

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

**FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS
CHRIST CHURCH, ESHER**

Sunday 14 December 2025, 6pm



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

John 1.14a

Festival of Lessons & Carols

Welcome to our Festival of Lessons and Carols. This order of service is based on the pattern of lessons used by Truro Cathedral, from where this annual tradition originated. Please join in the Congregational Hymns and in the prayers and responses marked in **bold**.

Opening Music

Organ Voluntary: *Es ist ein' Ros entsprungen*, Op. 122 no.8 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Proclamation Hymn: Once in royal David's city

[please stand; v.1 solo, v.2 choir only]

- | | |
|---|--|
| 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. | 4. For he is our childhood's pattern, 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. |
| 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. | 5. And our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love, For that child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heav'n above; And he leads his children on To the place where he is gone. |
| 3. And through all his wondrous childhood He would honour and obey; Love and watch the lowly maiden, In whose gentle arms he lay: Christian children all must be Mild, obedient, good as he. | 6. 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)

Bidding Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer:

[please remain standing]

**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 be seated]

Choir Carol: Good will to men, and peace on Earth

1. Behold a lucid Light appears,
Which brightens all the eastern sky,
Hark, hark what sounds salute our ears,
All glory give to God on high.

*“Good will to men, and peace on Earth”,
The Heavenly Choirs united cry
At the Divine Redeemer’s birth;
And glory be to God on high.*
2. Let mortals catch the sacred flame,
Till round the world the song shall fly
Which sounds the Great Redeemer’s Name,
And glory be to God on high.

*“Good will to men, and peace on Earth”,
The Heavenly Choirs united cry
At the Divine Redeemer’s birth;
And glory be to God on high.*

*Words: The Cornish Song Book c.1840
Music: Dobrinka Tabakova (b. 1980)*

First Lesson: Genesis 3.8-15, 17-19

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

Congregational Hymn: God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen [v.3 men only, v.4 women only]

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*
2. From God our heav'nly Father
A blessèd Angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
3. The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoicèd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind:
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessèd babe to find:
4. But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:

5. Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

*Words & Music: English traditional
Arrangement: Sir David Willcocks*

Second Lesson: Genesis 22.15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Choir Carol: In the Bleak Midwinter

1. In the bleak midwinter
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 midwinter, long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.
3. Enough for him, whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk
and a mangerful of hay:
enough for him, whom angels
fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.
4. 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.

*Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)
Music: Harold Darke (1888-1976)*

Third Lesson: Isaiah 9.2, 6, 7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

Congregational Hymn: It came upon the midnight clear

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heav'nly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.
3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.
4. For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

*Words: E.H. Sears (1810-1876)
Traditional English tune adapted by Arthur Sullivan*

Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11.1-3a, 4a, 6-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

Choir Carol: Angels' Carol

1. Have you heard the sound of the angel voices
Ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?
Have you seen the star, shining out so brightly
As a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?
Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven
To the humble shepherds, who have waited long?
3. He will bring new light to a world in darkness,
Like a bright star shining in the skies above;
He will bring new hope to the waiting nations
When he comes to reign in purity and love.
Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour's coming;
Let the heavens answer with the joyful morn:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing 'Christ is born'*

Words & Music: Sir John Rutter (b. 1945)

2. He is come in peace in the winter's stillness,
Like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night;
He is come in joy like the sun at morning
Filling all the world with radiance and with light.
He is come in love as the child of Mary;
In a simple stable we have seen his birth:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing 'Peace on earth'.*

Fifth Lesson: Luke 1.26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Congregational Hymn: O little town of Bethlehem

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
4. 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: English traditional, arr. R. Vaughan Williams*

Sixth Lesson: Luke 2.1, 3-7

Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

Choir Carol: Song of the shepherds

1. There were shepherds on the hillside,
looking after their sheep;
through the night they had to
keep themselves from falling asleep;
so imagine their surprise
when suddenly way up high
one of God's angels appeared in the sky!
2. He said, 'Don't worry,
I can see you're wond'ring what's going on!
There is something I must tell you all
and then I'll be gone.
I've got news – you won't believe it
but I promise it's true –
and it's Good news, especially for you!
3. And no sooner had he said this,
then there wasn't just one
but a multitude of angels,
shining bright like the sun,
singing praises up to God
for saving us down on Earth
by this most extraordinary birth.
4. So we sing our adoration
to our Father in heav'n,
for he sent his Son to save us,
children, women and men.
We'll continue to sing praises
now and for evermore,
to God our Father whom we adore.

*For over the hill in Bethlehem
lying in a manger of hay
is a newborn baby, a Saviour,
who was born for us this day.*

*For over the hill in Bethlehem
lying in a manger of hay
is a newborn baby, a Saviour,
who was born on Christmas Day!*

Words & Music: Joanna Forbes L'Estrange (b. 1971)

Seventh Lesson: Luke 2.8-16

The Shepherds go to the Manger.

Congregational Hymn: While Shepherds watched their flocks by night

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.
2. 'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind;
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.
3. '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:
4. 'The heav'nly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid.'
5. Thus spake the Seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:
6. 'All glory be to God on high,
And on earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.'

*Words: Nahum Tate (1652-1715)
Music: Este's Psalter (1592)
Last verse arr. Sir David Willcocks*

Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2.1-12

The Wise Men are led by the Star to Jesus.

Choir Carol: Silent Night

1. Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round the virgin mother and child:
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. 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.
3. 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!".

Words: Josef Mohr (1792-1848)

Music: Anthony Bailey (2014)

Ninth Lesson: John 1.1-14

Saint John unfolds the great Mystery of the Incarnation.

[please stand]

Prayers:

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
For to us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given.
His name will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, mighty God,
the Everlasting Father,
the Prince of Peace.
Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

[please remain standing]

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

[please be seated]

Choir Carol: Resonemus laudibus

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Resonemus laudibus cum jocunditatibus ecclesiam fidelibus: <i>Apparuit quem genuit Maria.</i></p> <p>2. Deus fecit hominem ad suam imaginem et similitudinem: <i>Apparuit quem genuit Maria.</i></p> <p>3. Deus fecit omnia caelum, terram, Maria cunctaque nascentia: <i>Apparuit quem genuit Maria.</i></p> | <p>4. Ergo nostra concio in chordis et organo benedicat Domino: <i>Apparuit quem genuit Maria.</i></p> <p>5. Et Deo qui venias donat et laetitia nos eidem gratias: <i>Apparuit quem genuit Maria.</i></p> |
|---|--|
- Words: Traditional
Music: Trad, arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Let us make the church resound with the joyful praises of the faithful: <i>He appeared, whom Mary bore.</i></p> <p>2. God created man in his own image and likeness: <i>He appeared, whom Mary bore.</i></p> <p>3. God made all things, heaven, earth, the seas and all creation: <i>He appeared, whom Mary bore.</i></p> | <p>4. Therefore let our assembly bless the Lord with choirs and organs: <i>He appeared, whom Mary bore.</i></p> <p>5. And to God, who enables your arrival, we give thanks to Him with joy: <i>He appeared, whom Mary bore.</i></p> |
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Blessing: May the joy of the angels,
 the eagerness of the shepherds,
 the perseverance of the wise men,
 the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
 and the peace of the Christ-child
 be yours this Christmas;
 and the blessing of God almighty,
 the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 be with you and remain with you,
 now and always.
 Amen.

Recessional Hymn: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim:
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n 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.

*Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!*

*Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn 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 the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

*Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!*

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Closing Music

Organ Voluntary: *Theme and Presto Finale from Variations sur un Noël* Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

The congregation is kindly requested to remain seated
until the conclusion of the organ voluntary.

Minister

The Revd Jonathan Andrew

Music Team

Director of Music

Stuart Whatton

Organist

Oliver Macfarlane

Harpist

Annabelle Doolan

Trumpeter

Thomas Doolan

Vocal Soloists

Daphne Doolan

Polly Jordan

Natalie Mechelewska

Myfanwy Tranmer

Alex Bernard

Rowan Marshall

Readers

Helen Coulson

Charles Hawkshaw-Burn

Ana Petri

Bob Lonnon

Bridget Williams

George Petri

Helen Griffin

William Stevens

The Revd Jonathan Andrew

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO STAY FOR MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you!

The retiring collection will go towards the running of our two churches and our work in the community. If you can, please do use the card machine, the QR code pewcards or a gift aid envelope. Thank you.

**PARISH OF ESHER
CHRISTMAS EVENTS & SERVICES**

Please do join us. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday 17 December

1.15pm - Music on the Green Come & Sing Carols,
Christ Church, Esher

Wednesday 24 December

CHRISTMAS EVE

4.00pm - Crib Service, Christ Church, Esher
11.30pm - Midnight Mass, Christ Church, Esher

Thursday 25 December

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.00am - Christmas Communion, St George's, West End
10.30am - Christmas Communion, Christ Church, Esher

Sunday 28 December

9.00am - Holy Communion, St George's, West End

MUSIC ON THE GREEN

2026 Lunchtime Concerts

Concerts start at 1.15pm, light lunch from 12.30pm

Music on the Green (MOTG) is the Parish of Esher's musical outreach programme based at Christ Church, overlooking Esher Green. At MOTG we believe that music should be accessible to all. Whilst having our firmest foot planted at the classical end of the spectrum, we seek to offer a rich and varied listening programme.

*Our concert dates for the first part of 2026 will be as follows:
January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20,
June 17 and July 15.*

Do join us for our opening recital on Wednesday 21 January, when we welcome our new ensemble in residence, Fontina Winds, with a programme of works for wind quintet.

Music in the Tower will take place as usual during Holy Week, on Tuesday 31 March and Wednesday 1 April 2026.