



**St Nicholas Church, Sighthill**  
**24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 from 6:00pm**

**CAROL OF THE BELLS (VIDEO)**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7nS>**

**KqfBk6k**

**WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP**

**LIGHTING THE FOUR ADVENT CANDLES**

Now is the time to light the Advent Candles. This past Sunday was the final Sunday of Advent, and we lit four purple candles. Tonight, on Christmas Eve, we light the candles of hope, love, joy, and peace – that Christ brought into this world.

**Please pray with me as we open our time together.**

Almighty God, we thank you for the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem, as announced by the angels on this holy night. May the mystery of the Word made flesh fill our souls with wonder and yearning. Change our hearts from a busy inn to a quiet chamber for your glory. May we who are gathered here join in song with the angels, share the delight of the shepherds, and adore him with the wise men. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

**A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**

We praise you, God of wonder and mystery. We praise you in the excitement of anticipation, in the heartache of our longing, and the fulfilment of our dreams. We praise you that in this moment you step into our humanity meeting our expectation and anticipation with the promise of Emmanuel, God with us; fulfilling our longing and our dreams with your glory dwelling amongst us We praise you that your Word is made flesh in the birth pains of a mother in the protective fear of a father, in the cries of a new-born baby.

## CAROL 1: SILENT NIGHT

1. Silent night holy night  
All is calm I'm singin' all is bright  
'Round yon virgin mother and Child  
Holy Infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Oh sleep in heavenly peace

2. Silent night holy night  
Shepherds quake oh at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born  
Christ the Savior is born

3. Silent night holy night  
Son of God oh 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

CCLI Song # 4629513  
Bart Millard | Brown Bannister

## READING: WHO STANDS AT MY DOOR?

Who stands at my door in the storm and rain  
On the threshold of being?  
One who waits till you call him in  
From the empty night.

Are you a stranger, out in the storm,  
Or has my enemy found me out  
On the edge of being?

I am no stranger who stands at the door  
Nor enemy come in the secret night,  
I am your child, in darkness and fear  
On the verge of being.

Go back, my child, to the rain and the storm,  
For in this house there is sorrow and pain  
In the lonely night.

I will not go back for sorrow or pain,  
For my true love weeps within  
And waits for my coming.

Go back, my babe, to the vacant night  
For in this house dwell sin and hate  
On the verge of being.

I will not go back for hate or sin,  
I will not go back for sorrow or pain,  
For my true love mourns within  
On the threshold of night.

(Kathleen Raine, 1908–2003)

Taken from The Gospel in Art, Music and Literature series by David Stancliffe

## **CAROL 2: IT WAS ON A STARRY NIGHT**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeRrAzapOQ0>**

### **READING – LUKE 2:13-20 (NIV)**

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.” 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.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 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 2: IN THE MID-BLEAK WINTER**

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 heav'n cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain  
Heav'n 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. Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air  
But His mother only  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss

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 can I give Him  
Give my heart

CCLI Song # 294736

Christina Georgina Rossetti | Gustav Theodore Holst

## **POEM : EMMANUEL**

God the Son, humbled in flesh, dwelt with us,  
Walked our paths, knew our grief and so thus,  
He is an example of how we might be,  
Without the prison of sin and iniquity.  
He leads us to God the Father, to freedom and life,  
To save us from anger, pain and strife.  
He sacrificed his own life; a death so cruel,  
To atone for our sins, for one and for all.  
A prize we could not earn, only by his grace  
Are we made righteous to see him face to face.  
His arms are open, if we would only submit,

Only through his intercession are we heaven fit.  
He is with us always, never to leave,  
He calls us in our hearts to have faith and believe.  
He is the author of creation, of every single thing,  
He reigns over all, he is King of Kings.  
He is the light of the world, the darkness he doth quell,  
He is LORD Jesus Christ, Our Emmanuel!

© Antonia Saunders

## **BRIEF REFLECTION**

Christmas trees and Christmas wrappings  
Christmas turkey, Christmas cake  
Christmas plays and Christmas puddings  
Christmas cards and crafts to make

Christmas lights and Christmas shopping in early  
October, oh for goodness sake!!  
Christmas songs and Christmas stockings  
Decorations, mince pies to bake  
Christmas carols and Christmas crackers  
Christmas parties and so many sweets to take  
Christmas TV with many repeats

All the family fighting for the best seats  
But what's this all about this word that describes so many things?

Is it really about spending, parties and all that Santa brings?

Well the fun is good and we really enjoy all that festivity

But at the heart of this season is a real-life nativity  
Not the wonderful tea towel shepherds and angels brigade

But that love was really born and in a manger laid

In Jesus we see God on this earth

Accepting all people and showing them their self-worth  
Not the stained glass version we so often see

But a babe who grew and died for you and me

He came not in riches in a designer made cot

His true identity was no doubt difficult to spot

The Christmas card picture would be missing somehow  
If you saw the scene you may not say 'oh wow'

**He was held by a peasant girl with a man at her side**

Their excitement and joy they no doubt could not hide  
Joseph and Mary, no doubt not X factor material

There was nothing in the scene that was remotely imperial

Then the shepherds arrived such a motley crew  
To be fair they realised God was doing something new

They had been told by an angel to go to this place  
To see the author of creation in a baby's face

The town was so busy there was a lot going on  
It would seem most people missed the arrival of God's Son

They didn't miss it through malice or watching TV  
There was no Sky Sports or BBC

They simply missed it – **the good news being born**  
They were unaware what was happening on that first Christmas morn

**I guess it's easy to miss the point of the season  
But make no mistake that behind Christmas –**

**there is a God given reason – John 3:16. That is the reason for  
the season... please don't miss... and Oh! Have a great Christmas.**

**STRANGE, THE WAYS THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN © Andrew Pratt**

Strange, the ways that God has chosen,  
strange the people of God's choice.  
Quietly we rehearse the memory,  
midnight turns and we rejoice.

Light is coming to the stable.  
Joy is coming to the earth.  
Joseph watches, thinking quietly.

Mary moving, giving birth.

God is being born among us,  
not remote but very near.  
All the heavens join in chorus,  
love has come to cast out fear.

## **PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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 debts,  
as we forgive our debtors;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power  
and the glory, forever, Amen.**

## **CAROL 3: MAKE ROOM BY CASTING CROWNS featuring Matt Maher**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUFSxt7qkNw>

## **CAROL 5: SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW**

1. See amid the winter's snow  
Born for us on earth below  
See the Lamb of God appears  
Promised from eternal years

### **Chorus**

Hail thou ever blessed morn  
Hail redemption's happy dawn  
Sing through all Jerusalem  
Christ is born in Bethlehem

2. Lo within a manger lies  
He who built the starry skies  
He who throned in height sublime  
Sits amid the cherubim (Chorus)

3. Say ye holy shepherds say  
What your joyful news today  
Wherefore have ye left your sheep  
On the lonely mountain steep (Chorus)

4. Teach O teach us holy Child  
By Thy face so meek and mild  
Teach us to resemble Thee  
In Thy sweet humility (Chorus)

CCLI Song # 260784  
Edward Caswall | John Goss

## **BENEDICTION**

The Prince of Peace  
Peace in a baby who lies in a manger.  
Peace through the parents who welcome each stranger.  
Peace, though a child is in imminent danger.  
Peace from the Prince of Peace.

Peace for the shepherds who ran down to greet him.  
Peace for the Magi, come, star-led, to meet him.  
Peace for the soldiers sent out to defeat him.  
Peace from the Prince of Peace.

Peace was his gift to disciples in sorrow.  
Peace is that gift none can beg, steal, or borrow.  
Peace for today and new hope for tomorrow.  
Peace from the Prince of Peace.

## **WISHING ONE ANOTHER A MERRY CHRISTMAS**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vdXR\\_igALU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vdXR_igALU)