

PARISH OF ESHER  
Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End

# Crib Service with 'No Rehearsal' Nativity



*'And the Word was made flesh,  
and dwelt among us.'*

John 1.14a

## Welcome to our Service

### Carol - O little town of Bethlehem

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 wondering love.

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.

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.

## A Reading from the Bible - Luke 2.1-7

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.

## Carol - Away in a manger

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 for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

## A Reading from the Bible - Luke 2.8-16

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.

## Carol - While shepherds watched their flocks by night

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

'Fear not', said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind;  
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and all mankind.

'To you in David's town this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour who is Christ the Lord,  
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands  
and in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
goodwill henceforth from heav'n to men  
begin and never cease.'

## The 'No Rehearsal' Nativity Play

### Carol - We three kings of Orient are

We three kings of Orient are,  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright;  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light!*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
gold I bring to crown him again,  
King for ever, ceasing never  
over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I:  
incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, gladly raising,  
worship him, God Most High.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and Sacrifice;  
heaven sings, alleluia; alleluia  
the earth replies.

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright;  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light!*

## The Prayers

As we draw towards the end of this service, we offer our prayers to God, concluding with the prayer which Jesus himself taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

## Carol - The twelve days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me  
A partridge in a pear tree.

On the second day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me  
Two turtle doves,  
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the third day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me  
Three French hens,  
Two turtle doves,  
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me  
Four calling birds,  
Three French hens,  
Two turtle doves,  
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me  
Five golden rings:  
Four calling birds,  
Three French hens,  
Two turtle doves,  
And a partridge in a pear tree.

*Continuing:*

Six geese a-laying  
Seven swans a-swimming,  
Eight maids a-milking  
Nine ladies dancing  
Ten lords a-leaping  
Eleven pipers piping  
Twelve drummers drumming

**A Christmas Blessing**

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