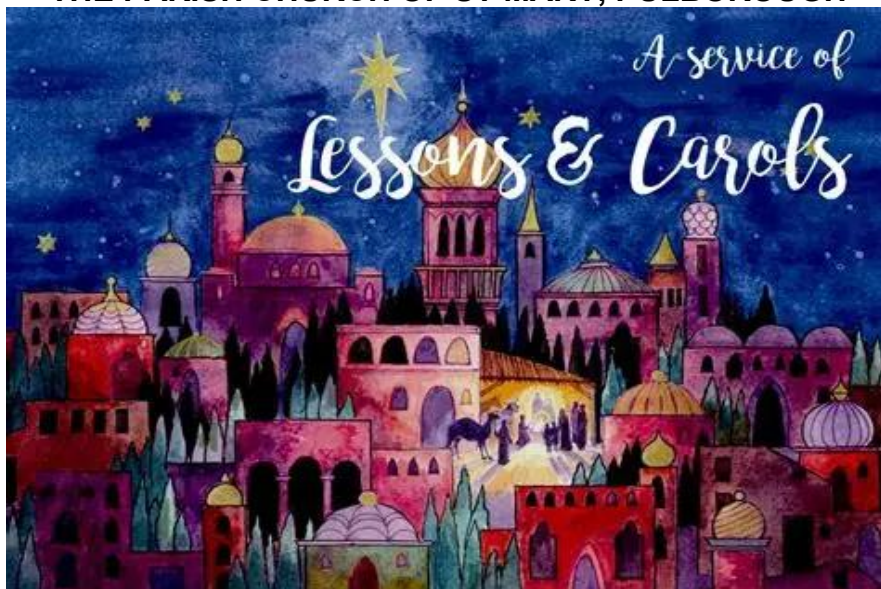


THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, PULBOROUGH



VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE

A traditional service of nine readings
with carols

Sunday 21st December 2025 at 6pm

Officiant: The Rector
Choir Director: Peter Allwood
Organist: Tony Hancock
with St Mary's Church Choir

*We are very grateful these leaflets have been sponsored
"In memory of Mimi and John, beloved parents,
grandparents and great grandparents"*

In the event of a fire or emergency in the Church, the exits available are: the West Door, the North Door, the South Door in the Chancel and the door through the Vestry. Please leave the building by an exit nearest to you.

*Introductory organ music: Chorale “Der Tag der ist so Freudenreich”
– J.S.Bach.*

Please stand when the choir gather in the candlelit west end of the church and the lights are turned out

**Processional Hymn: NEH 34 (solo verse 1 and choir verse 2)
Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)**

- 1 *Once in royal David's city
stood a 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.*
- 2 *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.*
- 3 **And through all his wondrous childhood
day by day like us he grew,
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.**
- 4 **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.**

**5 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 of Welcome and The Bidding Prayer
concluding with the Lord's Prayer***

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name;
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done;
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass
 against us.
 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen**

Please sit

Choir – The holly and the ivy – (John Gardner)

1st Reading: Genesis Ch 3 vv 8-14

Read by Sam Copus – Headteacher of St Mary's School

In the early chapters of the Bible we hear stories which try to encapsulate important truths about God and His relationship with his creation. The original perfect harmony and integration of all elements of creation is ruptured by the desire of human beings to assert their own will over the will of God.

The choice to eat the forbidden fruit spirals into a general state of disharmony and disintegration which undermines the Lord's loving purposes for all his children.

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'

Thanks be to God.

Choir – Adam lay ybounden (Boris Ord)

2nd Reading: Genesis Ch 22 vv15-18

Read by Carol Boniface – Pulborough Community Warden

The story continues with God coming in search of wayward humanity. This begins with the choice of Abraham to whom God made a promise. From him would come a blessing for his own people and for the whole of humanity. Abraham would be a father to a great nation and through that nation all nations will find hope in the Lord.

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

Thanks be to God.

Please stand

HYMN: O&N 523

English Traditional collected

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

- 1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring;
on Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring;
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful King's birth.**
- 2 Then why should men on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
then why should men on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
when from our sin he set us free,
all for to gain our liberty?**
- 3 When sin departs before his grace
then life and health come in its place;
when sin departs before his grace
then life and health come in its place;
angels and men with joy may sing,
all for to see the new-born King.**

**4 All out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
all out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God, and peace to men,
now and for evermore. Amen.'**

Please sit

3rd Reading: Isaiah Ch 9 vv 2, 6 and 7

Read by Sharon Curd – Chair of Pulborough Parish Council

In the words of the prophets God's people are being called back to him. In the darkness of people's disobedience, there glimmered a distant light of a child being born who could in due course put things right.

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.
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.
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.

Thanks be to God.

*Choir: "No small wonder" –(Words Paul Wigmore)
(Music Paul Edwards)*

4th Reading: Micah Ch 5 vv 2-4

Read by Charlotte Kenyon – West Sussex County Councillor

The prophet Micah speaks of a leader who will rule God's people and he asserts that Bethlehem, the City of David will be the place where this person comes onto the stage of human history.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

Thanks be to God.

Please stand

Hymn: O&N 370

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) based on Psalm 97

**1 Joy to the world the Lord has come!
let earth receive her king,
let every heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing!**

- 2 Joy to the earth the Saviour reigns!
let songs be heard on high,
while fields and streams and hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 3 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
the wonders of his love,
the wonders of his love,
the wonders, wonders of his love.**

Please sit

5th Reading: Luke Ch 1 vv 26-38

Read by Dr Tim Fooks – High Sheriff of West Sussex

Many years later God's messenger is sent to a young women who proves to be faithful, humble and obedient. She will be given a mighty task and a most unique calling to be the mother of the one in whom God will bring about the salvation of humanity.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of

Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’

Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Choir: A Maiden most gentle – (Andrew Carter)

6th Reading: Luke Ch 2 vv1-7

Read by Julian Edge – Co chair of Governors of St Mary’s School

St Matthew’s account of the birth of Jesus focuses on the place of Joseph, as the ancestor of King David and how Jesus’ birth is foretold by the prophets of old. However this child is no less than ‘God-with-us’- Emmanuel!

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and

wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand

Hymn: O&N 148
George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)

**Ding! dong! merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing;
Ding! dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!
*Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!***

**E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And 'io, io, io!'
By priest and people sungen:**

Chorus

**Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers!
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers!**

Chorus

Please sit

Seventh Reading: Luke Ch 2 vv 8-16
**Read by Elaine Waight – Director of Services for
Family Support Work -FSW**

In St Luke's account of Jesus' birth, the familiar characters appear and the familiar story unfolds. The first people to be given the privilege of seeing the new born infant are local people who live and work on the margins of their society. This is a foretaste of who Jesus will have a particular concern for in his future ministry.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Thanks be to God.

Choir – Quem pastores laudavere (arr. John Rutter)

Please stand

**HYMN: NEH 30 (omitting *verses)
Adeste fideles – Latin 18th Century
Tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880),) and others**

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

- 2 God of God,
Light of light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten, not created: *Chorus*
- 3 See how the shepherds
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps: *Chorus*
- 5 Child, for us sinners
Poor and in a manger,
Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly? *Chorus*
- 6 Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest:' *Chorus*

Please sit

8th Reading: Matthew Ch 2 vv1-11

Read by John Dixon – Chair of Pulborough & District Community
Care Association

St Matthew tells of those who come from foreign parts, who are not from among the Lord's people. They represent all the peoples of the earth from all cultures and from all over the globe. Their gifts shed much light on the identity of Jesus and His universal significance.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Thanks be to God.

Choir: This child (Graham Kendrick)

Please stand as the lights are turned off

9th Reading: John Ch 1 vv 1-14

Read by the Rector

St John tries to put into words truths that might astound and mystify us. He speaks of Jesus as existing from the beginning as the Divine Word. Yet in time this Word has taken on human flesh to live alongside us and in whom God speaks most clearly and powerfully.

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God

Please remain standing

Hymn: O&N 597

Stille nacht! Heilige Nacht! Joseph Mohr (1792-1848)
translated John Freeman Young (1820-1885)

- 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 Saviour is born'.
 Christ, the Saviour 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.

Hymn: NEH 26

Charles Wesley, (1707-1788) George Whitfield (1714-1770),
Martin Madan (1726-1790)

- 1 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 th' angelic host proclaim,
 'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

***Hark, the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.***

2 **Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a Virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
hail, th' incarnate Deity!
pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.** ***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 man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.** ***Refrain***

Final Prayer and Blessing

*Concluding organ music: "Postlude sur un Noël"
Bédard.*

*Following this service we will be serving wine, soft drinks and
refreshments, do join us.*

*There will be a retiring collection in aid of
the upkeep of the Parish Church. Thank you for your support.*