



St John's Cathedral 聖公會聖約翰座堂

Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong Island
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

21st December 2025 at 5.00pm



Information about St John's Cathedral and its ministries can be found on the notice boards and the website (www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk).

About the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who, at the age of thirty-four, had just been appointed Dean of King's College, Cambridge after experience as an army chaplain which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. (He devised the King's College's Advent Carol Service in 1934, and was a liturgical pioneer and authority during his twenty-two years as Dean of York.)

A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons, and from that date the service has always begun with the hymn 'Once in royal David's city'. In almost every year the choice of carols has varied, and some new ones have been introduced. The backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged. The original service was, in fact, adapted from an Order drawn up by E. W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880.

A. C. Benson recalled: 'My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve – nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church, beginning with a chorister, and ending, through the different grades, with the Bishop'. The idea had come from G. H. S. Walpole, later Bishop of Edinburgh. Almost immediately other churches adapted the service for their own use. A wider frame began to grow when the service was first broadcast in 1928 and, with the exception of 1930, it has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World War, when the ancient glass (and also all heat) had been removed from the Chapel.

Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Dean Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God ...' seen 'through the windows and the words of the Bible'. Local interests appear, as they do here, in the Bidding Prayer; and personal circumstances give point to different parts of the service. Many of those who took part in the first service must have recalled those killed in the Great War when it came to the famous passage 'all those who rejoice with us, but on another shore and in a greater light'. The centre of the service is still found by those who 'go in heart and mind' and who consent to follow where the story leads.

- Extract from the Order of Service from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge

The Officiant welcomes the people. All STAND for the Processional Hymn.

Processional Hymn

- Solo 1. *Once in royal David's city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.*
- Choir 2. *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 stall;
With the poor and mean, and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*
3. **And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.**
4. **For his is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew;
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.**
5. **And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.**

6. **Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.**

*Tune: IRBY H. J. Gauntlett 1805-76; descant by Stephen Cleobury 1948-2019
Words: Cecil Frances Alexander 1818-95*

All REMAIN STANDING as the Officiant introduces the service.

Bidding Prayer and Introduction *by the Revd Will Newman*

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this city Hong Kong.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

May the almighty God bless us with his grace;
Christ give us the joys of everlasting life,
and unto the fellowship of the citizens above
 may the King of angels bring us all.

All **Amen.**

All SIT.

Carol

Alleluya, A new work is come on hand (Peter Wishart)

Alleluya, A new Work is come on Hand
Through might and grace of Gode's son
To save the lost of every land. Alleluya.
For now is free that erst was bound we may well sing Alleluya.
Now is fulfilled the prophecy
Of David and of Jeremy
And also of Isaiah. Alleluya.
Sing we therefore both loud and high Alleluya.
Alleluya, This sweeté song
Out of a green branch it sprung
God send us the life that lasteth long. Alleluya.
Now joy and bliss be him among
That thus can sing Alleluya.

Words: 15th century

First Lesson read by Arlene Cheung (Cathedral Choir)

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

GENESIS 3. 8-15, 17-19

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures;

upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

And to the man he said,
'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
"You shall not eat of it",
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Adam lay ybounden (Philip Stopford)

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond,
Four thousand winter thought he not too long;

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
As clerkes finden written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
Ne had never Our Lady ybeen heavenè Queen.

Blessed be the time that apple taken was:
Therefore we moun singen: *Deo Gratias*.

Words: Anon.

All STAND.

1. **God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let 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.**

*(Refrain) O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

2. **In Bethlehem in Israel
This blessed babe was born,
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn;
The which his mother Mary
Did nothing take in scorn: (Refrain)**

*Choir 3. From God our heav'nly Father
A blessèd angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name. (Refrain)*

4. **The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoicèd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessèd babe to find. (Refrain)**

5. **But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray. (Refrain)**

6. **Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace.
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface: (Refrain)**

*Tune: GOD REST YOU MERRY London Carol Melody; arr. Mark Sirett b. 1952
Words: Traditional*

All SIT.

Second Lesson read by David Tou (Cantonese Congregation)

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.
GENESIS 22. 15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

Thanks be to God.

Carol

In dulci jubilo (Lau Yik Long) (world première)

*In dulci jubilo [In sweet joy] let us our homage shew!
Our heart's joy reclineth in praeseptio [to the manger]
And like a bright star shineth, Matris in gremio [in the mother's lap].
Alpha es et O [You are Alpha and Omega]!*

*O Jesu parvule [O tiny Jesus]! I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee, O Puer optime [o best of boys]!
My prayer let it reach thee, O Princeps gloriae [O Prince of glory].
Trahe me post te [Draw me after you]!*

O Patris caritas [O love of the Father], *O Nati lenitas* [O gentleness of the Son]!
Deeply were we stained *Per nostra crimina* [through our faults];
But thou hast for us gained *Coelorum gaudia* [the joys of heaven].
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia [Where there are joys], if that they be not there?
There are angels singing *Nova cantica* [new songs],
There the bells are ringing *In Regis curia* [in the King's court]:
O that we were there!

Words: English text translated from German by R. L. Pearsall 1795-1856

Third Lesson read by Cheung Ting Kin (Trustee)

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

ISAIAH 9. 2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Dies sanctificatus (Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina)

*Dies sanctificatus illuxit nobis:
Venite gentes, et adore Dominum.
Quia hodie descendit lux magna in
terris.
Haec dies quam fecit Dominus:
Exultemus, et laetemur in ea.*

*A hallowed day has shone upon us;
let every nation come and adore the Lord;
For on this day a great light has come
down to earth.
This is the day that the Lord hath made:
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Words: Gradual of the Third Mass of Christmas Day

All STAND.

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. 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.**
- 4. 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.**

Tune: FOREST GREEN English traditional melody arr. Stephen Cleobury 1948-2019
Words: Phillips Brooks 1835-93

Fourth Lesson read by Dennis Guo (Mandarin Congregation)

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

Isaiah 11. 1-4, 6-9

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

A Spotless Rose (Herbert Howells)

A Spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter,
And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing,
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and might,
The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

Words: Catherine Winkworth 1827-1878

Fifth Lesson read by Douglas Lam (Server)

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ST LUKE I. 26-35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Bogoroditse Dyevo (Arvo Pärt)

Богородице Дево, радуйся,
благодатная Марие, Господь с
тобою.
Благословена ты в женах,
и благословен плод чрева твоего,
яко Спаса родила еси душ наших.

*Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
for thou hast borne the Saviour of our
souls.*

Words: Liturgy of Vespers

All STAND.

1. **Unto us is born a Son,
King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal,
Of lords the Lord eternal,**
2. **Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know,
Be cradled in the manger,
Be cradled in the manger.**
3. **This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer,
And slew the little childer.**

Choir 4. *Of his love and mercy mild
This the Christmas story;
And O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory,
Might lead us up to glory.*

5. **O and A, and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino,
*Benedicamus Domino.***

*Tune: PUER NOBIS Melody from Piae Cantiones 1582
arr. Stephen Cleobury 1948-2019*

Words: Latin, 15th century, tr. G. R. Woodward 1848-1934

All SIT.

Sixth Lesson read by Nita Virtudazo (Filipino Congregation)

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

ST LUKE 2. 1, 3-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Dormi Jesu (John Rutter)

Dormi, Jesu, mater ridet,
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi Jesu blandule.
Si non dormis, mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat:
Blande veni somnule.

Sleep, sweet baby! My cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!

*Sleep, sweet baby! My cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!*

*Words: Latin, origin unknown
English, S. T. Coleridge 1772-1834*

Seventh Lesson read by Grace Lee (Sunday School)

The shepherds go to the manger.

ST LUKE 2. 8-16

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

The Shepherd's Carol (Bob Chilcott)

We stood on the hills, Lady,
Our day's work done,
Watching the frosted meadows
That winter had won.

The evening was calm, Lady,
The air so still,
Silence more lovely than music
Folded the hill.

There was a star, Lady,
Shone in the night,
Larger than Venus it was
And bright, so bright.

Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady,
It seemed to us then
Telling of God being born
In the world of men.

And so we have come, Lady,
Our day's work done,
Our love, our hopes, ourselves,
We give to your son.

Words: Clive Sansom 1910-1981

1. **While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.**
2. **'Fear not.' said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.**
3. **To you, in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:**
4. **The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid.'**

Choir 5. *Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:*

6. **'All glory be to God on high
And to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heav'n to men
Begin and never cease.'**

*Tune: WINCHESTER OLD from Thomas Este's Psalter 1592
vv. 5 & 6 arr. Louis Halsey b. 1929
Words: Nahum Tate 1652-1715*

Eighth Lesson read by Andrew Ashley (English Congregation)

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

ST MATTHEW 2. 1-11

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Thanks be to God.

Carol sung with the Junior Choir
Bright Star Carol (Nico Muhly)

Tell us, thou cleere and heavenly tongue,
Where is the Babe but lately sprung?
Lies he the lillie-banks among?

Or say, if this new Birth of ours
Sleeps, laid within some ark of flowers,
Spangled with deaw-light; thou canst cleere
All doubts, and manifest the where.

Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek
Him in the morning's blushing cheek,
Or search the beds of spices through,
To find him out?

Star: No, this ye need not do;
But only come and see him rest,
A princely Babe, in's mother's brest.

Chorus: He's seen! He's seen! why then around
Let's kisse the sweet and holy ground;
And all rejoyce that we have found
A King, before conception, crown'd.

Come then, come then, and let us bring
Unto our prettie twelfth-tide King,
Each one his severall offering.

And when night comes wee'l give him wassailing;
And that his treble honours may be seen,
Wee'l chuse him King, and make his mother Queen.

Words: Robert Herrick 1591-1674

All STAND.

Ninth Lesson *read by the Revd Canon Dwight dela Torre*

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

ST JOHN I. 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God.

*All REMAIN STANDING to sing the Offertory Hymn, during which the collection is taken.
Please be reminded that you can extinguish the candle now.*

Offertory Hymn

1. 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;
(Refrain)
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
2. God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
(Refrain)
3. See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
(Refrain)
4. Lo! star-led chieftains, Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations:
(Refrain)
5. Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
(Refrain)
6. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, in the highest;
(Refrain)

Tune: ADESTE FIDELES Melody possibly by J. F. Wade c. 1711-86
v.6 arr. Stephen Cleobury 1948-2019

Words: Latin, 18th century, tr. F. Oakeley, E. J. F. de Borderies, W. T. Brooke & others

All REMAIN STANDING.

Collect

Officiant

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
so we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge:
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All

Amen.

Blessing *led by the Dean*

The Dean

The Lord be with you

All

and also with you.

The Dean

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with peace and goodwill
and make you partakers of the divine nature;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, ☩ the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All

Amen.

All REMAIN STANDING for the Recessional Hymn, as the choir and ministers depart.

Recessional Hymn

1. **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 th'angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'**
**(Refrain) *Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.***
2. **Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
Hail, th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.** **(Refrain)**
3. **Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n 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)**

*Tune: MENDELSSOHN Adapted from Felix Mendelssohn 1809-47
adapt. W. H. Cummings 1831-1915, v.3 arr. Ashley Grote b. 1982
Words: Charles Wesley 1707-88 and others*

Organ Voluntary

In dulci jubilo BWV 729 (Johann Sebastian Bach)

You are invited to stay for the playing of the Organ Voluntary, or to leave at this point without disturbing those who wish to listen.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2025

AT ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

24th December 2025 (Wednesday)

– Christmas Eve

3.00pm	Crib Service
4.30pm	Christingle Service
11.00pm	Midnight Mass of the Nativity *
	<i>* Admission by tickets only</i>

25th December 2025 (Thursday)

– Christmas Day

8.00am	Said Eucharist
9.00am	Sung Eucharist <i>with Brass Ensemble</i>
10.30am	Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)
11.45am	Responsorial Eucharist with Carols
1.30pm	Sung Eucharist (Filipino)
	<i>(No 5pm Service)</i>

31st December 2025 (Wednesday)

– New Year's Eve

11.00pm	Watchnight Eucharist
	<i>— A service to welcome the New Year</i>



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