

**Order of service for Christmas Eve Midnight Service –
Sunday 24th December 2023**

**David Rue is leading and
Aaron Ku is speaking this evening**

Welcome & Introduction

Opening words:

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
For to us a child is born,
to us a Son is given.

His name will be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,
**the Everlasting Father,
the Prince of Peace.**

Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

Song: 'O little town of Bethlehem'

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth
For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love

How silently how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive Him still
The dear Christ enters in

O holy Child of Bethlehem
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 tidings tell
O come to us abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

Confession:

We confess that amidst all the joys and festivities of this season
we have sometimes forgotten what Christmas really means,
and have left the Lord Jesus out of our thinking and living:

ALL: Father, forgive us.

Help us to remember that you loved the world so much
that you gave your only Son, who was born to be our Saviour.

ALL: Lord, help us.

We confess that we have allowed the most important event in history
to become dulled by familiarity:

ALL: Father, forgive us.

Help us in this act of worship
to recapture a sense of wonder,
and to discover again the stupendous fact that the Creator of the universe
has come to us as a newborn baby:

ALL: Lord, help us.

We confess to a selfish enjoyment of Christmas while we do little
To help the homeless families of your world.

ALL: Father, forgive us.

**ALL: Fill our hearts with the love that cares,
That understands and gives;
Show us how we can best serve those in need;
For the sake of him who was laid in a manger,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Song: 'The first Noel'

THE FIRST NOEL THE ANGELS 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
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked 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
Noel, Noel...

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 wherever it went
Noel, Noel...

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both stop and stay
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay
Noel, Noel...

Then entered in those Wise men three
Fell reverently upon their knee
And offered there in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense
Noel, Noel...

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
Who has made heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood mankind has bought
Noel, Noel...

Reading: Luke 2:8-21 on page 1027 (Tom Watts)

Song: 'Silent night'

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 sing 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

Talk: Aaron Ku

Song: 'In the bleak midwinter'

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone
Snow had fallen snow on snow
Snow on snow
In the bleak midwinter
Long ago

Our God heav'n cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air
But His mother only
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss

What can I give Him
Poor as I am
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb
If I were a wise man
I would do my part
Yet what can I give Him
Give my heart

Reflective prayers: Corinne Brixton

Heavenly Father, on this Christmas night,
your Son, our Saviour, came as Immanuel, God with us.
May those who are lonely or feel isolated know your loving presence close to them.
We silently name any known to us [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, your Son came as a light shining in the darkness.
Bring comfort to those in war-torn regions of the world, where the darkness of pain
and suffering are a daily reality for so many.
We silently lift to God those countries in the news [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, there was no room for your Son.
Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty. Prosper
the work of those who seek to help them.
We picture in our minds any we have seen [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth.
Hold in your hand and bring your comfort to all who are in pain or distress.
We silently bring to God those whom we know [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, shepherds in the field heard good news of great joy.
Help us to hear and to grasp for ourselves this message of your gracious and
wondrous salvation through Jesus Christ.
We reflect on God's great love for each one of us [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, strangers found Mary and Joseph,
and saw the baby lying in the manger.
Bless our homes and all whom we love.
We remember with thanks those who are dear to us [PAUSE]
Holy God
ALL: hear our prayer.

On this Christmas night, angels and shepherds praised and glorified you,
for who you are and what you have done.
May our hearts worship and adore you
and Him who is your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
We ask all these things in His name,
ALL: Amen.

Song: 'O come all ye faithful'

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:

*O come, let us adore Him,
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 heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

*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 this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

Tr. F. Oakeley, W. T. Brooke and others

Blessing

May the blessing of the Lord Jesus,
King of the Jews,
Saviour of the world,
God Almighty from everlasting to everlasting,
be with us and those whom we love,
this Christmas and for ever more. Amen.