A black and white logo

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**Service of Nine**

A christmas tree with ornaments

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**Service of**

**Nine Lessons**

**and Carols**

**Sunday 22 December 2024**

**at 6.30pm**

**Led by Revd Simon Winn, Vicar**

**Director of Music - Benjamin Newlove**

A blue and white sign with a ear

Description automatically generated**Organist - Ben Banks**

*A warm welcome to our service of Nine Lessons and Carols, which takes us across the sweep of scripture declaring the good news of God’s outrageous love and ongoing work of saving us from ourselves.*

*Tonight, we are reminded that the Lord’s love is expressed profoundly and personally by coming to us in human form. The incarnation, as we call it, is that moment in human history when the God we might think of as distant from us, became more personal than any could have imagined, through Jesus Christ.*

*So, we hope that through the story of scripture, the beauty of music and the reflection of our prayers, you might receive and seek to share the peace and light of Christ this Christmas. We are pleased to welcome Greenwich’s community leaders and representatives to our service tonight. We wish you and your loved ones the blessings of Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year.*

***Revd Simon Winn, Vicar of St Alfege Church***

The collection (during hymn *O come, all ye faithful*), together with the collections from all our special services in Advent and Christmas will be divided equally between four charities:

* Embrace the Middle East
* St Alfege School food bank
* The Children’s Society
* Greenwich Homeless Project

Please place your cash offering in the bags during the hymnor use the contactless card reader (at the west and north doors) for electronic payments. If you are a UK taxpayer, the charities can claim 25% Gift Aid in addition to your donation. Please do complete a Gift Aid envelope whether your donation is cash or electronic (in which case write the amount on the envelope).

# *We light our hand-held candles*

# Hymn

*The first two verses are sung by the choir only.*

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.

***Please stand***

**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.**

**For he 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.**

**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;**

**where like stars his children crowned**

**all in white shall wait around.**

*Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)*

*Arranged by Sir Stephen Cleobury (1948-2019)*

# Bidding Prayer

# ****The Lord’s Prayer****

**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.**

***Please sit. We extinguish our hand-held candles.***

**Choir**

***This is the truth sent from above* - traditional arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and Christopher Robinson (born 1936)**

This is the truth sent from above,  
The truth of God, the God of love;  
Therefore don’t turn me from your door,  
But hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate  
Is that God did man create;  
The next thing which to you I’ll tell  
Woman was made with man to dwell.

And we were heirs to endless woes,  
Till God the Lord did interpose;  
And so a promise soon did run  
That he would redeem us by his Son.

And at that season of the year  
Our blest Redeemer did appear;  
He here did live, and here did preach,  
And may thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,  
To show us how we must be saved;  
And if you want to know the way,  
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

**First lesson**

Read by Peter Kinnison, Reader (Licensed Lay Minister)

**Genesis 3: 8 - 15**

*God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman will bruise the serpent's head.*

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.’

*Thanks be to God*

**Choir**

***Adam lay y’bounden* – David Hill (born 1957)**

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 founden,

Written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,

The apple taken been,

Ne had never our Lady

A been heavené queen

Blessed be the time

That apple taken was,

Therefore we mount singen,

Deo gracias.

*Text: Anon C15th*

**Second lesson**

Read by Keeley Taylor, Choral Scholar

**Genesis 22: 15 - 18**

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed all nations shall be blessed.*

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*

**Choir**

# *And the glory of the Lord* from *Messiah* -

# George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

*(Isaiah 40:5)*

**Third lesson**

Read by Alison Fisher, St Alfege Church Heritage Ambassador and member of social history research team (Best Team, London Heritage Volunteer Awards 2024)

**Isaiah 9: 2, 6 and 7**

*The Prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.*

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*

***Please stand***

**Hymn**

# ****Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew, come to make all things new, bear his people’s burden, freely love and pardon.****

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes, when he comes,  
who will make him welcome?***

**God in time, God in man,  
this is God’s timeless plan:  
he will come, as a man  
born himself of woman,  
God divinely human:**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring …***

**Mary, hail! Though afraid,  
she believed, she obeyed.  
In her womb God is laid,  
till the time expected,  
nurtured and protected:**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring …***

**Journey ends: where afar  
Bethlem shines, like a star  
stable door stands ajar.  
Unborn Son of Mary,  
Saviour do not tarry.**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes, when he comes,  
who will make him welcome?***

***Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-200). Music: From ‘Piae Cantiones’ (1582). Arranged by Gustav Holst (1874-1934) and Benjamin Newlove.***

***Please sit***

**Choir**

***The little road* *to Bethlehem* – Michael Head (1900-1976)**

As I walked down the road at set of sun  
The lambs were coming homeward one by one  
I heard a sheepbell softly calling them  
Along the little road to Bethlehem.

Beside an open door as I drew nigh  
I heard sweet Mary sing a lullaby  
She sang about the lambs at close of day  
And rocked her tiny Boy among the hay.

Across the air the silver sheepbells rang  
"The lambs are coming home," sweet Mary Sang  
"Your star of gold, your star of  
Gold is shining in the sky.  
So sleep, my little Boy, go lullaby."

As I walked down the road at set of sun  
The lambs were coming homeward one by one  
I heard a sheepbell softly calling them  
Along the little road to Bethlehem.

*Words: Margaret Rose*

**Fourth lesson**

Read by Georgia Sims, Chief Executive Officer, Greenwich Homeless Project

**Micah 5: 2 - 5a**

*The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem*

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

*Thanks be to God*

**Choir**

***In dulci jubilo* -arr. Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856)**

*In dulci jubilo* (in quiet joy) Let us our homage show; Our heart’s joy reclineth *In praesepio*, (In a manger) And like a bright star shineth, *Matris in gremio.*(In the mother’s lap)  *Alpha es et O* (Thou art Alpha and Omega)

*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!* (Prince of Glory) *Trahe me post te!* (Draw me unto thee)

*O Patris caritas,* (Of Father’s caring) *O Nati lenitas!* (O newborn’s mildness) Deep were we stained *Per nostra criminal;* (by our crimes) But thou hast for us gained *Coelorum guadia* (Heavenly joy) O that we were there.

*Ubi sunt gaudia,* where, (where be joys) If that they be not there, There are angels singing, *Nova cantica,* (New songs) There the bells are ringing *In Regis curia:* (At the King’s court) O that we were there.

*Trad.German 1570 -**edited and adapted Reginald Jacques*

**Fifth lesson**

Read by Cheryl Raithby, Acting Headteacher, James Wolfe Primary School

**Luke 1: 26 - 38**

*The birth of Jesus foretold*

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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with 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*

**Choir**

***Benedicamus Domino -* Peter Warlock (1894-1930)**

*In the original Latin:*

Procedenti puero Eya, nobis annus est!  
Virginis ex utero  
Gloria! Laudes! Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

Sine viri semine Eya, nobis annus est!  
Natus est de virgine  
Gloria! Laudes! Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

Sine viri copia Eya, nobis annus est!  
Natus est ex Maria  
Gloria! Laudes! Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

In hoc festo determine Eya, nobis annus est!  
Benedicamus Domino!  
Gloria! Laudes! Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

*English translation:*

A boy comes forth, Eya, this is our time,  
From the womb of a virgin.  
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

Without the seed of a man, Eya, this is our time,  
He is born of a virgin.  
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

Without the means of a man, Eya, this is our time,  
He is born of Mary  
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

On this appointed feast, Eya, this is our time,   
Let us bless the Lord.  
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

*Poem from Sloane MS 2593 (time of Henry VI)*

**Sixth lesson**

Read by Irene Bishop, Churchwarden

**Luke 2: 1 - 7**

*St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor

of Syria.

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*

**Choir**

***The seven joys of Mary -* trad. arr. William Whitehead**

**(born 1970)**

The first good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of one;  
To see the blessed Jesus Christ When He was first her son:

When He was first her son, good man:  
*And blessed may He be, Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
To all eternity.*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of two;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ To make the lame to go:

To make the lame to go, good man:  
*And blessed may He be …*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of three;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ To make the blind to see;

To make the blind to see, good man:  
*And blessed may He be …*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of four;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ To read the Bible o'er:

To read the Bible o'er, good man:  
*And blessed may He be …*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of five;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ To bring the dead alive:

To bring the dead alive, good man:  
*And blessed may He be …*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of six;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ To bear the Crucifix:

To bear the Crucifix, good man:  
*And blessed may He be …*

The next good joy our Mary had, It was the joy of seven;  
To see her own son, Jesus Christ   
To wear the crown of heaven:

To wear the crown of heaven, good man,  
*And blessed may He be …*

***Please stand***

**Hymn**

*Verse four is sung by the choir only*

**God rest you merry, gentlemen,**

**Let nothing you dismay.**

**For Jesus Christ our Saviour**

**was born upon this day.**

**To save us all from Satan’s power**

**when we were gone astray:**

***O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,***

***O tidings of comfort and joy.***

**From God our heav’nly Father *(choir only)***

**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:**

***O tidings of comfort and joy …***

**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 blessed babe to find:**

***O tidings of comfort and joy …***

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:

***O tidings of comfort and joy …***

**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:**

***O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,***

***O tidings of comfort and joy.***

*Words: Traditional*

*Arranged by Sir David Wilcocks (1919-2015)*

***Please sit***

**Choir**

**The Cherry Tree Carol - traditional English arr. Sir Stephen Cleobury (1948-2019)**

Joseph was an old man and an old man was he,  
When he wedded Mary, in the land of Galilee.

Joseph and Mary walked through an orchard good,  
Where was cherries and berries, so red as any blood.

O then bespoke Mary, so meek and oh, so mild:  
‘Pluck me one cherry, Joseph, for I am with child.’

O then bespoke Joseph, with words most unkind:  
‘Let him pluck thee a cherry that brought thee with child.’

O then bespoke the baby, within his mother’s womb:  
‘Bow down then the tallest tree, for my mother to have some.’

Then bowed down the highest tree unto his mother’s hand;  
Then she cried, ‘See, Joseph, I have cherries at command.’

O then bespoke Joseph: ‘I have done Mary wrong;  
But cheer up, my dearest, and be ye not cast down.’

Then Mary plucked a cherry, as red as any blood,  
Then Mary she went homewards all with her heavy load.

**Seventh lesson**

Read by Councillor Jit Ranabhat, Mayor of the Royal Borough of Greenwich

**Luke 2: 8 - 16**

*The shepherds go to the manger*

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*

***Please stand for the hymn***

The collection (during the final hymn), together with the collections from all our special services in Advent and Christmas will be divided equally between four charities:

***Embrace the Middle East*** is a UK charity which works with local partners in the Middle East to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised communities including refugees from current conflicts.

***The St Alfege School Food Bank*** is run from our church school, St Alfege with St Peter Primary School, and supports families with children at the school who are struggling because of the cost-of-living crisis.

***The Children’s Society***provides specialist support that empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover their hope.  Working alongside young people, their families and community, the Society seeks to create a society built for all children.

***Greenwich Homeless Project*** offers single room emergency accommodation for 13 people from October – March. It is a charity which also provides a year-round Day Centre for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness in Greenwich. The charity has a team of more than 100 volunteers.

Please place your cash offering in the bags during the collection or use the contactless card readers at the west and north doors for electronic payments.

Please also note that if you are a UK taxpayer the charity can claim 25% Gift Aid in addition to your donation. If you are eligible, please do complete a Gift Aid envelope and put your donation in it. If you are using the contactless card reader please write ‘contactless’ on an envelope together with a note of the amount you donated.

**Hymn**

*Verse three is sung by the choir only*

**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:**

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

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

**See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle**

**leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;**

**we too will thither bend our joyful foot-steps**

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

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

**Lo, star-led chieftains, magi, Christ adoring**

**offer him incense, gold and myrrh;**

**we to the Christ-child bring our hearts oblations:**

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

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

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,**

**sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:**

**‘Glory to God in the highest:’**

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

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

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born on Christmas morning;**

**Jesu, to thee be glory given:**

**Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:**

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

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

***Words: Latin, 18th century tr. F. Oakeley (1802-80)***

***Arranged: Sir Philip Ledger (1937-2012)***

***Please sit***

**Choir**

***The Sussex Carol*, traditional English - arr. Sir David Willcox (1919-2015)**

On Christmas night all Christians sing,

to hear the news the angels bring,

news of great joy, news of great mirth,

news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad,

since our redeemer made us glad,

when from our sin he set us free,

all for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before his grace,

then life and health come in its place;

angels and men with joy may sing,

all for to see the new-born King.

All out of darkness we have light,

which made the angels sing this night:

“Glory to God and peace to men,

now and for evermore. Amen.

**Eighth lesson**

Read by Amanda Wilson, Headteacher, St Alfege with

St Peter's Primary School

**Matthew 2: 1 - 12**

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise menfrom 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 Messiahwas 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 shepherdmy people Israel.”’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise menand 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*Thanks be to God*

**Choir**

***Nowell sing we -* Matthew Martin (born 1976)**

*Nowell sing we both all and some, Now Rex pacificus is ycome*.

Ex ortum est in love and liss, now Christ his grace he gan us giss,

and with his body us bought to bliss

both all and some. *Nowell sing we …*

De fructu ventris of Mary bright both God and man in her alight,

out of disease he did us dight

both all and some. *Nowell sing we …*

Gloria tibi ay and bliss; God unto his grace he us wiss,

the rent of heaven that we not miss

both all and some. *Nowell sing we …*

*15th Century English Carol*

***We re-light our hand-held candles. Please stand.***

**Ninth lesson**

Read by Revd Dr Tati Gutteridge, Curate

**John 1: 1 - 14**

*St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

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*

***Please remain standing***

**Hymn**

**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”.**

**Hark the herald-angels sing**

**Glory to the new-born King.**

**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, the incarnate Deity,**

**Pleased as man with man to dwell,**

**Jesus our Emmanuel.**

**Hark the herald-angels sing**

**Glory to the new-born King.**

**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.**

**Hark the herald-angels sing**

**Glory to the new-born King.**

***Words: Charles Wesley (1707-88) and others***

***Arranged by Sir Philip Ledger (1937- 2012)***

**Collect for Christmas Eve**

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. **Amen**

**Blessing**

May the joy of the angels,

the eagerness of the shepherds,

the perseverance of the wise men,

the obedience of Joseph and Mary,

and the peace of the Christ-child

be yours this Christmas;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

***Please remain standing as the choir and clergy process out. Please extinguish your hand-held candle before leaving***

***your seat.***

# Organ Voluntaries

***In dulci jubilo,* BWV 729 - J.S. Bach (1685-1750)**

***Allegro* from *Symphony No. 6* - Charles-Marie Widor.**

*Please join us in the Church Hall after the service for mince pies and mulled wine.*

*As you leave tonight, please feel free to take a copy of 'Follow the Star: Calm and Bright' - a booklet of daily Meditations for the twelve days of Christmas from the Church of England.*

**Supporting St Alfege Church**

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| We would also ask you to consider setting up a regular standing order to St Alfege Church to support the work  and ministry of the church. Account: PCC of St Alfege, Greenwich. Sort Code: 60-09-16 Account number: 25249304. You can also use this QR code to donate. | A qr code with a logo  Description automatically generated with medium confidence |

**More Information**

Please check our website for more information and news:

[**www.st-alfege.org**](http://www.st-alfege.org)**.uk**

**Vicar: Revd Simon Winn**

**Curate: Revd Dr Tati Gutteridge**

**Church Office: 020 8853 0687** [**office@st-alfege.org.uk**](mailto:office@st-alfege.org.uk)

***Want to discover more of our history?***

***Why not join one of our Hidden Spaces guided tours?***

Next tours on Saturday 4 and 18 January 2025, at 11.45am. Tickets £9 via:

<https://www.st-Alfege.org.uk/Articles/682086/St_Alfege_Church_Heritage.aspx>

***The Unseen: Spotlights on the Archive***

Enjoy bi-monthly spotlights on the church’s archive, bringing to the foreground hidden stories and characters connected to St Alfege Church. Head to the Chapel of our Lady with St Paul (South Chapel) to enjoy a new display about Christmas.

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| **Christmas Services at St Alfege**  **Tuesday 24 December Christmas Eve**  5pm Christingle Service  11pm Midnight Mass  **Wednesday 25 December Christmas Day**  11am Sung Eucharist  **Sunday 29 December**  8am Holy Communion (BCP)  10am Parish Eucharist  The services of Midnight Mass, Christmas Day Sung Eucharist and Parish Eucharist on Sunday 29 December will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [*h*ttps://www.youtube.com/c/StAlfegeChurch](https://www.youtube.com/c/StAlfegeChurch)  Weekday services will be paused for the Christmas break from 26 December and will resume on Monday 6 January 2025 with Morning Prayer at 8.30 am. |

**The Christmas tree in church has been donated in memory of Kevin Howes**

***Please take this booklet home with you***