

Christmas Carol Service 2021

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Date: 19 December 2021

[0 : 00] Good evening and welcome everyone to our Carols by Candlelight service. If you're a visitor here I hope you feel very welcome and do feel free to join us for mince pies and mulled wine after the service. For anyone who's never heard of Jesus before or they don't know who he is it'd be our joy that by the end of the service you may know more about him than you do now.

And for those of us who have experienced the love of Christ for many years let us rejoice in the truth of Christmas and that God came down to earth for us. In saying that let's say our call to worship which comes from Matthew 7 verses 7 through 8. Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find.

Knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it will be opened. Let's sing our first item of praise, joy to the world and remain standing for our opening prayer.

to the world the Lord is come. Let earth be seen for thee. Let every heart prepare him through. And let nature sing, and let nature sing, and let nature sing. And let the nature sing.

Let earth and let nature sing, and let earth and let nature sing. And let earth and let nature sing.

[2 : 03] Joy to the earth, the Savior brings, when their songs are called. From fields and clouds, from trails and clouds, from trails and clouds, from trails and clouds.

Repeat the astounding dawn, repeat the astounding dawn, repeat the astounding dawn.

By our mountains, sea, the coreLS Lnings of tours and clouds, one in the clouds. But our works are called, in our 79 to nutritious dawn, Paris and clouds. And our tongues are called, where our souls are called, in our congregate heavens. All right, while we are called, the elves of civilization, and our souls are called, from trails and clouds, theocused lord nations come. And that comes from proves that sun in our OLD and sky. And our lives of civilization, or tour and t picthemum, If it interactions through words, As in our lives of civilization, when our souls may lead on to trailers, Of course, moder ourjer e vision as well.

We are sent of now. It comes to the circle and the ceremonies of power in the area, and the crises are alive vino. For us in our life. V panels his righteousness till wonders of his love till wonders of his love till more others wonders of his love we thank you for Jesus Christ his birth Jesus who took the form of a servant and showed perfect obedience even to death on a cross through that death all who hear your good news of Christ how he lived a perfect life how he died in place of our sins those sins being the things that we do that do not show you honour and love he lived and died so that we could be in relationship with you the great loving eternal God of all the universe who loved us when we were still enemies to you who cares for us but not only cares for us but also through Christ calls us sons and daughters we are filled with awe that your love for us we know the times when we've had bad thoughts when we're embarrassed that anyone could even see or hear but you see everything that we think and do and yet you still love us we thank you for your word that makes clear your son is God and in being so was the only one who could carry out the rescue plan of salvation your word shows us who you are your character and your desire for justice we pray that you are working in our hearts and in our minds and we pray that anyone here who does not know you will hear the call of Christ and follow those of us who know you and follow you as our Lord and Saviour we are brought to thankfulness once again for a God who has done everything our faith being dependent on Jesus not ourselves we praise you our great God and Saviour in Jesus name Amen shortly you'll hear a little more from me very little but I'll let our readers come up when they say their names almost like an Argos and I'll let our gifted musicians lead us in praise for our carols in Sam but before I do that I wanted to give a little context to our first two readings they come from Isaiah and Micah who were prophets of God who spoke his words to the Jewish people around 700 years before Christ's birth they called the Israelites to turn back to the Lord after not following his will and speaking of a future hope for them our first reading will be read by Archie and then as I say the service will flow okay the reading as you can see is from Isaiah 9 we start with verses 1 and 2

and then it'll be 6 and 7 after that but there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish in the former times he brought into contempt the land the land of sea lunar sorry and the land of [7 : 41] Naphtali but in the latter time he made gracious the way of the sea the land beyond Jordan gallery of the nations the second one the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness on them has light shined verse 6 for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called wonderful counsellor mighty god everlasting father prince of peace verse 7 of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore the seal of the lord of hosts will do this any other

Glory to the new our King, Peace, Son, and mercy, God, God, and Savior's men, O Son, Join all you nations' eyes, Join the triumph of the skies, With the deadly force proclaim, Christ is born in heavenly heaven, Our hearts are worthy to sing, Glory to the new our King.

Christ, my eyes, turn the door, Christ the everlasting Lord, Leaves in time behold in power, Offspring of the virgin's womb.

Let him worship, God, and see, Hail thee, God, and plaiting, Jesus, one with man to grant, Jesus, our Emmanuel, Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the new our King.

Give them the rest of peace, Hail the Son of righteousness, Christ, my life, and life, O Holy Wins, Christ, may we be in His wings.

[11 : 31] God, we wish we glorify, For God, the gold, the gold, the gold, the gold, the gold, the gold, the gold, the gold.

Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the new our King.

Thank you. This reading comes from Micah chapter 5, verses 2-5.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth. Then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel, and he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

[12 : 57] And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be their peace. This next reading comes from Luke chapter 1, verses 26-38.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

[14 : 08] And Mary said to the angel, How will this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth, in her old age, has also conceived a son. And this is the sixth month with her, who was called Barry.

For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold, I am a servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

[15 : 18] me is is so this next reading comes from matthew chapter 1 verses 18 to 25 now the birth of jesus christ took place in this way when his mother mary had been betrothed to joseph before they came together she was found to be with child from the holy spirit and her husband joseph just being a man and unwilling to put her to shame revolt resolved to divorce her quietly but as he considered these things beholding angel of the lord appeared to him in a dream saying joseph son

of david do not fear to take me as your wife for that which is conceived in her is from the holy spirit she will bear a son and he shall call his name jesus but he will save his people from their sins all this took place to fulfill what the lord had spoken by the prophet behold the virgin shall conceive a son and bear a son and they shall call his name emmanuel which means god is with us when joseph woke from sleep he did as the angel of the lord commanded him he took his wife but here or not until she had given birth to his his son and he called his name jesus thank you for that ian and thank you for everyone who's been reading uh so far and leading the worship and welcome to gladiocity free church a carol service here in partick um my name is matthias uh and i'm just gonna do a short talk to us a little bit about why we're here what we're talking about and uh so uh wonderful to have all of you here um one of my favorite picture books growing up was by a guy this dutch american guy called your spears and it's just called christmas i don't know if anybody knows it um but the book doesn't have any text attached to it it's just a series of these really beautiful kind of big paintings with all these wonderful details so as a kid you can look at it and you know find little little things in the corners um and the book follows a family right around christmas and you see them you know going shopping and hanging out with their friends and eating their meals and and watching deepening all those sort of things uh all these christmassy things that you'd expect um and i was thinking of this book the other day not just because i was reminiscing about my childhood um but because there's there's a really good representation about how we think about christmas in it i think and you see in the first panel and the last panel first panel uh you see the family they're at a bank or a post office or something like that and on the counter is a little flip calendar and it says number of days until christmas and underneath there's a number you can flip down as you get closer to christmas

so at the start of the book you see you flip down number of days until christmas is 12. at the very end of the book you know you just watch them do their christmas thing you see all of them getting stuck and everything like that and then the very end of the book you see them again at the post office or the bank or whatever and the counter's there and the counter's there and it says number of days until christmas 364. it's just reset and you can start counting it down again and i think like i said this captures so well how we think about christmas we each have our own mental flip calendar we start counting down the days of christmas at some point i'm sure there might be some people out there who start counting down from 364 maybe um i don't start being american i don't start thinking about until after thanksgiving i know some people say december 1st i know some people in this congregation who are wearing christmas jumpers like mid-november and you know who you are but we each have our own mental calendar but we also have our own ways that we get into christmas start building up this anticipation for and getting excited for help us get into the christmas spirit you know we listen to specific songs wear certain clothing and wearing my christmas tie and a pair of christmas socks on you can't see uh watch movies do specific things eat certain foods we do all these things because we like building up the anticipation for christmas um and we do all this because we know it's coming you know from the the way our nature of our calendars work on december 26th we know we've been promised that 364 days later we're going to have another christmas so we know it's coming we have something to look forward to one of my favorite christmas songs is by the beach boys and has this great line which is christmas comes this time each year which is brilliant because it's just yeah you're right yes um and we might look down our nose at all this anticipation sometimes and all this excitement and the way we build up around christmas um but the reality of this idea of something promised and waiting for that having that promise fulfilled as a core part of the christmas story and uh you know the way it might look and uh what we might be waiting for and how we wait for it is different definitely but this idea of promise and fulfillment waiting for christmas having christmas is really part of the christmas story that we've been hearing so far and we see this uh most clearly uh from the passages that we first read those i'd say in those micah passages uh now if this is you know even if this is your first time in a church first of all welcome and second of all you're probably familiar at least with some part with the christmas story from luke and matthew that we've been reading and that you'll continue to hear you know story of the lowing cattle and uh you know no room in the skin everything like that the manger the whole thing but you might not be too familiar with who isaiah and micah are and why we include them and why we read them at a service like this um and even if you are a long time church going goer and you've been to dozens of these types of services it's easy to forget why we read isaiah and micah it's easy to forget why we include something that doesn't kind of fit into our lowing cattle

swaddling clothes image um as stephen said earlier on uh isaiah and micah are two prophets that's those are people through whom god would talk uh they were contemporaries with each other um and they would talk to the people of israel as god's chosen people and as stephen said they said a lot of things some of it not so uplifting because god's people were doing a lot of backsliding um but one of the things they both talk about as we see in these two passages is uh the event that we are celebrating this evening so you know we heard the isaiah passage passage he talks about to us a child will be born so he's telling us who's coming then micah talks about the place is going to happen it's going to be in bethlehem and he also talks

says this someone's going to be born in bethlehem sorry about that um like stephen said too they made their prophecies about 700 to 800 years or so before the events that take place before the rest of the story that we will hear now if my history is right and someone please correct me if i'm wrong but if you go back about 700 or so years robert the bruce is still alive so from us 700 years ago from us robert the bruce is still alive that's how far back we're talking it's like robert the bruce said you know on december 19 17 13 21 you know that one day people are going to hold a carol service on crow road and then you wait 700 years for that event to happen that's that's how long we're talking so that's a really really long time to wait um so you have these uh prophets promising one day that god will do these things he's going to send somebody and he's going to be wonderful and then people wait for 700 years the promise is passed down from generation to generation uh parents tell their children and those children then they'll tell their children and so on and so forth for 700 800 years that matches part of what makes our christmas is so exciting so you know it's a year away that's just long enough where uh you know it's not happening so frequently but it's it's close enough that you can look forward to it and you can anticipate it um so but in that in that distance gives enough time just to build out anticipation but imagine having to wait hundreds and hundreds of years for this promise to be fulfilled and you know it's also worth mentioning you know we read these isaiah and micah passages but this promise predates isaiah and micah this goes back to the beginning of human history god makes this promise that he's going to send someone um so this is a promise that is building and the anticipation around it is building um you know and it's also not just how long you wait for something but it's the quality of what you're waiting for that's important um that matters how much you care about if you lend somebody a book uh and they say you know i'll promise to give you back you're not really you might but you're probably not going to count down the minutes until you get that book back unless it's something really special um and you know part of the reason we enjoy christmas so much is that it's something that's nice and that we can't wait for and we look forward to it's you know it's time with family it's good food and drink it's presents it's time off school uh for most of us fortunately we look forward to christmas because it's a it's a good time of year um so what's this quality of the promise that's been made with isaiah and micah that we see what who who is this person being sent well um it's in reality it's his very own son god said he's going to send his own son and isaiah and micah we see who this son is going to be he's going to be a shepherd that's someone who protects he's going to be a wonderful counselor that's someone who's a wise advisor who's going to wisely advise people he's going to be a prince of peace uh he's going to be someone who rules with justice and righteousness someone who will bring stability peace justice protection with him i think there's a lot of us here tonight that could do with someone that has an offer of protection who can bring us advice who can bring us peace who can bring us justice that's what's being promised here but even more than that it's not just peace in this moment like i said he's going to be his own son who is going to be our savior you know we all have this problem we all have this problem what we call sin but it's it's our breaking of the relationship with god it is our the failures and the stumblings that we all do all the time it's our problem it's our fault um but but we can't deal with it um and so god says i'm going to send someone who can deal with that problem and i can fix this relationship

um and that's what he does he sends a son he's born in a relatively insignificant town so like it says it's bethlehem you can't even be not even worth being numbered among the 12 tribes of israel um but he's born there he grows up he lives a perfect life he's a an upright man but yet he dies he's killed as a sacrifice so that and he died in our place so you know it's a it's a hard time it's a it's hard to imagine holding on to a promise that long i think we have a hard time thinking outside of our current lifetime we i think we can maybe think outside of our life and maybe the lifetime of our children but we're pretty short-sighted people we can't think that far down the line but the people who heard these promises from god were able to wait generations and generations excitedly hopefully building this anticipation waiting for this promise to be fulfilled because they knew that was

god was going to fulfill it and that they knew that he was going to fulfill it perfectly and he did as he always does like i said two thousand years ago this son was born and that's why we rejoice that's why we have things like this because it's a remarkable event that this promise that's been promised since the beginning of human history has been fulfilled in this small town with this ordinary looking child who's going to go on and die for our sins there's one more story i'm going to tell about promise and fulfillment you will hear it in a little bit in its original form uh and because it's our last reading of the night it's not normally lumped into the christmas story uh which is a shame because i think it's i think that's an oversight i think it has to do with christ's birth and his coming it's one of my favorite stories in the bible um it's the story of a righteous and devout man named simeon now we don't know much about simeon we don't know how old he was but we know that he um he like i said he was a righteous man he's frequently being depicted as being late in life and at some point during his life god promised simeon that he would not die until he saw his savior until this person that god had promised would come simeon was going to see this person god said you're not going to die until you see him with your own eyes uh like i said we don't know how long he waited but tradition has he waited probably most of his life um and i'm sure it was one of those things where he remembered god's promise but it kind of sits in the back of your mind and you eventually kind of maybe think about it here and there but he waited for he knew it was going to be fulfilled one day he goes to the temple like i said he's a righteous man so he goes to the temple uh and he sees this husband and wife and it's mary joseph and they like i said they're ordinary people from this sort of small town you know they're what we'd say maybe working class you know they're they're you know not anybody special and they have a ordinary looking kid but simeon realizes that this is nothing this child might look ordinary but he's far from it and he comes over and he takes this child in his arms and he praises god because he realized that he has seen his savior with his own eyes and he prays it's this wonderful moment as he holds this child and just gives praise for god that he can rest easy now that he's seeing his salvation um it's this beautiful story of someone waiting on a promise and and god fulfilling it to that person and i think it's easy to be jealous of simeon you know he got to see jesus he got to hold him in his arms um he got to see his savior in person but i think in reality you and i we have it better um simeon had to wait his entire life until he met his savior he had to wait all the way to the end and he can tell you the rest but right now you and i your savior jesus is here and you can meet him

right now and right here we don't have to wait i hope you enjoy the rest of the service let's pray together great god and heavenly father we thank you for your promises that you make to us we thank you for those promises which you gave to the prophet isaiah to the prophet micah these promises that you would send uh your son and and all these glorious things uh would come come to pass uh we thank you that you broke into human history and you gave us your son that he would um come and live a perfect life and die in our place we pray lord that we would be like simeon and that we would anticipate your promises being fulfilled not necessarily lord in our lifetimes but uh in the future promises of your return back to earth in which you will set all things right um where we pray that uh and praise and thank you that the promises which we have which we see in christ when we look back and we see that jesus died for our sins simeon didn't get to see and so we do lord uh rejoice that we were able to live in the time in which we know that that jesus died for our sins and so we pray lord that you would help us to embrace this embrace this for ourselves that we would come to faith in you and to strengthen our faith we pray lord that you would stir up in our hearts a desire to be joyful at this time it's so difficult uh in a world filled with chaos to find peace but we thank you that we can find peace in the prince of peace and so we pray lord that you would be with us and continue with us as we sing praises to your name and as we hear your word being read we pray that you would bless us all this day in jesus name we pray amen oh

[33 : 58] His glory and his mighty deeds to everyone declare.

How great and awesome is the Lord, with him no cost compare.
For other gods are good and strong, the Lord make heaven slide.
All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light.
All nations to the Lord ask right the glory that is true.

[34 : 59] Glory and strength ask right to God, and praise his name and you.

The next reading comes from Luke chapter 2, verses 8 to 20.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them,

and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with an angel a multitude of heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is praised.

[36 : 28] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told to them concerning the child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds had told them. But Mary, who had heard all these things, pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as had been told to them.

This reading is from Matthew chapter 2, verses 1 to 12.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

[37 : 51] For we saw his star when it rose, and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet, And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler.

Who will shepherd my people Israel? Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly, and asked them from them what time the star had appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I may come and worship him.

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

[39 : 21] When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy, and going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. And where did he follow him?

Third night, holy night, All is bright, all is bright
Round your virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sweet in heaven we leave
Sweet in heavenly peace
Silent night, holy night
Shepherds pray at the sight

Glory streams from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born
Silent night, holy night
Son of God, the pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the joy-bearing grace

[42 : 18] Jesus, Lord of thy birth
Jesus, Lord of thy birth
Silent night, holy night
Lord of thy birth
Lord of thy birth
With the angels let us sing Alleluia
to our King
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born
Lord of thy birth

Luke 2 verses 25-35 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon And this man was righteous and devout Waiting for the consolation of Israel And the Holy Spirit was upon him And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit That he would not see death That he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ And he came in the Spirit into the temple And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him According to the custom of the law He took him up in his arms and blessed God And said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace According to your word For my eyes have seen your salvation That you have prepared in the presence of all peoples A light for revelation to the Gentiles And for glory to your people Israel And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him And Simeon blessed them And said to Mary his mother Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel And for a sign that is opposed And a sword will pierce through your own soul also So that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed So that thou shalt be controlling Jesus Esteemings Now her

nourishment Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Receive now the blessing of God And now may grace Mercy and peace From God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit One true and living God Rest and remain with each one of you Now and always Amen Amen

[48 : 35] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen