

Hearsall Carol Service 2020

The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful

Welcome

Welcome to our carol service for 2020, a carol service like no other in the history of Hearsall, and yet, a carol service like all others. We sing Christmas songs old and new; we hear the traditional readings from around our city; we remember who we are; we open the eyes of our hearts to the Word made flesh; we welcome Christ once more.

Our service proceeds without announcement. So we begin with a moment of stillness and then hear the traditional solo voice drawing us to the wonder of Christmas...

Carol **Once in Royal David's City**

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 that little child.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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;
When, like stars, His children crowned
All in white, shall wait around.

Reading 1 Genesis 3:8-15, 17,19

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'

¹⁰ He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'

¹¹ And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?'

¹² The man said, 'The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'
The woman said, 'The snake deceived me, and I ate.'

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the snake, 'Because you have done this,

'Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.'

¹⁷ To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree
about which I commanded you, "You must not eat from it,"

'Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return.'

Carol Thorns in the Straw

Verse 1

Since the day the angel came,
It seemed that everything had changed;

The only certain thing
Was the child that moved within,
On the road that would not end,
Winding down to Bethlehem,
So far away from home.

Verse 2

Just a blanket on the floor
Of a vacant cattle-stall,
But there the child was born.
She held Him in her arms,
And as she laid Him down to sleep,
She wondered - will it always be
So bitter and so sweet?

Chorus

*And did she see there
In the straw by His head a thorn?
And did she smell myrrh
In the air on that starry night?*

Verse 3

Then the words of ancient seers
Tumbled down the centuries;
A virgin shall conceive
God with us, prince of Peace,
Man of Sorrows - strangest name.
Oh Joseph, there it comes again,
So bitter yet so sweet.

Chorus

*And did she see there
In the straw by His head a thorn?
And did she smell myrrh
In the air on that starry night?*

*And did she hear angels sing
Not so far away,
Till at last the sun
Rose blood-red
In the morning sky?*

Verse 4

And as she watched Him through the years,
Her joy was mingled with her tears,
And she'd feel it all again,
The glory and the shame,
And when the miracles began,
She wondered who is this man,
And where will this all end?

Verse 5

'Til against a darkening sky,
The Son she loved was lifted high,
And with His dying breath,
She heard Him say, 'Father forgive',
And to the criminal beside,
'Today - with me in Paradise,'
So bitter yet so sweet.

Chorus x 2

Reading 2 **Genesis 22: 15-18**

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'

Carol O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel!
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou dayspring, from on high
And cause Thy light on us to rise.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, our great High Priest and intercede,
Thy sacrifice our only plea.
The judgment we no longer fear
Thy precious blood has brought us near.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Come, Thou King of nations bring
An end to all our suffering;
Bid every pain and sorrow cease
And reign now as our Prince of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Reading 3 Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and for ever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Carol **Same Old Story** (Prue)

Sending out an SO, Sending out an SOS.

Same old story, different times; See the world, what do we find?

Exploitation, violence, greed – poverty and mouths to feed.

Seems like a world gone mad, when the Word we had

Taught kindness, love and peace, victims to release

Sending out an SO, Sending out an SOS.

Story set in Bethlehem, news announced to shepherd men,

Baby born in cattle stall, humble king for one and all.

Still he's here to save, give us the peace we crave,

Calls us to follow him, change the world we're in.

Sending out an SOS, Sending out an SOS.

What a difference this man has made;

Taught loving kindness, but the price he paid -

Rejection, Crucifixion, but then rose again;

You can't keep a good man down when he's
Answering our SOS, Answering our SOS.

Same old story, same old fears, from the cross, the same wept tears.
Two thousand years, man's still not learned, from evil ways they have not turned.
Still he's here to save, give us the peace we crave.
Turn to follow him, change the world we're in,
Answering the SOS, Answering the SOS.

Reading 4 Micah 5: 2-4

² 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans^[a] of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.'

³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labour bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

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;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth.

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 to us today.

We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Reading 5 **Matthew 1: 18-23**

Joseph accepts Jesus as his son

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

The Sussex Carol (performed by the Pritchard clan)

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.

Then why should we on earth be so sad,
Since our redeemer made us glad,
Then why should we on earth be sad,
Since our redeemer made us glad.
When from our sin He set us free,
All for to gain our liberty.

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 all the earth may sing,
All for to see the new born King.

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 !” we sing again,
Now and for evermore, Amen.

Carol (BPW 168) It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

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, good will to men,
From heaven's all gracious King;’
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats

O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

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, you men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

And still the days are hastening on,
By prophet once 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.

Reading 6 **Luke 2:1-7**

The birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of

David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Carol Mary did you know?

Mary, did you know, your baby boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know, your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?
The Child that you delivered
Will soon deliver you!

Mary, did you know your baby boy
Would give sight to the blind man?
Mary, did you know your baby boy
Would calm a storm with His hand?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod,
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God?

*The blind will see,
The deaf will hear,
The dead will live again;
The lame will leap,
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb.*

Mary, did you know your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know your baby boy
Will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?
The sleeping child you're holding
Is the great I Am.

Reading 7 **Luke 2:8-20**

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Carol Revere the Secret Darkness (Prue/Sutcliffe)

Revere the secret darkness of the womb,
where life is nurtured in a sacred space,
then birthed into the shadowed world, to show
that glory lingers on a new born face:
enraptured, how a mother's eyes display
that love is at the heart of heaven's way.

The gentle power of love is hard to prove
when souls are masked and bodies stand apart,
but God accepts the risk of drawing close
and heaven's life beats with a human heart.
As mother Mary feeds a baby boy,
the world is tinged with everlasting joy.

For Jesus showed us what we may become
and demonstrated how we can be true
to love's demands in all of human life
by building peace in everything we do.
The frailty of a humble human frame
can overflow with life in Jesus' name.

And when we wander from the path of love
or suffer in the darkest vale of death,
in tenderness and mercy he draws close
and intimates his grace with every breath.
The King of kings resided with the poor
to open heaven's goodness to us all.

At Christmas time, our hearts aglow with love,
into our world we welcome Christ again;
our world of internet and climate change,
of viruses, dissent and racist hate.

We offer up our feet, our hands, our hearts,
embodying the love that Jesus starts.

Reading 8 **Matthew 2: 1-12**

The Magi visit the Messiah

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Carol **We Three Kings**

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar;
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Chorus

*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 forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Chorus

Frankincense to offer have I,
Incense owns a Deity nigh,
Prayer and praising all men raising,
Worship Him, God on high.

Chorus

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom,
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone cold tomb.

Chorus

Glorious now, behold Him arise,
King and God and sacrifice.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Peals through the earth and skies.
Chorus (and repeat last line)

Reading 9 **John 1:1-14**

The Word became flesh

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Carol **Silent Night**

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.

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!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiance beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Address

The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful

Well, what would the report card say for humanity as a whole in some intergalactic school system? Highly gifted and full of promise, but all-too capable of meanness and folly.

Humankind has shown numerous flashes of genius in, for example, the art of Georgia O'Keefe, the journeys to the moon, the singing of Montserrat Caballé, the writing of the Hallelujah chorus, Paul Gascoigne's goal against Scotland in Euro 96, the creation of anti-covid vaccines, the dancing of Rudolf Nureyev....

But humanity must try harder. Genocide and world wars are but the worst examples of our common moral failure. Every day we see the good and the bad, and sometimes the downright ugly, in human nature...

And as members of the human race, we all share in the same tendencies to greatness and delinquency. One minute we can do something noble like calling a

depressed friend, even though we feel drained and would rather grab a glass of gin and watch Netflix; the next minute, we might, in a fit of bad temper, leave our partner to do all the washing up after dinner.

These highs and lows of human reality are encoded in the Bible stories we've heard today. The Fall happens a million times a minute, as countless people fall away from decency somewhere on the planet.

But what of the Incarnation? Medieval mystic Meister Eckhart taught that the Incarnation was also continually happening as people learnt to co-operate with the love of God. Cast out our sin, we sing at Christmas, and enter in, be born in us today.

Incarnation now!

One thing that's useful about the Bible is the way it locates spiritual events in real places and times. A particular husband and a particular young woman, in a particular little town, on a particular silent night - they cooperate with the birth of the very Son of God.

And our own dramas happen in real places and times. At 3:15 on Wednesday afternoon in the playground of Hearsall Community Academy - At 6am in a suburban house in Bristol on the morning of Christmas Day.

Will I fall from grace and be bad-tempered and selfish; or will I find myself by giving myself away in love? Good, or Bad? Fall or something else, something like incarnation?

Jesus is a worked example of love in action. He was not like a hologram of a person with all the divine knowledge and power shrink-wrapped into the shape of a man... Being human, he had left behind his divine advantages and used the means and the methods that we use too. He learnt his mother tongue as infants do, studied the Scriptures and spent time in prayer to build a relationship with Father God.

Jesus loved children, respected women and challenged abuses of power... He healed the sick, went to parties, embraced the leper and stuck to truth even when it cost him his life. If he hadn't really been a flesh-and-blood man who had to learn and grow, and make real choices in real situations, his apparent humanity would have been a mean charade.

20th century monk, Thomas Merton, referred to a virgin point in the soul: a point untouched by illusion, a point of pure truth devoted to God. When Gabriel is asked by Mary how she could conceive a child, as a virgin, Gabriel points to the work of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it could be said that it was precisely because of her virginity that Mary could conceive the very Son of God within her.

It can certainly be said of us, spiritually. We need to find a true place within us, a beautiful place of devotion to God, a small pristine place, so that the Christ child of love can also grow in our souls. To live from this beautiful space is to live fully; rejoicing, sharing, eating, celebrating, singing, dancing, worshipping, learning, lamenting, laughing and loving.

Christ was born at a particular moment in human history. As we imagine the nativity scene concocted from the gospel accounts by Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century, what do we see? A random decree for a census disrupting the lives of many. A consequent shortage of accommodation. Families making room for one another by spreading into the parts of the house where the animals lived. Shepherds startled by angels. And later, gift-laden astrologers travelling from the east, and a tyrant king committing infanticide in a cruel burst of paranoia. The good, the bad and the ugly were all around the infant Christ.

But what of the infant Christ himself? Babies are neither good nor bad. Jesus just lies and feeds and sucks at the breast, probably with many of the complications and inconveniences all mothers know.

He was just beautiful. And this is beautiful: that God presents himself to us, naked, vulnerable and needy. God became fully present to all that was good and bad in our world. And he was beautiful in his coming.

We sometimes might reflect that Jesus was morally good - that he did everything right, and we may find that comforting. Today I want to say something slightly different. Jesus showed us that it is possible to be fully present in every situation, and to choose the way of love. And that is a beautiful thing.

So, in particular moments and particular places this season, remember to pause and be fully present. All of us face a challenging Christmas after a year blighted by a pandemic, and with festivities severely curtailed by anti-covid regulations.

But here's the thing - we each of us have a unique opportunity in all the history of the world to explore what love would look like in our particular situation. It's easy to fall, to stumble between the good and the bad, but Christ shows us it is always possible to love.

Amidst the good and the bad, let the beautiful emerge. Will you find that holy space within yourself, and seek to incarnate - to make flesh - love in all its fullness, Christ in all his unstoppable joy? That's how to have a really happy Christmas.

Carol Hark the Herald Angels Sing

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 the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

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

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 new-born King!*

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 new-born King!*

Blessing

And now may God graciously grant us all
peace and joy,
health and happiness,
hope and love;
and may the blessing of God the Father who made us;
the Christ who became flesh to save us;
and the Spirit who always infuses us with love;
rest upon us this day and remain with us
this Christmas time
and forevermore. Amen.

Thank you

A huge thank you to all our singers and readers;
to our amazing musicians Nick, Martin, Fran, Seb and John;
to our extraordinary technical team who continue to meet challenge after challenge;
to our administrators and supporters...

This has been a team effort and, whilst we thank one another,
we all desire that the glory goes to our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Happy Christmas to you all.