



4pm
24 December 2025

CHILDREN'S
NATIVITY SERVICE
JOURNEY TO
BETHLEHEM



WELCOME

CHRISTMAS

The 12-day season of Christmas begins today. Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. The twelve short days traces the first two years of Jesus' life. We celebrate the birth of a baby who grew to be a man who was to give up everything out of love for everyone.

**We wish you and all your friends and family
a very holy and happy Christmas.**

THANK YOU

We are grateful to Patrick Dienes-Williams and the members of the Stag Hill Philharmonic Orchestra, the choristers of Guildford Cathedral Choir, Katherine Dienes-Williams, Organist and Master of the Choristers, and Asher Oliver, Sub Organist for leading the music for this service.

We are very grateful to the Friends of Guildford Cathedral for providing the funds to allow us to hire screens for use at our main Christmas services

COLLECTION

Your support makes a real difference to the ministry and mission of Guildford Cathedral. If you would like to support this work on a regular basis it's very simple to set up a direct debit via the Parish Giving Scheme. The phone number is 0333 002 1271, and the Cathedral reference code is 170617001. One-off donations can be made using the Gift Aid envelopes or a contactless donation by using the contactless box (by the West Doors of the Cathedral), or our QR code. On behalf of all at Guildford Cathedral, thank you. There will be a retiring collection where you can also give contactlessly.



MUSIC BEFORE THE SERVICE

A Christmas Festival *Leroy Anderson (1908-1975)*

The Officiant at this service is The Venerable Stuart Beake.

Front Cover image: The Star, which showed the place where the baby Jesus was to be born.

CAROL

Solo Once in Royal David's city
 stood 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.

All 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.

 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)

Music: Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876),

harmonised by Arthur Henry Mann (1850-1929)

Descant: David Willcocks (1919-2015)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

NAZARETH: MARY AND JOSEPH

Mary and Joseph at home in Nazareth.

CAROL

All

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:

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

Journey ends! Where afar
Beth'lem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Music: Melody from Piæ Cantiones (1582)

arranged by Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

NAZARETH: THE ANGEL GABRIEL

The Angel Gabriel tells Mary that she is to be the mother of Jesus.

The Stag Hill Philharmonic plays and the Cathedral Choristers sing

Sing this night for a boy is born in Bethlehem,
Christ our Lord in a lowly manger lies;
Bring your gifts come and worship at his cradle,
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

All **See his star shining bright**
In the sky this Christmas Night!
Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

Angels bright come from heaven's highest glory
Bear the news with its message of good cheer
Sing, rejoice for a King is come to save us
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

All **See his star shining bright**
In the sky this Christmas Night!
Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

See, he lies in his mother's tender keeping
Jesus Christ in her loving arms asleep
Shepherds poor, come to worship and adore him
Offer their humble gifts before the son of Mary

All **See his star shining bright**
In the sky this Christmas Night!
Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

Let us pay our homage at the manger,
Sing his praise on this joyful Christmas Night;
Christ is come, bringing promises of salvation;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

All **See his star shining bright**
In the sky this Christmas Night!
Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

Words and music: John Rutter (b. 1945)

BETHLEHEM: THE SHEPHERDS' FIELDS

The angels tell the shepherds that Jesus has been born.

CAROL

All 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.

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

Choir 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.

All 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 Emmanuel.

Words: Bishop Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

Music: traditional English,

harmonised by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Descant: Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994)

BETHLEHEM: THE STABLE

Jesus is born in a stable.

CAROL *sung by the choir*

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;
We will lend a coat of fur,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
See the fur to keep you warm,
Snugly round your tiny form.

Gentle Jesus sweetly sleep, do not weep,
Angels now their watch will keep.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
Gentle Jesus sweetly sleep, do not weep,
Angels now their watch will keep.

Gentle Jesus do not wake. For our sake
God himself man's flesh doth take.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
Gentle Jesus sweetly sleep, do not weep,
Angels now their watch will keep.

Words: traditional Czech Carol

Music: traditional Czech Carol, arr. David Hill (b. 1957)

CAROL

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!*

See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:

Sing choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens
of heav'n 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!*

Words: Translated by Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others

Music: John Francis Wade (1711-1786)

Descant: David Willcocks (1919-2015)

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

CAROL

Like a candle flame,
flick'ring small in our darkness,
uncreated light
shines through infant eyes

*God is with us, alleluia
God is with us, alleluia
Come to save us, alleluia
Come to save us,
Alleluia!*

Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth
sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark
set a world on fire?

Yet his light shall shine
from our lives,
spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame
of his holy fire.

God is with us, alleluia

God is with us, alleluia

Come to save us, alleluia

Come to save us,

Alleluia!

Words and music: Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

PRAYERS

CAROL

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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until 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 fit us for heaven, to live with thee there

Words: Anonymous (19th Century American)

Music: Melody by William James Kirkpatrick (1838-1921),

arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

BLESSING

*To which all say **Amen.***

RECESSIONAL MUSIC

Sleigh Ride Leroy Anderson (1908-1975)

*Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England,
material from which is included in this service, is copyright The Archbishops Council 2000.
Other texts are reproduced under CC Licence 266692.*

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

SERVICES TOMORROW THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) *in the Lady Chapel*

10am Christmas Day Choral Eucharist

4pm A Service of Lessons and Carols (*a repeat of Sunday 21 December*)

SERVICES NEXT SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER

7.30am Morning Prayer *in the Lady Chapel*

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) *in the Lady Chapel*

9.45am Cathedral Eucharist *sung by Guildford Cathedral Singers*

4pm Evening Prayer *in the Lady Chapel*

EPIPHANY SERVICES

Tuesday 6 January 7pm Choral Eucharist *on the Feast of Epiphany sung by the Whyte Effect*

Sunday 11 January 6pm Epiphany Carol Service

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS

From Friday 26 December until Friday 2 January the Cathedral will be open from 8.30am to 4.30pm. Morning and evening services will take place as detailed in the Cathedral diary on the website.

Seasons café will be closed from today until Monday 5 January 2026.