



Church of Ireland  
**United Dioceses of  
Cork, Cloyne & Ross**  
Templebreedy Group



*Adoration of the Shepherds by Dutch painter Matthias Stom, c. 1650*

# **Nohoval Church Christmas Carols**

## **Sunday 14 December**

Our service this evening seeks to tell, once again, the great story of Christmas, the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, sharing in all the joys and sorrows of humanity. After two years of muted celebrations due to the Gaza war, the historic city of Bethlehem is preparing for a full and festive Christmas celebration once again. This year, the streets of Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank are filled with light and joy — decorations are up, and the Christmas tree at Manger Square near the Church of the Nativity once again shines brightly. Mayor Maher Nicola Canawati invited visitors to celebrate “peace and hope” from the “city of peace.” Tourist numbers, which had plummeted due to the conflict, are finally beginning to recover, and local businesses are reopening their doors.

There is no more powerful reason to believe in the fundamental dignity and importance of each and every human being than the doctrine rooted in the final lesson at our service, which proclaims that, ‘the word was made flesh’, that is ‘God became human’. This declares that God embraces the human condition in the fullness of its vulnerability – the same vulnerability that is cruelly exploited by those who invade, those who occupy, those who take hostages, those who torture, oppress, exploit, or abuse.

The Christmas story conveys extraordinary messages: the meaning of the word ‘God’ is not found in power but powerlessness; the image of God is ..... a child shivering in a barn; what brings light to the world is not the resolving of all our problems, or the ending of all our conflicts, but the belief that God can be with us and that he can still transform us, call us, to be the human beings he wishes us to be. In the northern hemisphere, this season of light in the depth of winter reminds us that the hope brought to us by the Christ child still has the power to evoke awe and wonder, excitement and delight, even in the face of terrible and terrifying suffering. We know there is a better way and we know we are called to do all that we can live it, reflecting the way Jesus himself lived in service and love.

That is why the angels sing, and why we will be made glad with our carols of praise.

Interspersed with the readings and carols, there will be four poems which seek to give a somewhat “sideways” commentary on the significance of the events we celebrate to prompt deeper thought and perhaps prayer.

I wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas, praying that you may something of the light of Christ in your own lives.

James Power

The service will run largely without announcement although when we come to the Children’s Nativity Tableau there will need to be some flexibility and instruction! Otherwise, **please stand for the carols and, except for the final reading, we sit for the lessons and poems.**

*Organist: Jim McClay*

## **The Bidding Prayer**

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to prepare ourselves for 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. This year, we continue to pray for the peoples of the Holy Land, the land over which our Lord himself walked, that they may find ways to live together in respect and harmony; we pray for the people of Ukraine and all whose nurse the wounds of warfare in Europe once again, as we do for all whose lives are torn apart by hatred and violence.

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:

**Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that 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.**

## Carol

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?*

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. *Refrain*

Mary, hail! Though afraid,  
She believed, she obeyed.  
In her womb God is laid;  
Till the time expected  
Nurtured and protected. *Refrain*

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!*

## First Lesson

### **The birth of Emmanuel according to St Matthew**

*Matthew 1:18-23*

*Thomas Gash*

## Carol

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

O come, O come, O Lord of might  
who to Your tribes on Sinai's height,  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

O come, O Rod of Jesse, free  
Your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell Your people save  
and give them victory o'er the grave. *Refrain*

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by Your advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain*

O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high  
and close the path to misery: *Refrain*

## Poem

*The Coming, R S Thomas*

## Second Lesson

**The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary**

*Luke 1:26-38*

*Geraldine Emerson*

## **Carol**

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!

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

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!

Of her, Emmanuel, 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!

## **Third Lesson**

### **St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus**

*Luke 2:1-7*

*Thomas Gleasure*

## **Carol**

Silent night, holy night.  
All is calm, all is bright,  
round yon virgin mother and child;  
holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night.  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sings alleluia:  
Christ, the Saviour is born,  
Christ, the Saviour is born.

Silent night, holy night.  
Son of God, love's pure light,  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace:  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus Lord, at thy birth.

## Poem

*The Oxen, Thomas Hardy*

## Fourth Lesson

### **The Shepherds visit the manger**

*Luke 2:8-20*

*Alan Rumley*

### **Children's Church tableau**

## Carol

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.

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 bedside till morning is nigh.

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.



## **Blessing of & Prayers at the Crib** *(lead by our young people)*

In the faith of Christ, and in thy name, O God most holy, we hallow this crib of Christmas, to set before the eyes of thy children the great love and humility of Jesus Christ thy only Son; who for us, and for our salvation, came down as at this time from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary his mother, and was made man; to whom with Thee and the same Spirit be all honour, majesty, glory and worship, now and to the ages of ages. **Amen.**

## **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 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: *Refrain*

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: *Refrain*

## **Fifth Lesson**

### **The wise men are led by a star to Jesus**

*Matthew 2:1-11*

*Orla Busteed*

#### **Poem**

*The Magi, W B Yeats*

#### **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: *Refrain*

Lo! star-led chieftains,  
Magi, Christ adoring,  
Offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
We to the Christ Child  
Bring our heart's oblations: *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of Angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God  
In the Highest: *Refrain*

## **Sixth Lesson**

*Please stand for this final reading*

### **St John unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation**

*John 1:1-14*

*The Rector*

## Collect for Christmas Eve

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ; Grant that, as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence, behold him when he shall come to be our Judge, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

### Poem

*Christmas, John Betjeman*

### Carol

The first Nowell the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:  
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,*  
*Born is the King of Israel.*

They lookèd up and saw a star,  
Shining in the east, beyond them far:  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night: *Refrain*

And by the light of that same star,  
Three Wise Men came from country far;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wheresoever it went: *Refrain*

This star drew nigh to the north-west;  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
And there it did both stop and stay  
Right over the place where Jesus lay: *Refrain*

Then entered in those Wise Men three,  
Full reverently upon their knee,  
And offered there in his presence  
Both gold and myrrh and frankincense: *Refrain*

Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,  
And with his blood mankind hath bought:  
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,*  
*Born is the King of Israel.*

## 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 the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you this night and forevermore. **Amen.**



The Adoration of the Kings (detail) by Jan Gossaert, 1510–15

**A very happy and blessed Christmas!**