

CAROL SERVICE

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT 2023

Welcome Candles, Advent candles, with readings.

Call to worship “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” This Message is from Isaiah and I can remember the words from a chorale in Handel’s Messiah.

Hymn Unto us a boy is born 5 verses

Reading Isaiah 11.1-9

Hymn Hark the herald. 3 verses

Reading Micah 5. 2-5a

The Messiah was a descendant of David, Israel’s greatest king and hero. It was just right that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, David’s city. Bethlehem is not the peaceful “little town” of the writer’s imagination. It is a Palestinian town with checkpoints operated by the Israeli army to get in and out. The church of the Nativity there has been looked after by a branch of Franciscans since the Middle Ages.

Shirley will tell us what it was like when she visited.

(Shirley talks)

Hymn O little town of Bethlehem 4 verses

Reading Luke 2 1-7

Hymn The Virgin Mary had a baby boy 5 verses

Another of the carols chosen was “In the bleak midwinter”. It was written by Christina Rossetti in the 1840s. She was from an Italian immigrant family. Christina paints a word picture of a village in deepest winter. The last verse is important for us, for in Advent one of the themes we are to consider “Judgement”. What is our response to be if we are put on the spot and have to account for ourselves? In the last verse look out for something we can do which takes our full commitment.

Hymn In the bleak midwinter MP 337 4 verses

Reading Luke 2 8- 15

MD short intro

Hymn While shepherds watched their flocks. 6 verses

Our Prayers The Promise of his glory p. 187.

... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

(at end)

Almighty Lord,

**Hear our prayer, and fulfil your purposes in us, as you accomplished your will
in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer-in any familiar language.

Reading Matthew 2. 1-6

In our prayers we mentioned strangers and prayed for people in other countries. We have seen how prophets of Israel looked forward to the Jewish Messiah, and how the first Christians, who lived in the cosmopolitan world of the Roman Empire realised that Jesus was born for the good of the whole world. Two people asked for the next carol, "We three kings of orient are".

Hymn We three kings. 5 verses with chorus

Take collection, dedication prayer.

Remembering that verse in the carol "in the bleak midwinter" where we found that we could give our hearts and our commitment as a gift to Jesus, we ask that he will help us be faithful to our promise. We will sing "O come all ye faithful" chosen by Janikka. We remember her and anyone who is in hospital at this time.

Hymn O come all ye faithful. 4 verses with chorus

Blessing: Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, Scatter the darkness from before your path, And make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory: And the blessing....