20 December 2020, 4pm

*Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet*

Please join with us at 4pm to read this service together either in person, printed form, whatapp or via the youtube link on our website www.christchurchnsfb.org

Each person in the church is assigned a deacon who will call you to see if you are alright in these times and to pray for you. Please feel free to call Ruth too if you wish – only happy to help! 020 8368 8157

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 the 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 Heaven-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Risen with healing in His wings
Mild He lay His glory by
Born that man no more may die

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!*

Welcome to Christ Church NSFB on Sunday 20 December to our candlelight service today. I’m Ruth the minister here. We begin our service by lighting the advent candle. We light one every week in advent as we wait for Christmas day to come. We light a candle to remember Christs light coming into the world.

*Advent candle lighting*

LEADER: The fourth candle we light today shines bright like Mary’s willing heart.
She thought herself weak, and yet she obeyed, was strong and brave to play her part.

Jesus, we welcome you into our lives,

**ALL: O come, O come Emmanuel.**

Make us brave to share your love,

**O come, O come Emmanuel.**

*Reading: Isaiah 7.10-16*

Mark Denham Leahy

**10**The Lord sent another message to Ahaz: **11**“Ask the Lord your God to give you a sign. It can be from deep in the world of the dead or from high up in heaven.”

**12**Ahaz answered, “I will not ask for a sign. I refuse to put the Lord to the test.”

**13**To that Isaiah replied, “Listen, now, descendants of King David. It's bad enough for you to wear out the patience of people—do you have to wear out God's patience too? **14**Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+7.10-16&version=GNT#fen-GNT-20792a)] who is pregnant will have a son and will name him ‘Immanuel.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+7.10-16&version=GNT#fen-GNT-20792b)] **15**By the time he is old enough to make his own decisions, people will be drinking milk and eating honey.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+7.10-16&version=GNT#fen-GNT-20793c)] **16**Even before that time comes, the lands of those two kings who terrify you will be deserted.

*Carol - O little town of Bethlehem*

Felicity Bega (piano) & Tanya Forward (voice)

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

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

*Reading: Luke 1.26-38*

Taiena Saunders

**26**In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. **27**He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. **28**The angel came to her and said, “Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!”

**29**Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. **30**The angel said to her, “Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. **31**You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32**He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, **33**and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!”

**34**Mary said to the angel, “I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?”

**35**The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. **36**Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. **37**For there is nothing that God cannot do.”

**38**“I am the Lord's servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.

*Sermon: He came to me*

Ruth Moriarty

I had just bitten into a truly horrible fig. It looked just fine from the outside, but oh I couldn’t spit it out quicker. What on earth had Mr Abraham been doing – he must have sprayed it with something to make it grow bigger. Ugh, I could still feel that sappy rotten taste all over my teeth. I was trying to find a clean cup for some water. That – that moment was when he came to me.

We’d had a big party the night before, you know for the betrothment. It was so fancy – wine, almonds, dancing and a little ceremony all here. I’d wore my best dress. All our neighbours had come over. To be honest, I was a little hungover. Homemade wine is brutal. Everyone else had got up early to work in the fields, I didn’t have much on that day, so I volunteered to clear up. The house was a tip.

I’m very house proud, everything normally is spic and span, I brush out the floor everyday, sometimes twice. Except with all the party to get ready for, I hadn’t had time to do the washing either, so that was out in the corner too. That was when he came to me.

I was wearing a hideous outfit, baggy trousers and a dodgy old long shirt I’d borrowed from joseph. They didn’t match. I hadn’t washed my face; I was grubby and a bit whiffy. My hair – thankfully was under a scarf. That was when he came to me.

We were trying to save as much money as we could – jo working, me doing odd jobs for my relatives and neighbours. But they were poor too. I didn’t come from a special family, not like jo. He had good Jewish blood.

Us, well there isn’t much to say about my family – which probably tells you a lot. We’re just an ordinary poor family, my parents worked in the fields, so did all my brothers and sisters.

We had a tiny house, and not enough of anything apart from love. Still love doesn’t fill a grumbling belly does it? Its why I’d gotten betrothed early, so jo could look after me. One less mouth to feed. And yet he came to me. He came to me, in my home in Nazareth.

He came to me when I was stuck at home, before I’d even tidied up.

An angel came to me.

The angel Gabriel came to me.

God’s messenger came to me.

Of all the girls in all the towns he had to come to me. What on earth did God want with me?

I wondered if Gabriel was a bit nervous. As we spoke, he looked directly at me, saying words that were lovely but in his eyes, I could see how important his message really was. He was choosing his words really carefully, and they seemed pretty loaded.

I was aware of his breath right infront of me, and how as he spoke it seemed as if his feathery wings fluttered nervously. I realised just how important it was that he had come to me.

His message was from heaven itself, from the throne of God. And it was that he was coming to us all. And it was starting with me. Me with grubby hands and a pounding head, little nobody me in my messy little house. I felt the power of the Spirit.

I knew that same Spirit had made the world, that Spirit that had brooded over the waters, that Spirit was now very very very much in my kitchen.

He was tender with me, he said peace be with you, which is lovely way to say hello. And he said that the lord was with me. I knew that meant trouble ahead. The lord is with you meant you needed him by your side, needed his protection, which have meant his message was important. And it was.

I agreed to God’s plan because I know that when God asks us to take part in something, when God is so keen to act, he sends an angel, that however difficult the journey may be – it will bring joy.

He came to me. With most important people you have to go to them. Most important places, you have to travel to get there. If it’s a special restaurant, we go to them. If it’s a special service at the temple, you have to go to the temple. But he came to me.

He met me right where I was, just as I was. There was literally nothing special about me, apart from God choosing me. The day he came to me changed my life obviously, but most importantly it told me of a God who doesn’t only turn up in the temple, in a special service, at a special time or in a service led by incredible priest.

God’s message came to me, just where I was at home. I’m not saying I don’t go to the temple now; I do, I love it. But maybe this will encourage you – he came to me where I was, stuck at home. He’ll come to you in just the same way, wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever state you are in – he will come to you. That’s what I named the baby in the end – Immanuel – God with us, wherever we are.

*Reading: Luke 1. 46-55*

Maeve Denham Leahy

**46**Mary said,

“My heart praises the Lord;
**47**    my soul is glad because

of God my Saviour,
**48**    for he has remembered me,

his lowly servant!
From now on all people will call me happy,
**49**    because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.
His name is holy;
**50**    from one generation to another
    he shows mercy to those

who honour him.
**51**He has stretched out his mighty arm
    and scattered the proud

with all their plans.
**52**He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones,
    and lifted up the lowly.
**53**He has filled the hungry with good things,
    and sent the rich away with empty hands.
**54**He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors,
    and has come to the help

of his servant Israel.
**55**He has remembered to

show mercy to Abraham
    and to all his descendants forever!”

*Carol - Away in a manger*

Rev Craig Downes (Albany Park Baptist Church, prior to Enfield Baptist)

Away in a manger
No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head

The stars in the sky
Look down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing
The poor Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my side
'Til morning is nigh

Be near me, Lord Jesus
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever
And love me, I pray

Bless all the dear children
In Thy tender care
And take us to Heaven
To live with Thee there

*Reading: Matthew 1.18-25*

Jean Kearey

**18**This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. **19**Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. **20**While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. **21**She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins.”

**22**Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, **23**“A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel” (which means, “God is with us”).

**24**So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. **25**But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

*Carol - Silent Night*

John Moriarty on saxophone

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

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

*Reading: Luke 2.1-7*

Evonne Williams

**2**At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. **2**When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. **3**Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown.

**4**Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. **5**He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, **6**and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. **7**She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

*Carol - Silent Night*

John Moriarty on saxophone

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

*Reading: Luke 2.8-20*

Nathan and Jaydon Ogebemudia

**8**There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. **9**An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, **10**but the angel said to them, “Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. **11**This very day in David's town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord! **12**And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

**13**Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

**14**“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
    and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!”

**15**When the angels went away from them back 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.”

**16**So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. **17**When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. **18**All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. **19**Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. **20**The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

*Intercessions*

Led by Desmond Gordon

Let us pray:

Eternal God our Heavenly Father, we come to you this evening focus our thoughts on you coming to this world as our Lord and Saviour.

Even in the darkest moments, your love gives way to hope. Love compels us to fight against the Covid 19 virus, along with our brothers and sisters. Love bears all things, believes all things, hope all things, endure all things.

The first Christmas, there was no room in the inn and we pray for all who are homeless and vulnerable in our society especially those that are in need of food and a warm shelter.

We give thanks to God for the many local organisations and churches that help those that are suffering, keep us Lord under the shadow of your mercy.

In this time of uncertainty and distress, sustain and support the anxious and fearful ones, that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Jesus. Amen

*Carol - In the bleak mid-winter*

Felicity Bega & Tanya Forward

In the bleak midwinter,

frosty wind made moan,

Earth stood hard as iron,

water like a stone;

Snow had fallen, snow on snow,

snow on snow,

In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,

nor earth sustain;

Heaven and earth shall flee away

when He comes to reign.

In the bleak midwinter

a stable place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels

may have gathered there,

Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;

But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,

Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;

Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

*Blessing*

**ALL: The wait is almost over, Christmas is**

**nearly here!**

Emmanuel is about to be born.

So go out, into this Christmas season, aware

that God is with you.

**The wait is almost over, Christmas is**

**nearly here!**

The King who has come, and who will come

again, sends you out to demonstrate his

Kingdom on earth. The long expected King,

born to the sound of angels singing,

sends you out to worship him with your lives.

The King who was born poor and humble

sends you to serve those who are weak

and needy in the world.

**The wait is almost over, Christmas is**

**nearly here! Amen.**