

A Quiet Christmas Service



Church of the Resurrection
and St Barnabas, Eastlands

Gathering

The congregation stand as the ministers enters

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

All And also with you

Welcome and introduction

Christmas can be a time of celebration with family and friends – but it can also be a sad time as we remember loved ones who have died or think of others who cannot be with us for many different reasons, especially this year. For some life over the last year or so has been hard facing things like illness, unemployment, homelessness, relationship breakdown and financial insecurity. For some the future seems bleak and dark. For some Christmas is a time where we value quietness and space. This evening we come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus the Light of the world in quietness and gentleness, through readings and musical reflections sung by St Martin's Voice.

Musical reflection – O Come, O Come Emmanuel sung by St Martin's Voices

O come, O come Emmanuel,
redeem thy captive Israel,
that into exile drear is gone,
far from the face of God's dear son.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou branch of Jesse, draw
the quarry from the lion's claw;
from the dread caverns of the grave,
from nether hell, thy people save.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright.
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
dispel the long night's lingering gloom,
and pierce the shadows of the tomb.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O Come, thou Lord of David's Key.
The royal door fling wide and free;
safeguard for us the heavenward road,
and bar the way to death's abode.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, O come, Adonai,
who in thy glorious majesty
from that high mountain clothed in awe,
gavest thy folk the elder Law.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*Latin 13th century, translated by T. A. Lacey (1853-1931)
© Oxford University Press*

Reading – Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

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.
³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
6 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.
7 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.

Prayer

God of mercy, at this time of Christmas when we celebrate the birth of your son Jesus, we remember the circumstances of his birth. Living under foreign rulers; a mother pregnant out of wedlock; forced to travel; homeless; under threat of death by Herod and forced to be refugee. Hear us as we pray to you in our pain and darkness. We ask for peace for the past, strength for today and hope for the future. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Good Shepherd who shares our life in sorrow and joy, in despair and in hope, and in death and new life.

Amen.

Musical reflection – Mary did you know *Sung by The Hound and the Fox*

Mary did you know that your baby boy
will one day walk on water?
Mary did you know that your baby boy
will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered,
will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy
will give sight to a blind man?
Mary did you know that your baby boy
will calm a storm with his hands?
Did you know that your baby boy
has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little baby,
you have kissed the face of God
Oh, Mary did you know?

Oh, Mary did you know?
The blind will see, the deaf will hear
and the dead will live again.
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak,
the praises of the lamb.

Oh, Mary did you know that your baby boy
is Lord of all creation?
Mary did you know that your baby boy
will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
is heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding
is the great I AM.

Mark Lowry (Lyrics) and Buddy Greene (Music)
By The Hound and the Fox (Songs of Winter)

Reading - Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
**My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.**

He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
**He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

**The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.

**The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.**

Reading – John 1: 1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Lighting of the Advent Candles

First candle

We light this first candle to remember loved ones who have died. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, and we hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives.

We take a moment to remember those who have died and name them, aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

**O God of love,
we commend to you our loves ones who have died.
We give thanks for them and we entrust them into your
everlasting love and care.
We ask that your presence will uphold
us in this Christmas season as we miss them.
We ask that we will find joy in the small things,
in the beauty of the world and in
those we meet.**

Second Candle

As we light this candle, we ask you to redeem the pain of other losses – the loss of relationships through divorce or separation; the loss of job, of home, of security, of good health, of joy in our lives and in the lives of those we love. As we name all our losses we gather them together and lay them at your feet. And we ask that you will place in to our hearts the gift of peace.

We take a moment to remember our losses and name them, aloud or in the silence of our own hearts.

**O God of compassion,
we come before you in need of wholeness and peace.
Although we want to place our trust in you,
Our hearts are often fearful and anxious.
We forget that you are with us
and that your rod and staff comfort us.
Help us to trust in you
with all that life places in our path.
Help us to notice you in all things.
Give us patience –
and make us ever more aware of your presence and guidance.
O Prince of Peace draw near.
Amen.**

Third candle

The third candle we light for ourselves and for those who long for a deep sense of God's love and purpose. We remember those who society often forgets: the homeless, the hungry, the poor, and the imprisoned. We place into your hands all those who are feeling lost, isolated or rejected at this time.

We take a moment to remember those in need of our prayers today and name them aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

**Your word is a light to our path
and a lamp to our feet.
Lead us Lord, direct our paths.
Give us hearts that seek you.
Give us discerning hearts**

**with the courage to seek your will for us and to persevere.
Renew us in the power of the Holy Spirit
to walk with you the path you set before us.
Amen**

Fourth Candle

As we light the fourth candle, we ask you to renew in us the gift of hope which God offers to us through the birth of Christ; a hope that doesn't deny the agonies of the world; a hope that sustains us as we trust in God and his promise to be with us.

**O God,
lift our hearts and let our cry come unto thee.
Fill our hearts with a deep confidence in your care.
Teach us to know and help us to see the light of your goodness
that shines into all our darkness.
Where we see your love in life,
help us to know it,
trust it and grow in its power.
So may our lives bring comfort
and encouragement to others.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
the light of the world.
Amen.**

Musical reflection – What child is this

What child is this, who, laid to rest
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds worship and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him praise
the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Come, have no fear, God's Son is here,
his love all loves exceeding:
nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne from me, for you:
hail, hail, the Saviour comes,
the babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
all tongues and peoples own him,
the King of kings salvation brings,
let every heart enthrone him:
raise, raise your song on high
while Mary sings a lullaby,
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.

*William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)
and Compilers of New English Hymnal, 1986*

Prayers of Intercession

God the Father, your will for all people is health and salvation.
We praise and bless you, Lord.

God the Son, you came that we might have life,
and might have it more abundantly.
We praise and bless you, Lord.

God the Holy Spirit, you make our bodies the temple of your
presence.
We praise and bless you, Lord.

Holy Trinity, one God, in you we live and move and have our being.
We praise and bless you, Lord.

Lord, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured or
disabled, that they may be made whole.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Grant to all who are lonely, anxious or depressed
a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Grant to all who minister to those who are suffering
wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Mend broken relationships, and restore to those in distress
soundness of mind and serenity of spirit.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Sustain and support those who seek your guidance
and lift up all who are brought low by the trials of this life.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Grant to the dying peace and a holy death,
and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those
who are bereaved.
Hear us, Lord of life.

Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin,
in our lives, in our nation, and in the world.
Hear us, Lord of life.

You are the Lord who does mighty wonders.
You have declared your power among the peoples.

With you, Lord, is the well of life
and in your light do we see light.

Hear us, Lord of life:
heal us, and make us whole.

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people;
in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon us and
all who turn to you for help;
for you are gracious, O lover of souls,
and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.
Amen

Prayer of healing and wholeness

The president says

In the name of God who gives you life.
Receive Christ's forgiveness, his healing and his love.
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
grant you the riches of his grace,
his wholeness and his peace.
Amen.

The almighty Lord,
who is a strong tower for all who put their trust in him,
whom all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth obey,
be now and evermore your defence.
May you believe and trust that the only name under heaven
given for health and salvation
is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Musical reflection – In the bleak midwinter
sung by St Martin's Voices

In the bleak mid-winter
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 mid-winter,
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 mid-winter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air –
But only his mother
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.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Dismissal

Peace

God has made us one in Christ.
He has set his seal upon us
and, as a pledge of what is to come,
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Blessing

May the peace of God which passes all understanding
fill our hearts with the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you now and always.
Amen.

Sending out

Unto us a child is born
Unto us a son is given

May the God of all hope fill you with joy and peace in believing that
you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God

Closing music - Silent Night *sung by St Martin's Voices*

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 Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

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.

John Freeman Young (1887)
based on Joseph Mohr (1818)

*Wishing you a blessed
and peaceful
Christmas*



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