



Concert for Christmas at St Nicholas
Available from Sunday 20th December 6pm on YouTube



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our 'Comfort and Joy' Christmas concert from St Nicholas Church, Marston. Christmas has been celebrated in this building since the 12th century. Things are very different this year and we can't gather in large numbers in the building and so we have put together this YouTube Christmas celebration.

The refrain of one of our oldest carols 'God rest ye merry gentlemen' repeats the words 'O tidings of Comfort and Joy'. We will be looking at how these two words 'Comfort' and 'Joy' are brought to life and passed on to us in the Christmas story.

Carol: God rest you merry gentlemen V1, V2, V5
ENGLISH TRADITIONAL CAROL Arranged: DAVID WILLCOCKS

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.*

From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

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 other doth deface:

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

COMFORT

1st Reading: Isaiah 9. 2, 6 'A child is born to us'

*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.*

Even the light of a small candle can be very comforting in the darkness, but a great light can chase the darkness right away.

It's a little like when you are driving on a motorway which is unlit and then suddenly you come to a junction where there are many lights which completely change what you can see and make it safe to negotiate the junction.

Candles can be comforting at Christmas as they can remind us of happy times of being with loved ones.

Anthem: Advent Carol Song Text: CHARLES BENNETT Music: BOB CHILCOTT

Our Advent Ring remind us during December that we are getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Light 1st Candle

We wait for the coming of Christ, the light of the world

All: Come Jesus Light of the world

Light 2nd Candle

We long for the peace of Christ in our world

All: Come Jesus Prince of Peace

Light 3rd Candle

We wait for the coming of Christ, giving life in abundance

All: Come Jesus Giver of Life

Light 4th Candle

We long for the presence of Christ, Emmanuel, God with us

All: Come Jesus Bearer of Hope

We celebrate the coming of Christ, the light of the world

All: Emmanuel, God with us

Song: Like a candle flame. Words & music: GRAHAM KENDRICK Arranged: DAVID OGDEN

The great words of comfort in that song are: God is with us. Alleluia! The message of the Christmas story is not that God is distant and aloof or even does not exist at all. The Christmas message is that God has come to earth. He came as a baby, in Jesus Christ, the unique God-man.

2nd Reading: Luke 1:26-31,35 – ‘Mary to give birth to the Son of God’

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³⁵ 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.

This would probably have been an encounter that would have unsettled Mary and given her much to think about. Although it was good news it was something almost too incredible to believe.

We might think that the Christmas story is just too incredible to believe. God coming to earth by being born to an ordinary woman living in a small town. But the Christmas story is about the power of God coming in love to save us.

Song: Love came down at Christmas – Words: CHRISTINA ROSSETTI Music: NEIL BARKER

The Queen in her Christmas Broadcast of 2011 said ‘Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves - from our recklessness or our greed.’

Then she went on to say “God sent into the world a unique person - neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.’

Choir: 'God so loved the world' Text: John 3:16 Music: BOB CHILCOTT

God so loved the world. These are words of comfort as is the knowledge that there is power to subdue the hateful attitudes in our lives which begins with forgiveness. Christ died for our sins that we might be reconciled to God.

STORY: Joel Denno

JOY

3rd Reading: Luke 2:8-20 – They joy of the Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, ^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, ^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!' ^[c]

¹⁵ When the angels had left them ... they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

The birth of the Christ child is joyful news. This is captured in this contemporary Christmas song

Song: 'Good news of great joy' Words & music: CHRIS TOMLIN & DANIEL CARSON

4th Reading: Rev 21:1-4 A new heaven and a new earth

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, ..'

The Christmas message is about new life and hope. It is about the hope of living with God and others in harmony and peace. Comfort and joy.

Our last choir anthem asks whether we have heard the Christmas story and if we have does that not lead us to worship: to sing glory to God and Alleluia.

Song: Jesus Child – Words & Music by JOHN RUTTER

CHRISTMAS PRAYER & BLESSING: Skye

Carol: 'Hark the herald angels sing' (v1 & v3)

Words: CHARLES WESLEY Music: FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLODY Descant: DAVID WILLCOCKS

Hark! the herald-angels sing,
'Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.'
Joyful, all you nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'

*Hark! the herald-angels sing,
'Glory to the new-born King!'*

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.

*Hark! the herald-angels sing,
'Glory to the new-born King!'*

Thank you for joining us for our YouTube Christmas 'Comfort & Joy' Concert 2020 at St Nicholas, Marston

- presented by Helen and Neil Barker
- singers, readers and musicians from St Nicholas Church SATB Choir, Junior & Youth Choirs & Music Group
- musical direction by Neil Barker
- the 'Menachem' story was written and told by Joel Denno
- Christmas prayers & blessing by Rev Skye Denno

God rest you merry gentlemen

ENGLISH TRADITIONAL CAROL Arranged: DAVID WILLCOCKS

Advent Carol Song

Text: CHARLES BENNETT Music: BOB CHILCOTT

Like a candle flame
Love came down at Christmas
God so loved the world
Good news of great joy
Jesus Child
Hark the herald angels sing

Words & music: GRAHAM KENDRICK Arranged: DAVID OGDEN
Words: CHRISTINA ROSSETTI Music: NEIL BARKER
Text: John 3:16 Music: BOB CHILCOTT
Words & music: CHRIS TOMLIN & DANIEL CARSON
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