



The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme



13 December 2020 6pm

A Zoom Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

For a zoom link to join this service contact Helen: 07788 848830, beneficehwcd@gmail.com

Welcome & Opening prayer

Carol: Hark the Herald angels sing

First Lesson: The prophecy of the Messiah's birth (Isaiah 9.2,6,7)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Poem: "The Coming" by R.S. Thomas

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows; a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.

On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

Carol: Of the Father's love begotten

Second Lesson: The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5.2-4)

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;

Carol: O little town of Bethlehem

Poem: "BC:AD" by U. A. Fanthorpe.

This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect

Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.

Third Lesson: The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1.26-38)

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 forever, 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.

Carol: In the bleak mid-winter.

Fourth Lesson: The birth of Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 1.18-23)

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a

righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “God is with us.”

Carol: Once in Royal David’s city

Fifth Lesson: The birth of Jesus (Luke 2.1-7)

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.

Poem: “Census” by Peter Dainty.

It was census day in the morning
when Jesus Christ was born;
and the government was
regimenting its citizens –
it’s easier to keep people in order
if you number them.
So Jesus came in time to be numbered
with the man in the street –
the Son of Almighty God,
another item in the state filing system.

He was registered as a tax-payer,
who would render to Caesar
what was Caesar's
And that's how the Son of Man became
just an extra figure
in the population statistics;
an additional number
destined, sooner or later,
to be crossed out.

Such is the way of human government.
But God has a different method:
he numbers the hairs on your head,
but he calls you by name,
and seeks you until he finds you,
not to tax you with heavy burdens
but to take the yoke upon himself
and pay off all your debts
by his self-giving.

Carol: The Virgin Mary had a baby boy

Sixth Lesson: The shepherds receive the good news (Luke 2.8-16)

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!"

Carol: While Shepherds watched their flocks by night

Seventh Lesson: “The shepherds go to the manger” by Arnold Kellett

But this ‘ere ‘eavenly visitation wor a bit over-pahrin fer t’ shepherds. As Ah’ve said, at fust the’ wer’ flaid ter death. An’ when it wor all over, the’ wer’ that capped the’ just gawped at one-another. Then one on ‘em says:

“Na then, lads! Wi mun go an’ see if t’ tale ‘at t’angil ‘as telled us is reight! Wi mun go inter Bethle’em an’ try to find this ‘ere babby.”

“But what abaht t’ sheep?” says another on ‘em.

“ Oh, ‘ummer ter t’ sheep!” says t’ fust shepherd. “This is summat aht o’ t’ ordinary – it’s a message from t’ Almighty! T’ sheep’ll nut come to ony ‘arm. It’s nobbut a mile away. Come on, lad. Frame thissen!”

So off the’ go, an’ by an’ by the’ finnd this little mistal, an’ Mary and Joseph, an’ t’ babby liggin’ in a manger.

“Can wi ‘ave a peep at ‘im?” axed one o’ t’ shepherds.

“Aye, tha can that,” says Joseph, glad of a bit o’ company, like.

“Ee! I’n’t ‘e grand?” says t’ shepherd. E’s that bonny an’ tender ‘e’s same as a neew-born lamb.....What do the’ call thi, then, little feller?”

“We’r bahn to call ‘im Jesus”, says Mary, “Nah, if tha’ll excuse mi, it’s time fer ‘is next feed.”

So Mary sam’s t’ bairn up aht o’ t’ manger, an sits ‘ersen dahn ter feed ‘im. An off t’ shepherds go, thrilled ter bits ‘at the’ve seen t’ little Lord Jesus....

And what appeals ter me, tha knaws, in this ‘omely tale telled bi Sent Lewk. It’s same as if ‘e’s sayin’ ‘at t’ Lord really cares abaht ordinary fowk – same as yon shepherds – an fowk wi’ no brass, an’ none o’ t’ comforts an’ luxuries wi tak fer granted. It’s summat we’r apt ter ferget at Christmastime.

Carol: See him lying on a bed of straw

Eighth Lesson: The magi are led by the star to Jesus (Matthew 2.1-11)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah^[c] was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”
Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact
time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,
“Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me
word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the
king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at
its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw
that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the
house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid
him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold,
frankincense, and myrrh.

Carol: We three Kings of Orient are

Poem: Look on this Child by Peter Dainty

Look on this child with awe, here is a mystery;
not a concoction only of molecules and genes,
(though that in itself is miracle),
but the essence of the past,
distilled in one small life;
the latest fruit of nature’s ancient tree.

Look on this child with love; love is its birthright;
it was conceived in love, however strange,
and will be nurtured best in love,
just as the flower blooms best
that is most cared for;
hate and neglect will wither; love gives life.

Look on this child with hope; it could just be
that this one gives the lie to our faults,
and, unlike us, learns from past failures.
if ever dreams come true,
why should they not come true
with this appearing of a new-born hope?

Ninth Lesson: The Incarnation of the Word of God (John 1.1-14)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became 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.

Carol: Joy to the World

Closing prayer & Blessing

Carol: O Come all ye faithful

Services for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Christmas Eve

4pm Christingle Services on Zoom

11.30pm Midnight Christmas Communion in church

Christmas Day

9.30am Christmas Morning Family Communion

10.45am Zoom Family Christmas Morning Service

Booking is essential for all these services. Please book by contacting Helen: 07788 848830, beneficehwcd@gmail.com . If you would like to receive our newsletters and our written service sheets please let Helen know and she will add you to our mailing list.

We wish you a very holy, peaceful and safe Christmas and a blessed New Year!