the hunt has been on for a vaccination. We know how vaccines work - we get injected with a mild dose of the disease and eventually we become immune to it.

God knows that too, so when sin infected the entire human race (Romans 3:23) He gave us a vaccine. He injected Jesus into the human race and the early results were good. Sin was dealt a deathly blow. Righteousness and holiness rapidly spread throughout the human race.

But then a new strain developed - Christendom - brought in by the Roman Emperor Constantine. The vaccine stopped working so well

as Jesus was sidelined and Official Christianity with its creeds, sacraments and liturgy took his place.

Every now and then a new dose of the vaccine has been effective, but at the moment the disease has taken serious hold of the human race once again. Christendom has died off, but many churches are clinging to it, not realising that it was never the solution.

As we sing along (at home) to the Christmas Carols; as we listen once again to the accounts of what happened when Jesus was first injected into humanity, let us immerse ourselves in Him and apply that vaccine to our own lives and discover the life that Jesus came to bring (John 10:10).

Happy Christmas!

Martin



**Carol:** Hark! The herald angels sing (StF 202)

Sing/read the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICt1s44cfMM>

- 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.'

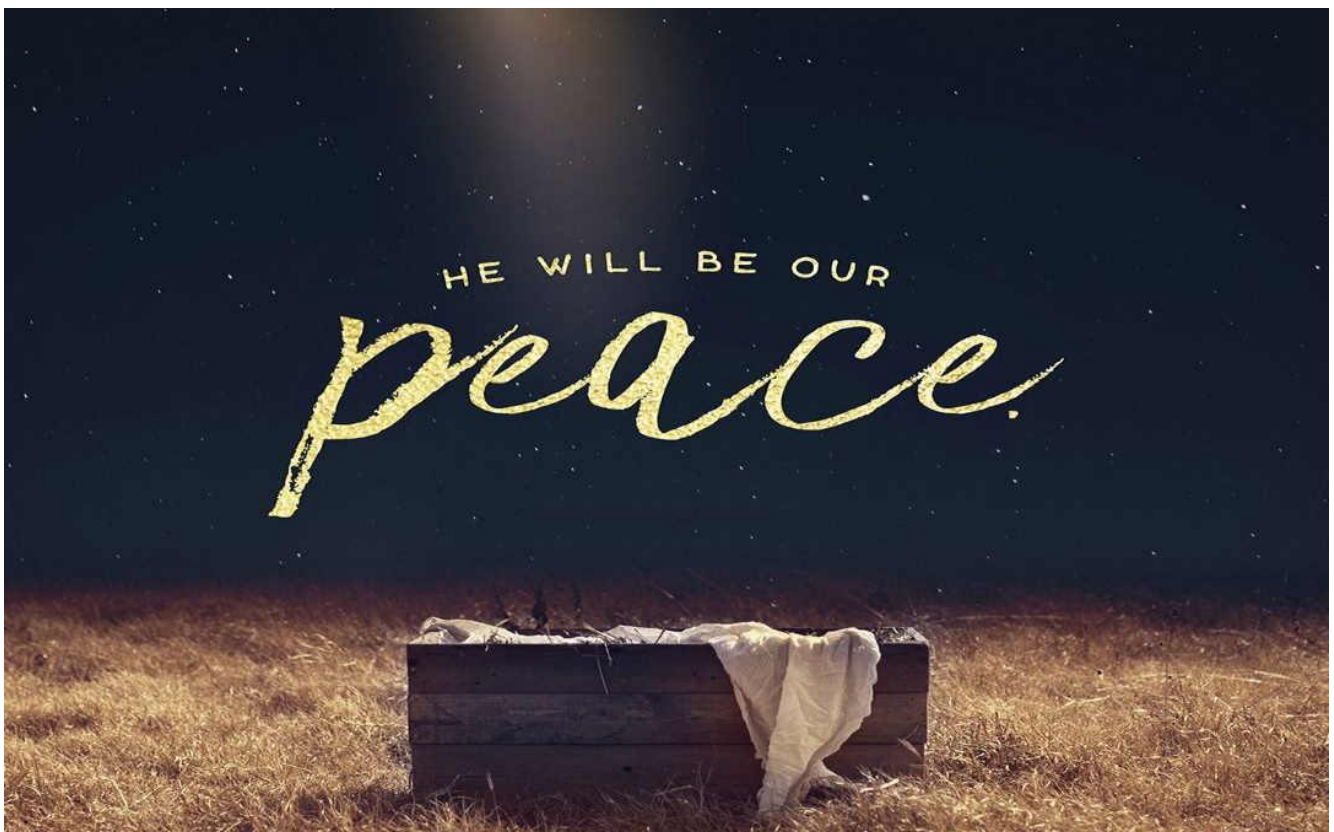
*Hark! The herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.*

- 2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail, the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel:

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

3 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 (1707-1788)*



**Blessing:** When the Word became flesh, earth was joined to heaven. May He give you His peace and good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host.

**Amen.**

**Choral item:** A star is shining tonight

Click here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQAA7EK\\_qVA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQAA7EK_qVA)

The lyrics of this carol are subject to copyright, however if you would like to read them the full text can be found if you click here:

<https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Oslo-Gospel-Choir/A-Star-Is-Shining-Tonight>



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