

St Nicolas
Forest Hill with Shotover

Advent Carol Service

Welcome and notices

Organ voluntary

Introit sung by the Choir

O vis eternitatis by Hildegard of Bingen

Bidding Prayer

In the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

We have come together at this season to proclaim and receive in our hearts the good news of the coming of God's kingdom, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate with confidence and joy the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that we may respond in penitence and faith to the glory of his kingdom, its works of justice and its promise of peace, its blessing and its hope.

And as we declare our hope in God's loving purpose, we pray for this aching world which waits for his coming. We pray for all who at this time especially need his pity and protection: the sick in body, mind or spirit; those who suffer from loss of dignity or loss of hope; those who face the future with fear, or walk in the shadow of death.

May God, of his grace and mercy, grant to all his people a new trust in his good providence and a new obedience to his sovereign word, for to him is most justly due all glory, honour, worship and praise, which we offer up in the words that Christ himself taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Candles

**Lord Jesus,
light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.
As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now.
Amen.**

Hymn 484: Long ago, prophets knew

Prayers of Penitence

Christ the light of the world
has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves
and confess our sins.

Silence is kept

Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour

was born in poverty in a manger.

Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks

to go to Bethlehem.

Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star

to find Jesus the King.

Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw us to himself,

and cleanse us from all our sins

that we may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bible Reading: Genesis 1:1-15 (NRSV)

The dawn of creation

Carol sung by the Choir

The truth from above *arranged by R Vaughan Williams*

Poem: A Hymn to God the Father by John Donne

Carol sung by the Choir

Adam lay ybounden *by Boris Ord*

Bible Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9 (NRSV)

A rod from the stem of Jesse

Carol sung by the Choir

I know a flower, it springeth *by Michael Praetorius*

Prayer

Lord our God,
on the first day of creation
you made the light that scatters all darkness.
Let Christ, the light of lights,
hidden from all eternity,
shine at last on your people
and free us from the darkness of sin.
Fill our lives with joy
as we go out to welcome your Son at his coming.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

Hymn 26: O come, O come, Emmanuel

Bible Reading: Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

The annunciation

Carol sung by the Choir

Gabriel to Mary came *arranged by Alan Bullard*

Poem: The angel and the girl are met *by Edwin Muir*

Carol sung by the Choir

I sing of a maiden *by Ken Northey*

Bible Reading: Luke 1:67-79 (NRSV)

Prophecy of Zacharias

Carol sung by the Choir

Hark the glad sound! *by Thomas Merritt*

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised Saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn 28: Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Intercessions

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid
we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.
Help us to live in the light of your coming
and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to your world as King of the nations.
Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.
Break into our lives,
where we struggle with sickness and distress,
and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.
Give us with all the faithful departed
a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus,
with power and great glory.
Lift us up to meet you,
that with all your saints and angels
we may live and reign with you
in your new creation.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Silence is kept.

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;
give new courage to your people,
who trust in your love.

By your coming,
raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom
on earth as in heaven,
where you live and reign
with the Father and the Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient
to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world

we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Dismissal

Hymn 31: Come thou long expected Jesus

Blessing

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon us his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill us with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the Godbearer,
give us grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Organ voluntary

Four Parishes Benefice

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