



**Leicester Cathedral**  
*A beating heart for City and County*

# **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

from the Community  
of Leicester Cathedral

**Comfort**  
and Joy



**Sunday 27 December 2020**  
**The First Sunday of Christmas | John the Apostle**

*The Rt Revd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester, leads the service.*

*Rosie Vinter, Assistant Director of Music, plays on the Organ*

Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich BWV605

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)*

## **Welcome and Greeting**

We meet in the presence of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Bishop Martyn continues with words of welcome.*

Today, as well as being the First Sunday of Christmas, is also the day when the Church remembers St. John, apostle and evangelist. From the gospel of John, we have these famous words that we often hear at Christmas time:

And the Word was made flesh, and lived among us,  
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

*John 1.14*

The Word that John writes about is Jesus Christ,  
the baby born in Bethlehem, God come to earth in human flesh.  
As Christians we believe that this Jesus is still with us,  
not as a tiny child but as almighty God surrounding us now  
through the Holy Spirit – bringing us God's comfort and joy.

So I invite you to open your hearts across the distance today,  
and to lift up your voices in singing wherever you are  
as we rejoice in God's tidings of comfort and joy this Christmas time.

## The Carol

**God rest you merry, gentlemen,  
let nothing you dismay,  
for Jesus Christ our Saviour  
was born upon this day,  
to save us all from Satan's power  
when we were gone astray:**

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

**From God our heavenly Father  
a blessed angel came,  
and unto certain shepherds  
brought tidings of the same,  
how that in Bethlehem was born  
the Son of God by name:**

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

**The shepherds at those tidings  
rejoicèd much in mind,  
and left their flocks a-feeding  
in tempest, storm and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway  
this blessèd babe to find:**

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

**But when to Bethlehem they came,  
whereat this infant lay,  
they found him in a manger,  
where oxen feed on hay;  
his mother Mary kneeling,  
unto the Lord did pray:**

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

**Now to the Lord sing praises,  
all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood  
each other now embrace;  
this holy tide of Christmas  
all others doth deface:**

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

## **Penitence** Asking for God's forgiveness and healing

Christ the light of the world has come  
to dispel the darkness of our hearts.  
In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins,  
trusting that God comes close to us with forgiveness and peace.

*Silence is kept*

God our Father,  
You sent your Son full of grace and truth:  
forgive our failure to receive him.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus our Saviour,  
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:  
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of love,  
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:  
forgive the hardness of our hearts.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution** God's forgiveness for us

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw you to himself,  
that you may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
and be cleansed from all your sins,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## The Collect

Let us pray.

God in Trinity,  
eternal unity of a perfect love:  
gather the nations to be one family,  
and draw us into your holy life  
through the birth of Emmanuel,  
our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

## The First Reading

I John I

*Read by Janet Arthur*

A reading from the First Letter of John.

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Second Reading

John 21.19b–25

*Read by Philip Leech*

A reading from the Gospel of John.

(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!' So the rumour spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?'

This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Reflection

The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan, Canon Chancellor and DDO

## The Carol

**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 you and all mankind.**

**‘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 spake 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 to the earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to men  
begin and never cease.’**

WINCHESTER OLD (AM89i)  
Ascribed to George Kirbye (c.1565–1634)  
in Thomas Este’s *The whole booke of psalms*. 1592  
Possibly derived from Christopher Tye’s  
*The Actes of the Apostles*, 1533

Nahum Tate (1652–1715)  
based on Luke 2.1–20

## Prayers of Intercession

*The following response may be used*

Lord, come to your people  
**In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

*and this response may be used at the end:*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

*The prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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.**

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**Thank you.**



## The Carol

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.

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.

And through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the lowly maiden,  
in whose gentle arms he lay:  
Christian children all must be  
mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern,  
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;  
when like stars his children crowned  
all in white shall wait around.

## **The Blessing and Dismissal**

When the Word became flesh  
earth was joined to heaven and heaven to earth:  
may you know that God is with you and in you today.

**Amen.**

May the peace and comfort of Christ  
rule in your hearts and homes.

**Amen.**

May you be filled with the joy of the Spirit  
this Christmas and in every season.

**Amen.**

and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

Until we meet again,  
go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

*Rosie Vinter, Assistant Director of Music, plays on the Organ*

In dulci jubilo BWV729

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)*

## **Leicester Cathedral needs your help**

We understand that not everyone will be able to help in this uncertain climate. But if you are able to continue your giving, or to make a donation now, it will be enormously helpful.

We have limited reserves, our earned income has come to a standstill, and giving by collection plate and envelope has ceased. As a result, we are experiencing very real financial pressures.

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