

18.12.22 Carol Service

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Date: 18 December 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening. A very warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see all of you here. Perhaps some here for the first time.

And if you're here for the first time, you're very welcome. And you're very welcome as well. And if you're able to stay behind, there's tea, coffee, punch, mince pies at the end of the service.

So please stay behind. It would be good to get the chance to enjoy some fellowship together. She's giving me smiles. She's the only one who is just now. So what we're going to do in the course of the service tonight, we're going to worship God.

And we're going to hear the Christmas story. So we've got various carols. We have 11 carols and we have nine readings. And it's just going to flow.

So various people from the congregation are going to read. And we're going to begin with A Way in a Manger, the very familiar carol that we sing with the wee ones.

[1 : 04] But before we sing and before we read, let's pray and let's ask for God's help as we come together in the name of Jesus. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this evening and we thank you for the blessing that we have of being able to come together in this way.

We thank you for each other and for the encouragement that we get as we take time on with each other in this place. And we thank you for the promise that we have that where two or three meet together in the name of Jesus, you will be here with us.

So we thank you that we have the assurance that you are with us, God, in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we pray that as we sing these carols that are so familiar to us, that we would sing from our hearts, that we would sing worship to you, the God who is worthy of all our praise.

And we pray that as we read your word, that we would sing our hearts, that we would sing our hearts, that we would sing our hearts, that we would sing our hearts, that we would sing our hearts. And we would sing our hearts open to the wonder of the Christmas story, the promise that came over hundreds and thousands of years, that a Savior was coming, one who would bring peace and joy and life everlasting to all who believe.

So help us, we pray, if we are believers, to worship you from our hearts and to give thanks for all that we share in as we take hold of Jesus. And for any tonight who may not yet have trusted Christ, we pray that you would be working in their hearts also, that each one of us would see our need of Jesus and each one of us would believe and come to the Jesus who promises to receive all who come to him.

[2 : 49] So be amongst us, we pray, be lifted up, Lord Jesus, in all that we do and draw us to yourself. Bless us, we pray, take away our sin and we ask these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Also, we're going to sit for some of the carols and we're going to stand for a few of them. So I'll tell you in advance and I'll stand, so if you keep half an eye on me and Farrakhan at the front there. Come in, come in, there's plenty of space. You're very welcome, John. And so we're going to stand for Hark the Herald Angels Sing and we're going to stand for O Come All Ye Faithful and we're going to stand for the First Noel.

Well, but I'll stand at the front when it's time and we can all stand. But for the first carol, we'll remain seated. So I'll wait in a manger and then after that carol has been sung, Cameron Morrison's going to come and read the first part of the Christmas story and we'll go from there.

Let's pray.

[4 : 25] Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Unlove me, I pray Bless all the dear children In your tender care Unfitness forever To live with you there Genesis chapter 3 verses 8 to 15 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 from which I commanded you not to eat? The man said The woman you put here with me She gave me some of the fruit from the tree And I ate it And the Lord God said to the woman What is this you have done? The woman said The snake deceived me and I ate So the Lord God said to the snake 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 Amen pray to the misberger And the many offspring And you will strike your father And you will strike your descent Thank you Hear all the ■■■ And you will strike your thumb And you will strike your thumbs down You will strike your foot And you will strike surfaces

[7 : 40] O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that war's in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, the Lord of might, who to thy choice on side, in ancient times, this is netheral, in love and majesty and all.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Lord of mine, O come, O come, Thou God of Jesse, free! Lie on from Satan's heavenly, From depths of hell my people stay, and in their victory order may.

[9 : 42] Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou days, bring love and cheer, our spirits by thy blood and tear. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows blue to fight.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou King of David, come, and open wide our heaven beyond.

[10 : 55] May save the way of deeds on high, and cross the path to misery.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee. Thank you.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[13 : 31] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. I'm going to read from Isaiah chapter 9. It says, Amen.

[16 : 07] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Stood the holy castle shed Where our mother laid our baby And our manger for his dead Then he was a father-in-law Jesus Christ her little child 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 stone With the good and king and holy With our earth as Savior holy

And through all his wondrous childhood He would honor and obey Love and watch the lonely mother In whose gentle arms he gave Christian children all must be Kind of regent will not seek For he is our child's father Day by day like God's Savior He was little, weak, and helpless Tears and smiles like us he knew And he feels for all our sadness And he shares in all our goodness

And arise and thus shall see him Through his own redeeming love For that child so dear and gentle Is the Lord in death now And he brings his children on To the place where he is born God in land the lowly stable With the oxen standing by We shall see him In the dead heaven Sins at God's right land on high Hear his children gather round Light like stars with glory crown

This reading is from Luke chapter 1 Verses 26 to 35 and verse 38 In the sixth month 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

We had a creche, a lovely creche just through the wall there. And for two or three years, it sat there immaculate and empty. And now it's full. We're thinking about having to relocate the Sunday school into the creche and the creche into the Sunday school.

And when I think back, the only noise I used to hear during sermons in the past was just the gentle purring snore of a few heavy heads.

[32 : 02] But now we have the happy shrieks of these wee ones. And we love to hear them. We love to hear the voices of these wee babies.

And what we've been reading about in the different messages over the last few minutes is the story of a baby. A baby that was promised over hundreds of years and then was born in the little town of Bethlehem.

We heard of this baby that was coming in Genesis and then through the prophet in Isaiah. And then in Luke, we're told that this little boy, this little boy was born in Bethlehem just as was promised.

And on the night that the baby, Jesus, was born, there were shepherds out on the hill. And all of a sudden, heaven broke in.

The darkness was broken by night. The silence was broken by the sound of song as heaven broke in to their experience.

[33 : 11] And the news story came forth to them first. Today, a baby has been born and this baby has been born to you. And that's a kind of strange announcement when you think about it.

Because when a baby is born, he or, well, she as it is in Harris usually over the last while, the baby is born to the parents, not to you.

But this baby is God's gift to you and to me. The shepherds heard that. They're out in the fields.

Heaven breaks in and says, a baby has been born, not to Mary and Joseph, but to you. And this child that was promised, this child that we've been singing about, is God's gift to you and to me.

And just think for a second about his name. As Isaiah told us of his name. His name will be wonderful. If you've got the old King James Version, it's got wonderful comma.

[34 : 23] So let's go with that for tonight. His name will be wonderful. Something of the wonder of heaven is going to be found and heard and seen and experienced in this child.

And when we think about Christmas, there is a sense of wonder about the season. We talk about the Christmas spirit or the magic of Christmas. And I know there's a lot of nostalgia packed into that. Sentimentalism. But at its core, that's true. Because in the Christmas story, we have the wonder of this child that was born.

And he will be counselor. The one who's able to guide us through this life. And the one who's able to guide us even through death into life that's eternal. He will be counselor.

And he will be mighty God. Isaiah tells us, as he predicts the coming of this baby, that the power of God would be present in the person of Jesus.

[35 : 32] And the power of God would be given to all those who belong to Jesus. Which is an incredible thing for us to think about. When we're scared.

When we feel weak. If we are Christians. We have the power of God. Christ with us. His name will be wonderful.

His name will be counselor. His name will be mighty God. His name will be everlasting Father. The first reading that was heard was from Genesis.

And it was a sad reading to start with. Because it's about the fall of man. In the very beginning. In the very beginning. We see God. And we see Adam and Eve. In perfect harmony.

That perfect relationship of love. But sin came in. And broke that. And Adam and Eve. Rather than spend time with God in the garden.

[36 : 36] When sin comes in. They're hiding from God. And the voice of God comes forth and says. Where are you? Where are you? Come to me. The sin has caused a barrier.

And then there's the promise. I will send one. Who will deal with your sin. And who will bring you back. To experience the love.

Of the everlasting Father. And the one who was promised. And the one who came. Is Jesus. And he will be the Prince of Peace. When sin came into the world.

Peace was lost. But this child. This child was coming. To save us from sin. This child was coming.

To bring heaven's peace. To those who would receive him. Remember what Jesus said in John 14. Peace I leave with you.

[37 : 43] My peace. I give to you. Not of this world. It's heaven's peace. And that's the promise. For those who trust in Jesus.

I got a message. Even late last night. From the bedside. From the bedside. Of someone who's perhaps coming. Towards the end of their time. In this world. And the testimony.

From that bedside. Was there's a peace. That's not of this world. In that place. And that's the promise. That Jesus gives.

To those. Who will trust him. And so this. Story that we're hearing. This child. That Isaiah promised. He was delivered. He was born.

Into this world. On the first. Christmas. And the. The good news is. And the. The young ones are telling us. How good the news is. The good news is.

[38 : 44] This child. He has offered to you. For to us. For to you. And to me. A child is born. To us. A son is given.

A savior. Has been born. To you. So let's just think about this. As we. Move towards the.

Conclusion of the service. Let's think about.

The wonder. Of all. That we're reading. In scripture. Let's think about this. Offer. Of God. To us. Of the child. And let's think about.

Our response to him. As we continue. To. To read. And to sing. Our way through. The Christmas. Story. We're going to. Sing the next hymn now.

While shepherds. Watched. Their flocks by night. The angels. Watched. The flowers. Watched. Dry light. All seated. O the crown. The angel.

[39 : 40] Of the Lord. And down. The glory. The glory. To the glory. To the glory. To the glory. To the glory.

The glory shone above In Australia, for my dear dear The Caesar's love of mine The tithes of great joy I bring To you and all my pride To you and David's sound is seen It's for no dayless time Our Savior who is Christ the Lord On this shall be the sight The heavenly baby that shall walk To you the beauty of his grace All evening raptive, sprawling

The throne of nature laid Who saved the angel And for whom appeared A shining throne All angels praising all to us God bless her joyful song O glory be to God, our Lord And to the earthly peace Whose will has won from hell to hell He did not ever cease I am going to read from Matthew chapter 2 verses 1 to 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 peoples 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

[43 : 18] 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 worshipped him Then they opened their treasures And presented him with their 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 Amen The first, oh well The angels they say Lost in deathly and shepherds in fields last they lay They feel treading They keep in their sheep

On a cold winter's night That was so deep Noel, Noel, Noel Born is the king of Israel And wise men from a country far Looked up and saw a guiding star They traveled on They traveled on by night and day By night and day To reach the place where Jesus lay Noel, Noel Noel, Noel Noel, Noel Lord is the king of Israel

And when we have entered in Or bended he They worshipped him They offered there They offered there They offered there In his presence Their gold and blood And frankincense Noel, Noel Noel, Noel Noel Noel Born is the king of Israel And when we have entered in Israel Then let us all With one heart Sing In the name of the Lord For Christ our son

Salvation brought And with his blood And guide us forth Noel, Noel Noel, Noel For this and King of Israel Reading from Matthew 3 Verses 1-6 And verses 13-17 In those days John the Baptist came Preaching in the wilderness of Judea And saying Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, a voice of one calling in the wilderness, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist.

[47 : 34] His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea, and the whole region of the Jordan, confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the river Jordan.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John, but John tried to deter him, saying, I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?

Jesus replied, Let it be so now, it is proper for us to do this, to fulfil all righteousness. Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him, and a voice from heaven said, This is my Son, whom I love.

With him I am well pleased. Let it be so now, it is a time of death we have, but still we see divine.

[48 : 52] The hopes and fears of all the hills are meant in you tonight.

O Christ is born all day heavy, God gathered all along.

Our portals sleep, the angels keep their watch of one day long. O Lord, each rise together, proclaim the holy birth.

And praises sing to God the King, and peace to make on earth. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given.

So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His hand.

[50 : 21] No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin. Where meek souls will receive and still, the dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He sent to us, He prayed. O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He prayed. O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He prayed.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He prayed. We hear the Christmas ages, the great cloud-tiding sound.

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord in our new world. O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He prayed.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, He prayed. OPTN1, verses 1-14. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[51 : 38] 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 recognise 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.

[52 : 49] We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. The End The End

O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord Sing like the angels Sing in exaltation Sing with the citizens of heaven Glory to God Glory in the highest O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord Yes Lord we greet you

[55 : 29] On the happy morning Jesus to you Be in glory Word of the Father Let Him flesh appearing O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him Christ the

Lord Just take a seat for a moment please Just before we finish I've been given a wee box of these books Somebody's bought them And is donating them to anybody who wants to take one The title of the book is

Is Christmas Unbelievable? And there might be someone here And there might be some people here Who are just listening to the whole Christmas story And wondering How true is all this? We love this story It's a familiar story But there might be some who are struggling To grasp this as truth And this is a wee book That helps us to see The truth of the Christmas story There's four questions asked within it Number one Was Jesus even a real person?

Now for most of us That's not even a question But there are some people Who would contest Even the life of Jesus in this world And this is a book That takes us through the evidence of it Secondly Can we take the gospel seriously?

How reliable is the Bible? Maybe that's your question It's answered in this wee book Thirdly How can you believe in a virgin birth? It's a miracle And this is a book that helps us to think that through And finally Why does it matter?

[57 : 35] And if these are questions that are in your mind And questions that you're thinking through Then at the table on the way out I think There's a wee box of these books So thank you to the person who bought them It wasn't me And please be encouraged to take them It's a gift It's for you And remember This book is just a wee book That points us to the greater gift That was given to you And that's the gift of Jesus So let's stand now for our final prayer Our Heavenly Father We thank you for the vastness of your love That you would send your only begotten Son into this world To be born a human being The Word of God in flesh appearing And we thank you that Jesus came into this world

On that rescue mission To save us from our sin We thank you that Jesus lived for us That perfect sinless life We thank you that Jesus went to the cross And died for us To deal with our sin To overcome sin To overcome death And we thank you that Jesus rose And promised that everyone who believes in him Will share in that resurrection life That everlasting life So give us faith we pray That we may each of us believe In the Lord Jesus Christ And know the blessing of salvation A blessing that is not just for Christmas Day But is for every day here That we are given in this world And then in the world to come Every day forever So help us we pray to believe Bless us in the tea and the coffee And what's been prepared Help us Lord to enjoy that And to enjoy each other's company And we ask Lord

That you would be near to us Over this Christmas season Help us not to be distracted by the busyness But to be still And to know that you are God And that you are with us And now we pray that the grace Of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit Would be with us all This Christmas time And forevermore Amen