



Westminster Abbey



Together at Christmas

Friday 8th December 2023, 5 p.m.

This carol service is a heartfelt thank you to all those across the UK supporting the very youngest members of our society during those crucial early years.

Alongside this service at the Abbey, twelve Together at Christmas community carol services will be taking place around the UK, hosted by Lord-Lieutenants, and supported by The Royal Foundation.



With thanks to His Majesty The King for donating Christmas trees from Windsor Great Park to decorate Westminster Abbey.

After the service, these trees will be donated to the local community.

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile telephones and other electronic devices are switched off. The church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

The service is conducted by the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, conducted by Andrew Nethsingha, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Peter Holder, Sub-Organist.

Underscore provided by an ensemble of musicians of the Royal Marines Band Service and the Royal Corps of Army Music.

Music before the service:

Matthew Jorysz, Assistant Organist, plays

*Prelude and Fugue
in C BWV 547*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

La Nativité

Jean Langlais (1907–91)

Andante in F K616

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 645

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Andante sostenuto
from Symphony no 9 Op 70 'Gothique'*

Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)

The Holy Boy

John Ireland (1879–1962)

The Sub-Organist plays

In dulci jubilo

Johann Michael Bach (c 1648–94)

Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. All remain seated while presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The congregation's candles are lit.

ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand. During the Hymn the choir and clergy process to places in Quire and the Sacrarium

A soloist sings

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 her little Child.

The choir sings

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.

All sing

And through all his wondrous childhood
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;
Where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

*Henry Gauntlett (1805–76)
harmonised by Arthur Henry Mann (1850–1929)
arranged by David Willcocks (1919–2015)*

Cecil Alexander (1818–95)

From the High Altar, the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster, welcomes the congregation, concluding with the Prayer

ETERNAL God, in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation: give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven; through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

All sit and extinguish candles

Beverley Knight MBE and Adam Lambert sing

The Christmas Song

*Robert Wells (1922–98)
and Mel Tormé (1925–99)
arranged by Simon Haw (b 1965)*

A film is played, with a foreword given by Emma Willis

The birth of a baby

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales reads Luke 2: 1–7

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke

IN those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn

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.

Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour, is born.

Silent night, holy night.
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)
arranged by Andrew Reid (b 1971)

Joseph Mohr (1792–1848)
translated by John Freeman Young (1820–85)

All sit

*Jim Broadbent reads an extract from Letters from Father Christmas by John
Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892–1973)*

The choir sings the Carol

HARK! how the bells,
sweet silver bells,
All seem to say,
'throw cares away.'
Christmas is here
bringing good cheer,
To young and old,
meek and the bold.

Ding, dong, ding, dong,
that is their song,
With joyful ring,
all carolling.
One seems to hear
words of good cheer
From ev'rywhere,
filling the air.

Oh, how they pound,
raising the sound,
O'er hill and dale,
telling their tale.
Gaily they ring,
while people sing,
songs of good cheer,
Christmas is here!
Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas!
Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas!

On, on they send,
on without end,
Their joyful tone
to ev'ry home.

*Mykola Leontovich (1877–1921)
arranged by Peter J Wilhousky (1902–78)*

Peter J Wilhousky

Roman Kemp introduces the following performance, played upon John Lennon's piano

Jacob Collier plays

Last Christmas

*George Michael (1963–2016)
arranged by Jacob Collier (b 1994)*

Leonie Elliott reads Growing Tomorrow

AS trees we are shaped
by the gardener's nurture:
by the warding of Jack Frost,
by the watering done.
Our vigour determined
by the soil we're sown on.

As hymns we are tuned
by the composer's hand:
by the pressure applied
as a pen makes its strokes.
Our melody determined
by those first careful notes.

As adults we are fashioned by those first moments in life:
the patient hug
when we cry and bawl.
The encouraging smile
In the nativity hall.

It's those childhood moments that make us all:
the recommended book,
the parents that listened
the first time snow
made our whole world glisten.

What a world it could be if we all equally received...
the composer's musical thought,
and the gardener's growing care.
The spirit of Christmas
woven tight in our hair.

If every child could be read to
with that first festive tale
could our world come together
To listen and regale?
Could stories be our currency?
Could imagination be our homes?
Could every single one of us
evade the chill of being alone.

What a world it could be if every child - a gift
was unequivocally shown,
that no bridge is too far
and from a sleigh ride's height
their own shining star.

It is a world that is waiting -
a cracker fizzing to be popped,
a carol jingling to be sung,
a world that exists
in the hopes of our young.

*Joseph Coelho (b 1980)
Children's Laureate*

The choir sings the Carol

DING dong! merrily on high
In heaven the bells are ringing:

Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riven with angel singing.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And io, io, io,

By priest and people sungen.
Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.

*16th-century French melody
arranged by Mack Wilberg (b 1955)*

George Woodward (1848–1934)

A film is played

Early childhood Christmases

All stand. Drums are played by The Romford Drum and Trumpet Corps

All sing the Hymn

JOY to the world, the Lord is come!
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

Antioch
Lowell Mason (1792–1872)
after George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

All sit

James Bay sings

White Christmas

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)
arranged by Simon Haw

Micheal Ward reads Luke 2: 8–19

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke

IN that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

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.’

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

Thanks be to God.

All remain seated. The choir sings the Carol

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 heav'n'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 heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring 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, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards 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 give back the song
which now the angels sing.

*English traditional melody
adapted by Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)
arranged by Peter Holder (b 1990)*

Edmund Sears (1810–76)

The Dean gives a Reflection

The Dean leads the prayers, during which candles are lit around the crib. At the conclusion of the prayers, all say

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who 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.**

The congregation's candles are lit

Freya Ridings, accompanied by the Soul Sanctuary Choir, sings

Merry Christmas Everyone

*Bob Heatlie (1946–2023)
arranged by Simon Haw*

All stand. The Dean pronounces the Blessing

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. **Amen.**

All sing the Hymn

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 th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen 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:

*Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)
arranged by Christopher Robinson (b 1936)*

Charles Wesley (1707–88)

Music after the service

Fanfare on Antioch

Gerre Hancock (1937–2012)

Noël 'Votre bonté grand Dieu'

Claude Balbastre (1724–99)

**Members of the congregation are requested kindly to remain
in their seats until invited to move by the Honorary Stewards**



The Royal Foundation is proud to support Her Royal Highness's Together at Christmas carol service. The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales develops and delivers programmes that are linked to Their Royal Highnesses's passion for tackling society's greatest challenges. It leads with the belief that change is always possible, and this positive approach sees it involved in issues that have previously seemed too big a challenge to many. The Royal Foundation partners with the best and the brightest, bringing together groups, organisations, and people around particular issues to create lasting change. Current areas of focus include mental health, conservation, homelessness and early childhood, through The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood which was founded by Her Royal Highness in 2021.

This Christmas, The Princess of Wales and The Centre for Early Childhood are working with baby banks around the country to support parents and carers, providing a vital lifeline for families in all sorts of challenging circumstances. Find out more about your local baby bank and how you can support at <https://centreforearlychildhood.org/>

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