

# Christmas Carol Service



## *Welcome*

Welcome,

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

- for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;
- for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognize their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;
- for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

**Our Father, which 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.**

## Carol : O come ye faithful

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.

**R.** O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest:

**R.** O come let us...

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

**R.** O come let us adore him....

## *Introduction*

Here is a passage from the old testament, which announces the birth of our saviour.

## *Isaiah 11,1-9 The prophecy*

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, (who was king David's father); from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

## *Commentary*

This text tells us about the coming of a messiah, a saviour. This one does not come from nowhere, he is a descendant of King David and he must restore the kingship. However, he is presented like a child. Funny savior, isn't it? This tells us who this king is: he is full of innocence, he is just, he is the prince of peace. So much so that the whole creation is appeased.

### **Carol : First Noel**

1. The first Noel the angel 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.

**R.** Noel, Noel Noel Noel, born is the King of Israel.

6. 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 our life hath bought.

### *Luke 1,26-38 The annunciation*

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

## *Commentary*

Today, in the 21st century, it is difficult to believe in the virginity of Mary. I believe that this text does not speak to us of purity. Mary is no purer than any other. But she is the one who welcomes the promise of God, the coming of the messiah. Thus this text affirms on the one hand that God keeps his promises and on the other hand that nothing is impossible for him. He always finds a way for life, to join us in our lives.

### *Carol: Silent Night*

1. 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.

2. Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

3. 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.

## *Luke 2,1-20 The birth of Jesus*

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 guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 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 Savior 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 favor 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 to them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

### Carol : *Away in a manger*

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in your tender care, and take us to heaven to live with you there.

## *Commentary*

For this commentary, we want you to work: and you can reply in English if you want...

Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?

What does it mean that the angel announced the good news to shepherds?

What did this text mean for you about God's plan?

### *Carol: Once in the royal David's city*

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.

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 Savior holy.

3. 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.

### *Universal prayer*

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.



## *Announcements and collection*

- Living creche next Friday the 23 December at 5h30 pm, by and for children, and big children. Here in the temple.
- French Christmas celebration the 25 December at 10h30, for everyone, in the temple.
- Now it's time for the collection, for the mission of our church.

## *Blessing*

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing.

