

# St Mary's Church, Walkley



**The Church on the Road:**  
*Inclusive, Eucharistic, a safe place to be with God*

*When peaceful silence lay over all,  
and night was in the midst of her swift course:  
from your royal throne, O God, down from the heavens,  
leapt your almighty Word.*

## Christmas Carol Service

### 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021

#### **Welcome to St Mary's Church, Walkley**

At the moment we are not quite back to our usual way of worship. You will notice that:

- Half the seating is still arranged for people who want to keep physical distance.
- We will be singing whilst wearing face-coverings, and with the congregational music towards the end of the service.

## The Preparation

*We remain seated as the cantor sings.*

*Minister* I welcome you, on behalf of all here at St Mary's, both those gathered in the building and those on the livestream.

We have come together 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.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a world in need;

for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognize their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;

for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

*All*        **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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **The First Reading: Luke 1. 5 - 25**

*Reader* A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.  
*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated as the cantor sings.*

### **The Second Reading: Luke 1. 26 - 38**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' 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.

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.  
*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated as the cantor sings.*

## **The Third Reading: Luke 1. 39 - 56**

*Reader* A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated as the cantor sings.*

## The Fourth Reading: Luke 1. 57 - 80

*Reader* A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.  
He has raised up a mighty saviour for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all  
who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,  
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of  
death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.  
*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated as the cantor sings.*

### **The Fifth Reading:** Luke 2. 1 - 7

*Reader* 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.

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.  
*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated and wearing masks we sing hymn number 377.*

## **The Sixth Reading: Luke 2. 8 - 20**

*Reader* 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*Reader* This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*We remain seated and wearing masks we sing the following hymn:*



**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.**

**‘Fear not,’ said he, (for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind)  
‘Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to all of humankind.’**

**‘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:**

**‘The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid.’**

**Thus spoke the Seraph: and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:**

**‘All glory be to God on high,  
and on the be peace,  
goodwill henceforth from heaven to all  
begin and never cease.’**

Nahum Tate, 1652-1715

## The Prayers

*We remain seated or kneel.*

*Intercessor* In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Christ, born in a stable,  
give courage to all who are homeless.  
Holy God,

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* Christ, for whom the angels sang,  
give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.  
Holy God,

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* Christ, worshipped by the shepherds,  
give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.  
Holy God,

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* Christ, before whom the wise men knelt,  
give humility and wisdom to all who govern.  
Holy God,

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger,  
give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.  
Holy God,

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* Father,  
angels and shepherds worshipped at  
the manger throne.  
Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,  
Joseph and the saints  
through him who is your Word made flesh,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

*All* **Amen.**

*The prayers conclude with the following:*

*All*        **Lighten our darkness,  
Lord, we pray,  
and in your great mercy  
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,  
for the love of your only Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

### **The Collect**

*Minister*    Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:  
accept our heartfelt praise  
as we worship you,  
our Saviour and our eternal God.

*All*        **Amen.**

*We remain seated and wearing masks we sing hymn 444.*

### **The Blessing**

*Minister*    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 ours this Christmas;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always.

*All*        **Amen.**

*We remain seated and wearing masks we sing hymn 199.*

*Following this the cantor will sing.*

*We ask you to make your way out carefully being mindful of those  
who wish to maintain social distancing.*

## ***Please take this order of service away with you!***

*Beginning with the back rows of pews and chairs, please leave using the church porch and move away as quickly as possible to help others to leave too. If you use the ramp, please use the hall door as usual, and move away as quickly as you can.*

*Please be mindful of those who prefer to keep their distance from others at the moment.*

**More information: [stmaryswalkley.co.uk/opt-in-to-hear-from-st-marys/](https://stmaryswalkley.co.uk/opt-in-to-hear-from-st-marys/)**