

# Carols by Candlelight

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Preacher: James Ross

[ 0 : 00 ] Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him!  
Hear heaven and nature sing! Hear heaven and nature sing! Joy to the earth, the Savior brings! Let  
men their songs implore!

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy! Repeat the sounding joy!  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

No more let sins and sorrows grow! Nor thorns infest the ground!

He comes to make His blessings flow! Far as the curse is found! Far as the curse is found! Far as,  
far as the curse is found!

[ 1 : 26 ] 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!

The glories of His love! The glories of His love! Welcome to a very different Carols by Candlelight  
here at Buclew.

I'm James the Minister. It's a pleasure to welcome you as part of our Advent season. Advent, of  
course, is about waiting and about celebrating. For us today, we look back on the first coming of  
Jesus into our world.

And we also look forward, anticipating His return. Our theme this evening is Jesus, Light of the  
World.

[ 2 : 38 ] Our hope is that after darkness, there would be light. Light. To use the words of Madeleine  
Longley, Maybe you have to know the darkness before you can appreciate the light.

This year, it would be true that we have all known darkness. The darkness of pandemic. The  
darkness of fear and loneliness.

Of uncertainty. There is a deep sense in all of us. A longing for hope. We are weary. And we want  
there to be light at the end of the tunnel.

And that, in a sense, takes us to the heart of Advent. To the heart of Christmas. It's what the birth of  
Jesus represents. To borrow a lyric from one of our Advent hymns.

O come, O come, Emmanuel. We have this. O come, bright morning star. And cheer our spirits. By  
your advent here.

[ 3 : 44 ] Dispel the long night's lingering gloom. And pierce the shadows of the tomb. So our hope,  
as we spend some time together, is that we'd be encouraged and we'd find joy.

For a little while, we'd be able to push back the darkness. That we would see Jesus as that true  
light that God promised, who has come into the world to save us.

So, wherever you are, grab yourself a hot drink. Sing out with your friends and your family, whoever  
you're with. And enjoy some time of worship together.

Isaiah 9, verse 2 to 7 says, The people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living  
in the land of the shadow of death.

A light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you,  
as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

[ 4 : 48 ] For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the  
bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire. 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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of  
Peace.

Of the increase 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. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, who mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God draws near.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel O come, O come, O come, great Lord of might, who long ago on Sinai's height, gave Israel's tribes the holy love, in cloud and majesty and all.

[ 7 : 01 ] Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel O come, bright morning star and jeep, our spirits by your advent here, and hear, dispel the long night's lingering gloom, and pierce the shadows of the tomb.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel O come, strong ye of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home, make strength the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel O Israel O little town of Bethlehem O little town of Bethlehem O little town of Bethlehem O little town of Bethlehem How still we see you lie Above your deep and dreamless sleep

The silent stars go by Yet in your streets is shining The everlasting light The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in you tonight How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is given So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heir No ear may hear his coming But in this world of sin

Where meek souls will receive him Still the dear Christ enters in For Christ is born of Mary And gathered all above While mortals sleep The angels keep Their watch of wandering love O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth O holy child of Bethlehem

[ 11 : 41 ] 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-tiding stare O come to us O come to us Abide with us Our Lord Emmanuel Our Lord Emmanuel Our next reading from Isaiah 49 From Isaiah 49 Verse 6 to 7 Verse 6 He says It is too small It is too small a thing for you To be my servant To restore the tribes of Jacob And bring back those of Israel

I have kept I will also make you a light For the Gentiles That you may bring my salvation To the ends of the earth This is what the Lord says The Redeemer and Holy One of Israel To him who was despised and abhorred by the nation To the servant of rulers Kings will see you and rise up Princes will see and bow down Because of the Lord who is faithful The Holy One of Israel Who has chosen you Luke chapter 2 verses 28 to 32 Simeon took him in his arms And praised God saying Sovereign Lord as you have promised You now dismiss your servant in peace For my eyes have seen your salvation Which you have prepared in the sight of all people A light for revelation to the Gentiles And for glory to your people Israel

Thanks be to God for his word 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 Holy night Shepherds quake at the sight Glory streams from heaven afar Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia Christ the Savior is born Christ the Savior is born Christ the Savior is born Silent night Holy night Holy night Son of God Love's pure light God loves pure light Radiant beams from thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace Son of redeeming grace Jesus Lord at thy birth Jesus Lord at thy birth Jesus Lord at thy birth Son of God So have you ever had the sunny southern Christmas?

[ 16 : 25 ] It can be quite a slightly surreal experience So we had a couple years ago We were spending Christmas in the Philippines So it was one of those moments where it's your 30 degrees every day But there's inflatable snowmen everywhere Christmas was spent by the beach eating barbecue food One time we did do the traditional British Christmas dinner That was really bizarre But one of the great memories I have from those trips was Of being in a group being taught how to make the traditional Filipino parole And if you don't know what that is It's the traditional paper star lantern Actually a really nice family Christmas craft idea if you're so inclined But it's designed to help folks remember Jesus as the light of the world To remember from the Christmas story that star leading the wise men from the east towards God's newborn king

But that's not for most of us anyway Our normal experience, our normal northern Christmas Is one that takes place in the darkness And every year about this time we begin to wage war against the

darkness We set our houses and our trees aglow, don't we?

With lights, with candles And we've really needed that this year To give us that sense of hope We want to see light shining in the darkness And our typical northern Christmas is actually really fitting Because when we read those key Bible texts about the coming of Jesus We find that Christmas comes in the darkness A darkness deeper than the weather A darkness that speaks to dark circumstances That speaks of despair That speaks of a people who are lost morally and spiritually And needing to find hope To find hope from God So let's review just for a few moments How often this theme of after darkness, light, features

So as John introduces his gospel As he introduces us to Jesus We have these words in John 1 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 Jesus, the creator of all He enters into his creation As light in the darkness And then we have Zechariah Speaking about the birth of Jesus Words of prophecy Speaking of the tender mercy of our God By which the rising sun will come to us from heaven To shine on those living in darkness And in the shadow of death To guide our feet into the path of peace So there again is the picture of Jesus coming Like the sun bringing light and bringing peace Or Isaiah Speaking 700 years before the coming of Jesus Words that we have already heard The people walking in darkness Have seen a great light On those living in the land of deep darkness A light has dawned And this darkness for the people in Isaiah's day Was deep indeed They were facing exile From their own country They were facing the loss of home and place And most of all The loss of a living connection Of relationship with their God And into their social and moral and spiritual darkness There is a promise That a child would come A child who would come and pierce the darkness And what a child he would be As Isaiah goes on in those famous words For to us a child is born

[ 20 : 58 ] To us a son is given And the government will be on his shoulders And he will be called Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace Of the greatness of his government and peace There will be no end This child of course is Jesus He will rule with the power and authority of God As God And his rule, his glory, his kingdom Will grow and keeps on growing In hearts and lives all around the world And then again to go to another passage we heard And we can think of the words of Simeon Who saw this promised child As an eight day old in the temple And Simeon said For my eyes have seen your salvation Which you have prepared in the sight of all nations A light for revelation to the Gentiles

And the glory of your people Israel Let's think for a moment about the faith involved In Simeon's life here Looking at this tiny vulnerable child And seeing in the baby Jesus God's Saviour God's glory Jesus is the light As Simeon says He shines to reveal God's truth to us He shines to reveal God's glory to us So that we see the glory of God In the life of Jesus We see God's saving love That love not just for some But for all who will see and believe That Jesus is Son of God And Saviour of the world Here is Jesus God's light shining in the world He created as the eternal Son of God Who became one of us

He isn't God at a distance But He's God with us in our tears In our darkness Bringing His hope And bringing His light But here's a question How does the light of Jesus Shine in the darkness? Well let me encourage you Perhaps over the holidays To read one of the Gospels Matthew, Mark or Luke or John And there you will discover The light of the beautiful life of Jesus You see it in His perfect love His incredible compassion and mercy To a whole variety of people that He met You will hear it in His wisdom In His truth You will see it in His servant leadership And in His self-giving sacrificial love But we also see the light of Jesus Shining at the cross And at the empty tomb As we come to the cross We discover that Jesus dies in the darkness Here is Jesus bearing sin And shame And experiencing the judgment of God

For us For us Not for Himself And then we go to Easter Sunday And we discover Jesus rises in the light There is victory And there is new life On Easter Sunday To borrow from one of our carols Light and life to all He brings Risen with healing in His wings The great darkness Is the darkness of sin That leads to death And eternal separation from God And that darkness has been defeated By Jesus The light of the world So that by coming to Him in faith We can live in His life And His light And His love And His joy So why does all this still matter today?

[ 25 : 16 ] Well it matters because we know darkness We know the darkness of our circumstances And for some of you I'm quite sure There is that sense that the darkness Just will not lift And there's a sense of despair There's the deeper darkness Of living in God's world Without knowing God And

the hope that He brings And in response to the darkness Of our sin and our circumstances Jesus said I am the light of the world Whoever follows me Will never walk in darkness But will have the light of life Maybe for some of us What Madeline Longley said is true Maybe we have to know the darkness Before we can appreciate the light The light who is Jesus Christ The Son of God

And the Saviour of the world Okay, let's pray briefly Father God We recognise there is so much darkness In our world This has been a difficult year For so many We pray for those in our families Those in our workplaces And in our community Who have experienced suffering and loss Where that darkness will not lift Lord, we pray for the darkness of despair And loneliness and fear That we know in our own hearts We acknowledge that And at the same time We would look to you For hope and for healing And for light And we thank you for Jesus Your Son who entered into our darkness Who knew suffering

Who knew what it was to weep and to mourn To mourn We thank you that he came To be our Saviour To bring light To bring the love of God To a hurting world And we pray that you would help us To look to him And to trust in him And to know life and hope from him And we pray this in Jesus' powerful name Amen So thank you everyone for tuning in Thanks to everyone who's made it possible Our musicians Our reader Our tech team And if you want to know more About Christianity If you want to know more about the light That Jesus offers Please be in touch with us Through Facebook Or on our website And now let's sing One more time And again, thanks for joining us God rest you, Mary, gentlemen

God rest you, Mary, gentlemen Nothing you dismay For Jesus Christ our Saviour Was born on Christmas Day To save us all from Satan's power When we were gone astray O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy From God our Heavenly Father A holy angel came The shepherds saw the glory The shepherds saw the glory And heard the voice proclaim That Christ was born in Bethlehem And Jesus is his name O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy

O tidings of comfort and joy Fear not Fear not, then said the angel Let nothing cause you fright Fear not, then said the angel Let nothing cause you fright To you is born a Saviour In David's town tonight To free all those who trust in him From Satan's power and might O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy Comfort and joy Comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy The shepherds at these tidings Rejoiced in heart and mind The shepherds at these tidings Rejoiced in heart and mind And on the darkened hillside They left their flocks behind And went to Bethlehem straightway This precious babe to find

[ 30 : 31 ] O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy And when to Bethlehem they came Where Christ the infant lay They found him in a manger Where oxen feed on hay And there beside her newborn child His mother knelt to pray O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy Comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy Now to the Lord sing praises All people in this place With Christian love and fellowship And fellowship each other

Now to the Lord sing for the Lord And let the Christmas festival And let the Christmas festival All bitterness displace O tidings of comfort and joy Comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy With joy and joy O tidings of comfort and joy O tidings of comfort and joy 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, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of Heber.

Glory to God, all 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.

[ 33 : 52 ] Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger, We would embrace thee with love and awe.

Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born that happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given.

The Lord. For us sinners, O come, let us smash, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us bless him, Christ the Lord. Come with us, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

the Lord.