

St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service, 20 December 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Interpreted service with Albany Deaf Church
Our Journey to Christmas



Introit The Holly and the Ivy (verses 1 & 2) Traditional Folk Carol

Oh, the holly and the ivy
now they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood
the holly tree bears the crown.

*Oh, the rising of the sun
and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ
sweet singing all in the choir.*

Oh, the holly tree bears a blossom
as white as any milk,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
all wrapped up in silk.

Welcome and Call to Worship

Dreams and angels, prophecies,
mystery and magi, choirs and shepherds,
we make our way to the star-blessed stable,
to the light shining miraculously
in human misery and darkness.
We are almost there.
Come let us worship.

Carol The Holly and the Ivy (verses 3 and 4)

Oh, the holly tree bears a berry
as bitter as any gall,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
for to redeem us all.

*Oh, the rising of the sun
and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ
sweet singing all in the choir.*

Oh, the holly tree bears a prickle
as sharp as a thorn,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
on Christmas day in the morn.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray for a better future. Christmas is almost here, this year's journey is nearly over, only a few more sleeps to the big day.
We are excited, we are waiting.
We want to know what is going to happen,
but we have to be patient for 5 more days.

When we hear the story of the journey to the first Christmas,
help us to understand how excited Mary and Joseph must have been and how worried they must have been about the future.
We can look back and thank you, God, for sending your son Jesus to be with us,
the real gift of Christmas.

Even though we are excited about all the celebrations that come with Jesus' birthday,
we pray that you will help us to remember the most important thing of all;
that we are celebrating the same Saviour that was born all those years ago
and that he can change our lives now
just as much as he did for Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Magi.
Amen.

Lighting of the Advent candles

We light a candle for joy.
May it light the way.

(candle lighting)

Joy cannot be bought,
it is a priceless treasure.
Joy lives deep in the human spirit.
God of love, we were made in joy.
May we also live in joy.

Hymn 284 (verses 1-4)

Hope is a candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed, though it burns through the years;
dim in the daylight of power and privilege –
when they are gone, hope will shine on.

Peace is a candle to show us a pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.

Love is a candle whose light makes a circle,
where every face is the face of a friend.
Widen the circle by sharing and giving –
God's holy dare: love everywhere.

Joy is a candle of mystery and laughter,
mystery of light that is born in the dark;
laughter at hearing the voice of an angel,
ever so near, casting out fear.

Richard Leach

Nativity 2020

A present day re-telling of the Nativity story, interspersed with music

Hymn 304 O little town of Bethlehem (verse 1)

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in your streets is shining
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in you tonight.

Phillips Brooks (1835–1893) (*alt.*)

Carol We three kings (verse 1)

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

Hymn 304 O little town of Bethlehem (verse 4)

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;

cast out our sin, and enter in ;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell ;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Hymn 295 Who would think that what was needed (verses 1-2)

Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army,
proud in purpose, proved in worth ?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way ?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
monarchs scorn and angels sing ;
such a place as none would reckon
hosts a holy helpless thing.
Stable beasts and by-passed strangers
watch a baby laid in hay :
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

John L. Bell (*b.* 1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2020)

Reflection We are all included in the story

Hymn 295 (verse 3)

Centuries of skill and science
span the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether,
with such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Our Prayers for Others

Ruth Burgess (adapted)

On our journey to Christmas, help us, God, to watch and to listen:
to watch out for people who might need our help,
to listen to people who tell us their stories.

Even though we're approaching Christmas,
and at this time of year we watch, and we listen,
help us also to act when that is what's needed.

We know that this time of year doesn't work for everyone.
For some people Christmas is sad,

for some people Christmas is cold
and hungry and lonely.

We know that this time of year doesn't work for everyone.
It's OK to cry and to talk about things which make us sad,
to love and to listen,
and to share our resources.

We know that this time of year doesn't work for everyone.
But it might work a bit better
if we looked for God in all things;
in the manger, in the people we know
and in the stranger,
as we journey to Christmas.
Amen.

Hymn 786 May the God of peace go with us

May the God of peace go with us
as we travel from this place ;
may the love of Jesus keep us
firm in hope and full of grace.

Ian Jamieson (*b.* 1939)

Blessing and Sending

May the blessing of God surround us
May angels and friends share our journey
May we be safeguarded, loved and cherished
May we walk on holy ground

May people of faith inspire us
May wisdom and justice empower us
May we be wise and strong and creative
May we celebrate life and hope

May God's image grow within us
May laughter and courage heal us
May the Gospel of life sustain us
All the days of our journey home.

Organ The First Nowell

Ashley Grote

Worship Leaders: Reverend Dr Rosie Magee, Nick and Sally Evans

Nativity Play adapted from a script by Adrienne Burgess

Narrator: Nick Evans

Joseph: Crispin Longden

Hotel Manager: Andrena Crawford

Wise People: Dorothy MacKenzie

Mary: Sally Evans

BSL signing: Louise Holden

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

Introit: Joanna Stark

Organist: Drew Crichton

The Choir of St Andrew's and St George's West

Vocal ensemble: Eleanor Cozens, Eleanor Wilson, Caitlin McGillivray, Drew Crichton, Tim Cooper, Andrew Carvel

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Andrew Carvel, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

Sources:

Nativity Scene courtesy of Christian Aid at STAGW

Hymns used under licence from CCLI 247862

Streaming licence 351013

St Andrew's & St George's West Church of Scotland Edinburgh. Charity SC008990

www.stagw.org.uk