

**North Kent Methodist Circuit Service
Sunday 17th December 2023 10.30am**

Rev Robin Selmes and members of Hartlip Methodist Church

PRECIOUS LITTLE

Welcome

Carol: StF 330

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) Based on Psalm 98

Opening Prayer

Bible Reading: Luke 1 v 26 - 38

The Angel Gabriel visits Mary

Poem: Precious Little

Carol: StF 202

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 men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:

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:

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Bible Reading: Luke 2 v 1 - 5

Mary and Joseph journey to be registered

Poem: The Donkey

Carol: StF 213

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 street 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 all the 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 Immanuel!

Philip Brooks (1835-93)

Bible Reading: Luke 2 v 6 & 7

The Birth of Jesus

Poem: The Innkeeper

Carol: StF 214

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.

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.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

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;
There his children gather round
Bright like stars, with glory crowned.

(Cecil Frances Alexander 1818-95)

Poem: The Stable That Never Was

Carol: StF 217

Silent night, holy night:
Sleeps the world; hid from sight,
Mary and Joseph in stable bare
Watch o'er the child belovèd and fair
Sleeping in heavenly rest.

Silent night, holy night:
Shepherds first saw the light,
Heard resounding clear and long,
Far and near, the angel-song:
'Christ the Redeemer is here!'

Silent night, holy night:
Son of God, O how bright
Love is smiling from your face!
Strikes for us now the hour of grace,
Jesus, Lord at your birth.

Joseph Mohr (1792-1848) Tr. Stopford Augustus Brooke (1832-1916)

Bible Reading: Luke 2 v 8 - 14

The Shepherds are told about the birth of Jesus

Poem: Angel Voices Never Singing

Carol: StF 221

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

'Fear not,' _said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind),
' Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and humankind.

'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:

'The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
And in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, and thus
Addressed their joyful song:'

'All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to earth
Begin and never cease.'

Nahum Tate (1652-1715)

Bible Reading: Matthew 2 v 1 - 11

The Wise Men journey to find Jesus

Poem: What Kings?

Carol: H&P 119

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay:
In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep
On a cold winters night that was so deep:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
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:

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:

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:

Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:

Anonymous

MESSAGE - Revd Robin Selmes

Carol: StF 204

In the bleak mid-winter
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 mid-winter,
Long ago.

Heaven cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Throngèd the air –
But his mother only,
In her maiden bliss, Worshipped the Belovèd
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 I can I give him –
Give my heart.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Reading: John 1 v 1 - 14
Jesus, Light of the World

Poem: Our Christmas Crib

Carol: StF 212

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, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light of Light eternal,
Lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
Begotten, not created:

See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:

Lo, star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ-child
Bring our hearts' oblations:

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
In the highest':

18thC Tr. Frederick Oaley (1802-80) & others
Blessing

Women

Original poems by Heather Gallagher

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