

GARROWBYBENEFICE

Carol Service: Christmas Day



Welcome

A very Happy Christmas and a warm welcome to our Benefice service from St Andrew's Bugthorpe.

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

Opening Prayer

O God, our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the Shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Deliver us from evil by the blessing that Christ brings, teach us to be joyful with pure hearts. May this Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and may the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving, and forgiven, for Jesus sake.

All Amen

after Robert Louis Stevenson

Carol: One in Royal David's City

1st Reading: Isaiah 9: 2, 6 & 7 ~ The Prophecy

INTRODUCTION: The prophet Isaiah is one of a number of visionary voices from the past, pointing to that light in an otherwise dark world. This light is the promise of ultimate peace and justice for a suffering world. It will come in the most unexpected form, so be ready and watching.

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

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.

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 forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Carol: 'O Holy Night'

2nd Reading: Luke 1:26-35 & 38 ~ The Annunciation

INTRODUCTION: The Christ child, the Light of the World, upon whose shoulders so much ultimately rests is promised to an unsuspecting young woman setting out on the road of marriage and parenthood. God's mission, the salvation of all humanity, is to be fulfilled in Mary who humbly accepts the awesome role given to her.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God.

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Carol: Angels from the realms of glory



3rd Reading: Matthew 1:18-23 ~ the birth of Jesus - 'God Emmanuel'

INTRODUCTION: The focal point of all human history is the humble birth of a child in a backwater of the ancient world. The child's mother has some inkling of what is happening but Joseph, her betrothed, is utterly bemused until he too is given a divine message, that God himself is coming into his own creation in this child – Emmanuel "God is with us."

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.

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.

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.

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."

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet:

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

Carol: Night of Silence

4th Reading: Luke 2:8-16 ~ the shepherds

INTRODUCTION: The first people to be told of this birth, who become the first visitors to the new born child, are ordinary working men, shepherds at their daily work. They are told how to recognise this child, "wrapped in bands of cloth, and lying in a manger." They drop everything and go.

In that district there were shepherds out in the fields, guarding their flock by night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

'Don't be afraid,' the angel said to them, 'for I am bringing you good news of great joy, a joy which all peoples will share.

For today there has been born to you in David's town a saviour who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This is how you will recognize him. You will find a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger’.

Suddenly there was with the angel a crowd of heaven’s army, singing God’s praise,

‘Glory to God in the heights of heaven’, they sang, ‘and on earth peace to mankind, on whom God’s favour rests’.

When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other: ‘Come! We must go over to Bethlehem and see what has happened and what the Lord has told us about.’

So, they went as fast as they could, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

5th Reading: A Poem ~

A JUNIOR Shepherd PROTESTS ~ by Deborah Mercer

It’s really not fair and it’s really not right!

We were all sitting here this freezing cold night,

Bothering no-one and tending our flocks

When suddenly - one of life’s terrible shocks!

Along comes an angel shining and tall,

Hov’ring and fluttering over us all,

It’s all very well saying “Be not afraid”,

But I fancy most folks would be rather dismayed!

Still it all turned out well, “Good tidings, great joy”

And a nice trip to Bethlehem soon to enjoy,

“You see”, said the boss, his heart clearly soaring,

“You’re wrong when you say that the work here is boring!”

In total agreement, I stood up to go,

But then he turned stern and said, “Dear me no!

We can’t leave the sheep in the freezing cold here,

With the wolves and the foxes - the very idea!”

Well, you get the message, the youngest (that’s me)

Is still stuck out here! No great happenings I’ll see,

They’ve left me alone with no proper heating,

My only companions are snoring and bleating!

A Christmas Song: Come Hasten ye Shepherds: Da Capo

Come hasten, ye shepherds, come one and come all.
Come, let us go find Him, the Child in the stall.
Bring with you your pipes, we will play them with joy.
Now haste to the manger to find the new Boy.

The Babe like an angel, so lovely, so fair;
Both mother and father keep watch o'er him there.
The mother so gentle, so tender and mild,
Is guarding in slumber the sweet holy Child.

Oh neighbour, run quickly, a cradle to bring
from cold winds to shelter this dear little thing.
Ah, here is your cradle, so cosy and warm!
Sleep well, little Jesus, we'll keep you from harm.



6th Reading: John 1:1-14 ~ the Word of God made flesh

INTRODUCTION: Who and what is this child who Christians celebrate and welcome each Christmas?

This passage tells us that in the beginning of time God spoke and all things came into being. God's word is dynamic beyond our comprehension yet is knowable to us now because he spoke in the form of a human being – Jesus the Saviour who comes not for one day, or a season, but is living among us and within each of us every moment of our existence here and into all eternity.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

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.

Address

Carol: Hark the herald angels sing

Intercessions ending with the Lord's Prayer

THE LORDS PRAYER

**All Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that 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.**

A Christmas Song: Gaudete: Traditional: Da Capo

Gaudete, Gaudete!	<i>Rejoice, Rejoice!</i>
Christus est natus	<i>Christ is born</i>
Ex maria virgine,	<i>Of the virgin Mary,</i>
Gaudete!	<i>Rejoice!</i>

Tempus ad est gratiae,	<i>It is now the time of grace</i>
Hoc quod optabamus;	<i>That we have desired;</i>
Carmina laetitiae,	<i>Let us sing songs of joy,</i>
Devote redamus.	<i>Let us give devotion.</i>

Deus homo factus est,	<i>God was made man,</i>
Naturam er ante;	<i>And nature marvels;</i>
Mundus renovatus est	<i>The world was renewed</i>
A Christo renante.	<i>By Christ who is King.</i>

Ezecheel is porta	<i>The closed gate of Ezechie</i>
Clausa pertransitor;	<i>Has been passed through;</i>
Unde lux est orta	<i>From where the light rises</i>
Sallus invenitor.	<i>Salvation is found.</i>

Ergo nostra contrito,	<i>Therefore let our assembly now sing,</i>
Psallat jam in lustro;	<i>Sing the Psalms to purify us;</i>
Benedicat Domino:	<i>Let it praise the Lord:</i>
Sallus Regi nostro.	<i>Greetings to our King.</i>

Closing Prayers and Dismissal

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.

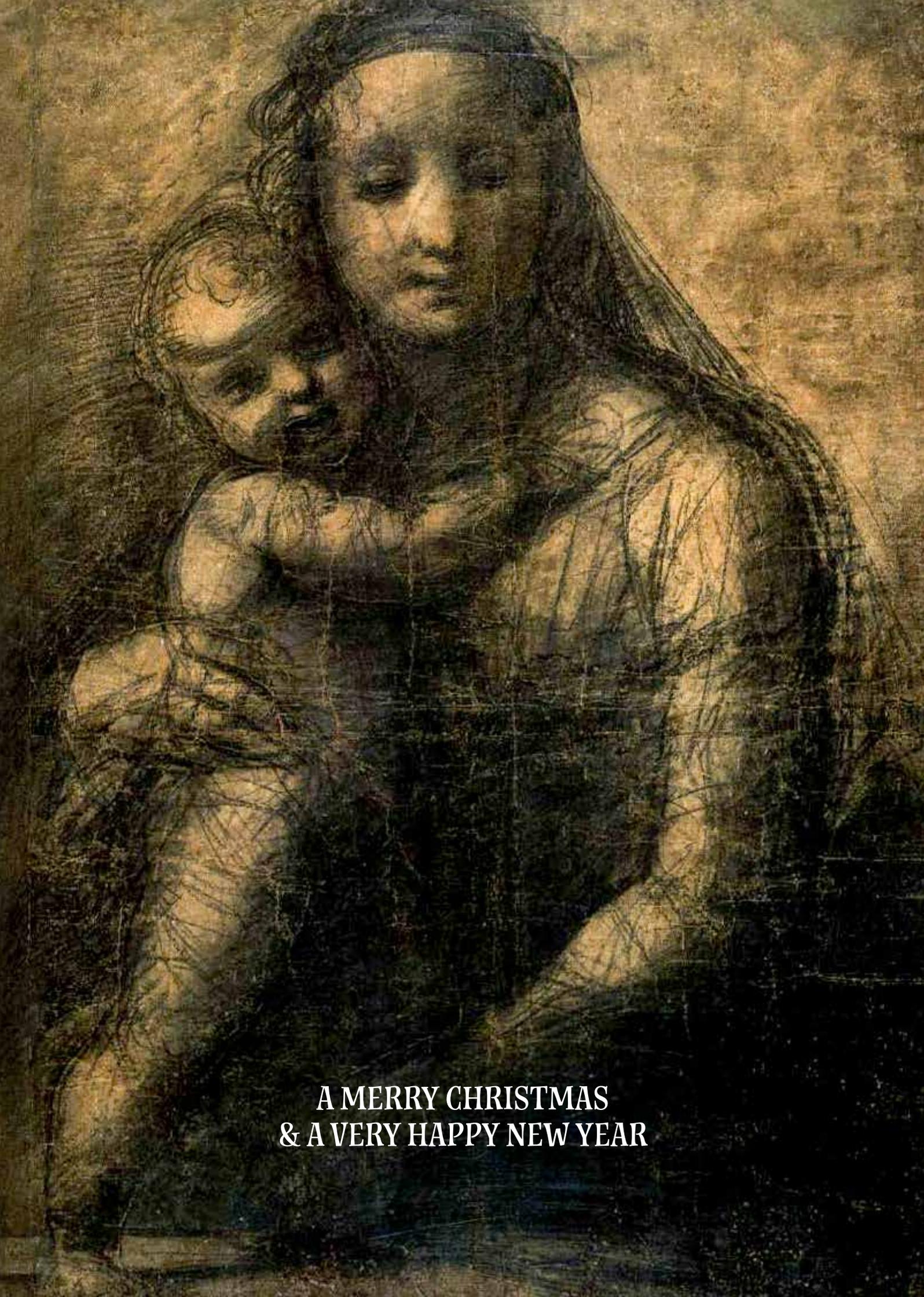
All Amen

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 among you and remain with you always.

All Amen

Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful





**A MERRY CHRISTMAS
& A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR**