



## **Blackford Parish Church** **The Christmas double issue** **Order of Service**

The carols, readings and talk  
from Christmas Eve

The carols, reading and  
reflection from Christmas Day

Where to find services on  
BBC TV this Christmas

**Although we will not be holding face-to-face services until we come out of Tier 4 restrictions, our building will be open today, Christmas Eve, from 2-5pm for a bit of quiet space.**

**Both our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services can be found on our website [www.blackfordparishchurch.org/christmas](http://www.blackfordparishchurch.org/christmas)  
Now join us for the Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight**

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 Immanuel:

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 (1707-1788)*

Ding dong merrily on high,  
In heav'n the bells are ringing:  
Ding dong! verily the sky  
Is riv'n with angels singing.  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,  
Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And "Io, io, io!"  
By priest and people sungen.  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime  
Your matin chime, ye ringers;  
May you beautifully rhyme  
Your evetime song, ye singers.  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

**Lance Pearson read for us.**  
The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light; on those  
living in the land of deep  
darkness a light has dawned. 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 Counsellor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace. Of the  
greatness 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.  
(Isaiah 9: 2, 6, 7)

**We didn't use the traditional tune  
for this next carol but instead  
sang it to ""On Ilkla Moor Baht  
'at" . Go on try it.**

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," he said, for mighty  
dread  
Had seized their troubled minds.  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind"

"To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
The Saviour who is Christ the  
Lord  
And this shall be the sign!

"The heavenly Babe you there  
shall find  
To human view displayed  
And meanly wrapped in swathing  
bands  
And in a manger laid."

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

**Mairi read from Luke Chapter 2  
with this a break in the middle  
where Kirsty Duncan sang this  
favourite carol**

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room at the inn.

Away in a manger no crib for a bed  
The little lord Jesus laid down his sweet head  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay  
The little lord Jesus asleep on the hay.



The cattle are lowing the baby awakes  
But little lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love you lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me lord Jesus i ask you to stay  
Close by me for ever, and love me, i pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
And fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

For this new carol, which was also in the school assembly, we have to learn Makaton language to sign as we sing.

All the angels sing, that Christ has come  
To a manger bare Mary laid him there  
Come on fill the sky - With shouts of praise  
Lift your voice with me And sing, sing, sing, sing, sing!

Emmanuel, Emmanuel God is with us  
It's the true meaning of Christmas  
Jesus has come and changed life forever  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel God is with us  
Ev'ry day and not just Christmas  
Jesus has come and changed our lives forever more

All the angels sing That Christ has come  
To a world in need Good news indeed  
Love wrapped as a babe Gave everything  
For you and I Let's sing, sing, sing, sing, sing!

Join with all the angels singing Giving glory unto him  
One and all now lift your voices To him praises bring  
All of heaven sings his praises All creation worships him  
He is Jesus Holy one He is Christ the King

***Words & Music Doiug Horley:***

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Carole-Ann, Kim, Struan, John, Shona, Moira, William, Lindsey,  
Laura and Jane brought us this thought provoking poem..

They say there's a big man who lives far away,  
Supposedly jolly but it's hard to say.  
I've never seen him, and neither have you.  
But the children believe, whether or not it's true.

He's known as a loner, with many a quirk  
No time for a chat, he's embroiled in his work  
He keeps to himself, for most of the year,  
I reckon we're grateful he doesn't appear.

We send him requests, for particular needs,  
But we never hear back, who knows if he heeds?  
We try to be good, give his arm a twist,  
To merit our place on his blessed little list.

And maybe one day if we do what we should,  
He'll give us our things, so long as we're good.  
I've had it to here, I'm calling his bluff:  
He's a weird moralistic dispenser of stuff!

Granted, this rant is a strange one to pick  
But listen I'm not really after St Nick  
As strange as he is - and Santa is odd -  
I'm really addressing most folks' view of God.

It's God who we see as a distant Big Guy –  
An ancient, invisible, St Nick in the Sky.  
"He's sees you asleep, He knows when you wake"  
He's watching and waiting to spot your mistake.

And just like with Santa, requests we hand in,  
We want all his things but we don't want him.  
That's our connection with old Father Christmas.  
We might dress it up, it's essentially business.

Throughout the year, good behaviour's our onus  
When Christmas rolls round we're expecting our bonus.  
"Just leave us the gifts, Nick, we've been good enough!  
And then please push on, now we've got all your stuff!"

I mean Santa is interesting, curious, quirky  
But no-one wants him to share their Turkey!  
I'm sure his "ho, ho, hos" are sublime,  
But I fear what he'll say once he's drunk our mulled wine.

That's old St Nick, but the picture rings true,  
It's how we imagine what God is like too.  
But Christmas resounds with a stunning "Not so!"  
The One from on high was born down below.

To a world in need He did not send another.  
God the Son became God our Brother.  
He drew alongside, forever to dwell,  
Our God in the flesh, Immanuel.

This God in the Manger uproots all our notions:  
A heavenly stooping, divine demotion.  
Born in a stable, wriggling on straw,  
Fully committed to life in the raw.

Santa gives things and then goes away.  
Jesus shows up, to befriend and to stay.  
Santa rewards those with good behaviour.  
Jesus comes near to the broken as Saviour.

If you don't like God, I think I know why...  
You probably think He's St Nick in the Sky.  
You're right to reject that far-away stranger!  
This Christmas look down to the God in the manger.



**Voted Britain's favourite carol on the BBC Songs of Praise Poll last weekend, Amy Davidge sang this carol for us.**

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn  
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born  
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming  
Here come the Wise Men from Orient land  
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger  
In all our trials born to be our friend  
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger  
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend  
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His Gospel is Peace  
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother  
And in His name, all oppression shall cease  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we

Let all within us Praise His Holy name  
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!  
His power and glory evermore proclaim  
His power and glory evermore proclaim

Our Hot Chocolate Youth Group contributed a film as is now a tradition. This year it was based on the "Outside/In" leaflet handed out with the printed copies off this Order of Service

Sandy Marshall sang this carol for us accompanied on guitar, as originally sung 200 years ago..

Still the night, Holy the night,  
Sleeps the world, hid from sight,  
Mary and Joseph in stable bare,  
Watch o'er the child, beloved and fair,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Still the night, Holy the night,  
Shepherds first saw the light,  
Heard resounding clear and strong,  
Far and near, the Angels song,  
Christ the Redeemer is here,  
Christ the Redeemer is here.

Still the night, Holy the night,  
Son of God, love's pure light,  
Love is smiling from thy face,  
Strikes for us now the hour of grace,  
Saviour since thou art born,  
Saviour since thou art born.

### Gordon's Christmas Eve talk

I've put a penalty clause into the next edition of the church newsletter for any contributor using words like "unprecedented, uncertain or challenging" so I can hardly use them here. But thankfully the Christmas accounts give me enough words to describe life here and now as well as life there and then; they're dark like the prophet Isaiah saw; they're characterised by dashed anticipation for great events and family milestones; just ask Joseph about his wedding plans. There is a sense of being out of control. The Jews of that time were in a country overrun by the Romans and they had no control. Mary –



several months pregnant and only just back from Jerusalem, is off again with Joseph to make the 70 mile journey back down to Bethlehem – look as hard as you like, there’s no mention of a donkey – just because the government has declared a mandatory travel order and you must go to where your family are from. But none of that family let them into their houses. No room at the Inn. Hospitality is closed. A planned happy event is cut down to the bare minimum; laying your baby down in a dirty animals feeding trough must have been the last straw.

So since we can identify with this storyline, what can we take from it today as we invited ourselves into the story.

The shout of “Fear Not” goes out to petrified shepherds and to us. You’d need to have a heart of stone not to be affected by what this year has brought, the pain of the past few months, the uncertainty of the present; the anxiety of the future. But with the shout of Fear Not comes the reason – Good news!

Good news, there’s a vaccine.. There’s the potential of being beyond the power of the virus through this and eventually the virus no longer being present among us. But have you realised that great though the vaccine news is, the Christmas message is even better. The biggest problem the world faces is not the virus but the wrong that is in each one of us. Scroll back through the discussion on the Blackford Cares Facebook page and see all the caring, sharing, encouraging and supporting how many complaints you see about the virus. Then count up the complaints about other people. Those who do this, those who don’t do that, those who said this or that, those who don’t realise what I’m up against, those who don’t realise what others are up against. Those who are selfish, thoughtless, negligent, arrogant, greedy. Joseph was told to call the baby “Jesus” because he will save his people from their sins. That’s what sin is; the virus that has control of us, a rebellion that keeps us apart from God and puts distance and barriers in our relationships as well. But sin is the virus for which Christmas – through Easter – offers a saving vaccine.

Mary’s an amazing girl; there’s something about her humility in a proud world that made God choose her and she made that promise of Christmas, personal; “In God my saviour shall my heart rejoice” she sings. Are you planning on getting the benefit of the vaccine by everyone else taking it and you might just get swept up in the melee because you’d not stepped out of line too much?

Or have you realised that you’ll need to sit down, roll up your sleeves

and accept your need for it too. That's how the Good News of Christmas works too. Make it personal.

Have I given you something to ponder? Mary did a lot of pondering. I'll settle for pondering for the time being, but if you can follow the shepherds' example and praise him and pass it on ...all the better. There is hope, there is light, there is a wonderful counsellor; he's not St Nick in the sky he's the God in the Manger who comes near to the broken as Saviour.



I don't know if you're having peas for your Christmas dinner but I've given you a few p's to chew over today. **Penalty, , proud, plans, pregnant, petrified, pain, potential, power, presence, problem, people, pride, promise, personal, ponder, praise, pass** it on

### **Our final carol on Christmas Eve is a call to praise**

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

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, glory in the highest

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning  
Jesus, to Thee be glory given  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing

### **We close Carols by Candlelight with a prayer**

Let's pray: Lord God, this has been a very strange year, a hard year, a puzzling year, a year of hopes, and a year of losses. We thank you for those who you have brought into our lives this year; we mourn those we have lost this year. We arrive at Christmas in various degrees of expectation, meet us here as we are, challenge us, comfort us, excite us, rebuild us, protect us, provide for us, provoke us to ponder, to praise and to pass it on Amen

**Up until Saturday evening we were planning to hold a Christmas Day service in our building; instead we recorded it during the week and put it on our website.**

**Mairi lit the fifth Advent candle and introduced the first carol.**

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 men their songs employ;  
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.

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.

**Jacqui Crawford reads John 1:1-7.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 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.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

## Mairi's Reflection

That first Christmas morning was like a light being turned on. Isaiah's prophesy that we heard read by Lance last night has been fulfilled – the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Mary and Joseph saw it; the shepherds saw it, Anna and Simeon at the temple saw it a few days later. And all of them told other people about what they had seen when they saw Jesus.

In writing his Gospel, John doesn't take time over the details of mangers, donkeys or shepherds, but as we heard from Jacqui, he immediately cuts to the chase and introduces Jesus as "the Light that shines in the darkness." And he then introduces John the Baptist – a different John – as "a man sent from God...(who) came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe."

You and I need to be like John – and the shepherds and Anna and Simeon. Jesus taught that we are to let our light shine, but we need to remember that "Our Light" is Jesus. We are not the light, we are just mirrors that reflect His light. "Witnesses to the light" as John would say.

If we are going to reflect the light of Jesus, we must remember a couple of things:

1. We need to be close to people and have a clear line of sight with them, no barriers. No shouting from a distance. but walking close with them – as close as physical distancing will allow.
2. And we need to have a close, uncluttered line of sight to Jesus as well. We cannot reflect any of the light if we are not prepared and ready to receive it in the first place.

When we remember those two things, we will reflect His light to the world. In amongst the clutter of Christmas – and this Christmas has more clutter than ever before – take time to clear our lines of sight to Christ and to others so that we too can share the light. Amen



## Our final carol

The virgin Mary had a baby boy, (x3)  
and they say that his name was Jesus.

### Chorus

He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.  
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.

Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!

He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.

The angels sang when the baby born, (x3)  
and they say that his name was Jesus. [Refrain]

The wise men saw where the baby born, (x3)  
and they say that his name was Jesus. [Refrain]

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### Christmas Eve:

- 5:30pm (BBC2) **Carols from King's** The world-famous King's College Choir sing carols old and new
- 11:45pm (BBC1) **Christmas Celebration** Sally Magnusson takes us into Christmas morning with much-loved carols from churches across Scotland.

### Christmas Day

- 6:55am (BBC2) **Carols from King's** The world-famous King's College Choir sing carols old and new (Repeat!)
- 10:00am (BBC1) **Christmas morning:** worship with a gospel flavour, from Birmingham, led by Bishop Paul McCalla.
- 12:00noon (BBC Scotland) **The Service** Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Rev Calum MacLeod host a special Christmas Day service from St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh.
- 7:00pm (BBC Scotland) **Christmas Celebration** Sally Magnusson takes us into Christmas morning with much-loved carols from churches across Scotland. (Repeat!)