

Sunday 30 November
First Sunday of Advent

All are welcome

What Child IS This

Call to Worship

Readers 1 & 2 then congregation sings;

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems
sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

Readers 1 & 2 then congregation sings;

**This, this is Christ, the King, (on
screens)
Whom shepherds guard and angels
sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

Prayer of Invocation in Unison

Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this
moment
with humility and hope.

Open up our hearts to new
understandings of
the unfolding story of your
presence among us.

Show us the true meaning of the
kingdom on earth
as it is in heaven.

We pray in the name of the Child,
the One Who Reigns in our hearts
and lives.

Amen.

Hymn CH4 457

All hail the power of Jesus' Name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,
* and crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, you martyrs of your
God,
who from his altar call;
praise him whose path of pain you
trod,
and crown him Lord of all.

Let every tongue and every tribe,
responsive to the call,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng,
we at his feet may fall;
join in the everlasting song,
and crown him Lord of all!

* When using MILES LANE the words 'crown him' are sung four times in each verse.

Edward Perronet (1726–1792)

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Hymn : Away in a manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his
sweet head.

The stars in the bright sky looked
down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the
hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby
awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he
makes.

I love thee, Lord Jesus! look down
from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is
nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee
to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I
pray.

Bless all the dear children in thy
tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with
thee there.

ALL AGE TIME

**Be near us, Lord Jesus; we ask Thee
to stay**

**close by us forever, and love us, we
pray.**

**Bless all the dear children in Thy
tender care,**

**and make earth a heaven, where all
have a share.**

HYMN -

Up from the depths I cry to God:
O listen, Lord, to me;
O hear my voice in this distress,
this mire of misery.

*I wait for God with all my heart,
my hope is in his word;
and more than watchmen for the dawn
I'm longing for the Lord.*

If you, my God, should measure guilt
who then stands free from blame?
But true forgiveness comes from you;
we trust, and fear your name.

O Israel, set your hope on God
whose mercy is supreme:
the nation mourning for its sin
he surely will redeem.

Christopher Idle from Psalm 130
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Scripture Reading Lamentations 3:46-57

'All our enemies have opened their mouths wide against us. We have suffered terror and pitfalls, ruin and destruction.' Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief, until the Lord looks down from heaven and sees. What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city. Those who were my enemies without cause hunted me like a bird. They tried to end my life in a pit and threw stones at me; the waters closed over my head, and I thought I was about to perish. I called on your name, Lord, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea: 'Do not close your ears to my cry for relief.' You came near when I called you, and you said, 'Do not fear.'

Our second reading is from Luke 2:1-5. It places us in the scene before the arrival of the Holy Family when the manger in Bethlehem was simply serving as a place for the animals' feed.

Luke 2:1-5

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

SERMON

Hymn CH4 303 It came upon a 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 you
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.

But with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angels' hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the love-song which they bring;
oh, hush the noise and still the strife
to hear the angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet bards foretold,
when, with the ever-rolling years,
still dawns the Age of Gold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810–1876) (alt.)

Announcements and Intimations

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**Hymn - CH4 277 Hark the glad
sound** PARAPHRASE 39

Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long;
let every heart exult with joy,
and every voice with song!

He comes, the prisoners to relieve,
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken hearts to bind,
the bleeding souls to cure;
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

The sacred year has now revolved,
accepted of the Lord,
when heaven's high promise is fulfilled,
and Israel is restored.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's exalted arches ring
with thy most honoured name.

Scottish Paraphrases, 1781

St Luke 4: 18, 19

BENEDICTION

**This, this is Christ, the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary! Amen**