

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

4 December 2022

Welcome

Advent Candle lighting

Reading: Luke 1.26-28

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin promised to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

The Lord is with you
And also with you

Toy collection & presentation

Song:

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.

Refrain:

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

2 God from true God, and
Light from Light eternal,
born of a virgin, to earth he comes!
Only-begotten Son of God the Father:
[Refrain]

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

Nativity part 1: Mary

Song: O little town of Bethlehem

1 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 streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King
and peace to all the earth.

3 How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

4 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!

Nativity part 2: Shepherds

Song: Hark the herald

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. [Refrain]

3 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 we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

Nativity part 3: Shepherds to Jesus

Song: 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.

Nativity part 4: Star-watchers

Poem: read by Anthea and Chris

'So what is the point of angels and
shepherds
And camels and stars?' you say.
'Is it just a nice story to tell to the children
To celebrate Christmas Day?'

It's not just a story. It's not just for kids.
It's the hinge on which history swings!
That Bethlehem baby grew into a man
Who challenged all powers and kings.

He taught us that love is better than hate,
That serving beats being 'in charge'.
He showed us the value of each human life:
The little as well as the large.

And then, on a cross, he died for that dream,
Died to take all our wrongs away.
And walked, three days later, right out of his
tomb
To turn death's dark night to day.

And that is the good news the angels
proclaimed:
The heart of all Jesus would do.
A new life for now. A new life forever.
That's his Christmas present to you!

Song: From Heaven, You came helpless
babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
"Yet not My will but Yours", He said

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

All age talk & craft: Let the bells ring

Today we're going to make a simple Christmas decoration. A bell wreath to decorate your home. Thread the bell onto the fuzzy stick, twist the top and add your bow and label. Kids – there are extra bells for you, and beads. How many can you get on the fuzzy stick?

Recently I was asked by a friend from another country, how is Christmas celebrated here in the UK? I happily explained advent calendars, sherry and mince pies for Father Christmas, Christmas turkey, cake, pudding, carols, crackers, trees and cards. Where do these traditions come from? We know they come from a real mix of traditions some from the Victorians, some from European traditions, some a bit pagan too.

The conversation made me think about what our Christmas symbols mean. One of the symbols, I've not ever thought much about is a Christmas bell. Who can name a Christmas song with bells in it? Before Jingle bells was

written way, way back in 1857 – would you believe it?! Bells were mainly connected to the church. We don't have a bell in our tower, but most old churches with towers do. What is the bell for? It's a call to worship, it's to remind people to get out of bed and come to church. The bell is just like our notifications on electronic devices – it's to remind us that something is happening.

Why Christmas bells? It was a popular belief that Jesus was born at midnight, and so churches would have a service close to midnight and ring the bell at 12midnight – Christ is born.

A bell gives a message, and the story we've just heard of the birth of Jesus, begins with a message from an angel to Mary. The message was given to her at home, indoors, and to just her. Gabriel brings Mary a message, calling out at the back door something like 'cooeeye – anyone home?' Gabriel's name ends in el, which in the bible, means God is in the person or angel.

Gabriel's message to Mary, in a poor, backwater place is that she will bear a son, she will name him Jesus and her son will change the world, for he will be the son of God. What a message to bring and what a message to hear. The message that we're adding to our decoration is : the Lord is with you. It's what Gabriel said to Mary. What do those words mean to you today? How is the presence of God a blessing to you?

The Lord is with you, is the kind of message that makes you want to ring a bell in joy, jingling all the way around the world. As our bells ring today, we remember Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. But too we ring a bell looking forward, to his promise to come again and renew the earth. May the bells ring out: The Lord is with you.

Lord's prayer – active

Song: We have heard distant bells

We have heard the distant bells
ring out “Christ is coming”.
We have heard the angels tell:
God is on his way.
We’ve seen first-fruits, signs of life,
bursting through the darkness.
In a world of fear and strife,
hope is here to stay.

*How long, until you come to reign?
How long, until you come again?*

One day there will be no pain,
sorrow or injustice.
Jesus will return again
wiping tears away.
Now we sing lamenting songs,
while the chords are broken,
join in the martyrs in “How long?”,
how long must we wait?

Rays of light, a glimpse of dawn,
while the night still lingers.
Earth it groans to be reborn,
help us watch and pray.
Clothe us in the ways of Christ,
ready for his coming.
Worshipping through daily life,
hastening the day,
when you come to reign.

Blessing