

**SAINT MARGARET'S UNITING CHURCH, MOOROOLBARK,
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE 2018.**

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours. THE GOSPEL according to Saint Luke. Chapter 2, Verses 13 & 14

TIS 304 O come, all ye faithful verses 1&2, 6&7

1

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
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,
come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2

True God of true God, Light of Light eternal,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created:

6

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God, glory in the highest':

7

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father now in flesh appearing:

Call to Worship (responsive)

Like the shepherds we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,
longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,
that this world can change for the better.

Here, on this Christmas morning,
we gather to share the light of Christ,
A light that shines in the world.

**We gather to share our joy
And thanks for new life.**

Lighting the advent candles

TIS 289 Christmas is coming (Chorus, verse 5 only, & chorus.)

'Christmas is coming'

*the church is glad to sing
and let the Advent candles
brightly burn in a ring.*

5

At last we light the candle
kept new for Christmas day.
This shines bright for Jesus,
new-born, and here to stay.

*Christ is among us.
The candles in the ring
remind us that our Saviour
will light up everything*

1st Reading : The Book of the prophet, Isaiah. Chapter 9, Verses 2,6 & 7
God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

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.

6 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.

7 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 onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Sing TIS 265 O come, O come Emmanuel 5 verses

1

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 you, O Israel.

2

O come, O come, great Lord of might
who to the tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

3

O come, O key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;

make safe the way that leads on high
and close the path to misery.

4

O come, O branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save
and give them victory o'er the grave.

5

O come, O dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

The Early Word. Jesus was a refugee. (*Lost Sheep series.*)

2nd Reading – THE GOSPEL according to Saint Luke. Chapter 1, Verses 26 to 35 & 38

The Angel Gabriel speaks to the Virgin Mary.

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. 32 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. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 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. 38 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.

Sing TIS 302 The Angel Gabriel from heaven came all verses

1

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

2

'for known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

3

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,

'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy name':
most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

4

of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
'most highly favoured lady'. Gloria!

3rd Reading – THE GOSPEL according to Saint Luke. Chapter 2, Verses 1, 3 to 7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 4 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. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 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.

Choir sings "Christmas Lullaby" *Alison McAllister*

How softly, how silently Jesus lay sleeping,
A lowly manger for His bed;
And Mary and Joseph, their watch o'er Him keeping,
While stars shone brightly overhead.
The angels sang praises and glorified God,
Singing peace on earth to all;
May we come and worship and bow down before Him,
Our King Creator, Lord of all.
Lulalulay, Lulalulay,
Lulalulay, Lulalulay.

4th Reading – THE GOSPEL according to Saint Luke. Chapter 2, Verses 8 to 16

The shepherds go to the manger.

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, 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, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

15 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." 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Sing TIS 299 While shepherds watched their flocks by night. all verses

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
you and all humankind.

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 heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling clothes
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 to the world be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to earth
begin and never cease.'

Message – Robin Butler.

A CHRISTMAS VIEW

In a book called "The Phantom Tollbooth", a boy called Milo travels from Situation to Situation in a wonderful car. Its fuel is THOUGHT. Think and it moves. Have no thought, at it stops. Do you think – dream a little?

One day, Milo meets a boy about his own age; but this little boy is the height of a grown man BUT his feet are in the air, level with Milo's knees. How come? He explained, "In our country we are born at full height and grow down. When our feet reach the ground, we know we are fully grown. This

means we always see things from the same position – our point of view never changes.”

CHRISTMAS is both end and beginning of our calendar and Church Year. It is a time of joyous celebration and renewal. For some, it is a time of indulgent exuberance; for some, a time of reflection on the formative good times in our life-cycle, that so enrich the present.

For the Christian, Christmas brings two amazing gifts to be received and given – forgiveness of the past – and like the new-born babe of Bethlehem, the opportunity to begin a new unblemished life.

What is your point of view?

In the words of the old hymn by William Young Fullerton –

*I cannot tell why He, whom angels worship,
Should set His love upon the sons of men,
Or why, as Shepherd, He should seek the wanderers,
To bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that He was born of Mary,
When Bethlehem's manger was His only home,
And that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
And so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.*

Sing TIS 317 Love came down at Christmas - all verses

1

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
star and angels gave the sign.

2

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus:
but wherewith for sacred sign?

3

Love shall be our token,
love be yours and love be mine,
love to God and neighbours,
love for plea and gift and sign.

During Offering – Sing TIS 311 Silent night- stand for last verse

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:

shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing, 'Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.'

3

Silent night, holy night:
wondrous star, lend your light;
with the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ our Saviour is born,
Christ our Saviour is born.

Blessing of offering

UCA President, Deidre Palmer's Christmas message. (Video)

Prayers of the people

God of star and stable, you lead us to wonder and to hope
You gather us together to hear your promise of love.
As we gather, we offer our concerns and our dreams, our hopes and
fears.....(*silence*)

Like the shepherds who sought the stable, we seek your promise of peace,
we pray for your people broken by violence,
those who live with fear, and those who live without hope.
We pray for countries consumed by war and violence and we pray for your
courage and peace.

Like the wise ones who dedicated their gifts, we remember those in need.
We pray for those who are lonely, hungry or forgotten.
For those who are ill in body and spirit,
for those who are confused or afraid,
we pray for your joy and love for all your people,
Especially those we remember now (*silence*)

Holy one, you came as a child, offering renewal of spirit and of living,
may our prayers be a new beginning: for healing, truth, and trust.
May we embody love that is forgiving, compassionate and gracious.
We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who became the Christ,
Who taught us when we pray to say –

*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,
Save us from the time of trial*

*And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever, Amen.*

**5th Reading – THE GOSPLE according to Saint Matthew. Chapter 2,
Verses 1 to 12**

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 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.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 ‘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.’”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 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.” 9 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. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 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. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sing TIS 314 As with gladness men of old. Verses 1,2,3,& 5

1

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright:
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore your glory see.

2

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to your lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
one whom heaven and earth adore:
so may we with willing feet
ever seek your mercy seat.

3

As they offered gifts most rare
at your cradle rough and bare:
so may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

5

in the heavenly country bright
need they no created light:
you its light, its joy, its crown,
you its sun which goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
hallelujahs to our King.

6th Reading - THE GOSPEL according to Saint John. Chapter 1, Verses 1 to 14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 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.

Sing TIS 268 Joy to the world

1

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive its king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;

let us our songs employ;
while fields and streams, rocks, 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
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Blessing and Benediction

From this house to yours,
May you share in the gifts of the season,
May love, the promise of generations, attend you
Joy the gift of life together, fill you.
Peace, the desire of neighbour and nations, find you.
Hope the horizon of faith, sustain you.

*The blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.*
Amen

TIS 779 The Christmas Blessing – May the feet of God go with you,

May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.

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