

**Opening Carol: Unto us is born a Son**

Unto us is born a Son,  
King of quires supernal:  
See on earth his life begun,  
Of lords the Lord eternal. *(repeat line)*

*(Upper voices)*

Christ, from heav'n descending low,  
Comes on earth a stranger;  
Ox and ass their owner know,  
Be-cradled in the manger. *(repeat line)*

*(Upper voices)*

Of his love and mercy mild  
This the Christmas story;  
And O that Mary's gentle Child  
Might lead us up to glory! *(repeat line)*

*(Lower voices)*

This did Herod sore affray,  
And grievously bewilder,  
So he gave the word to slay,  
And slew the little childer. *(repeat line)*

*(All)*

O and A, and A and O,  
*Cum cantibus in choro,*  
Let our merry organ go,  
*Benedicamus Domino. (repeat line)*

BCB 43

**The Collect**

Almighty God,  
who wonderfully created us in your own image  
and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ:  
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,  
so we may share the life of his divinity;  
for he is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

**The New Testament Reading**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This is the word of the Lord.

*Galatians 4: 4–7*

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gradual Carol: A great and mighty wonder**

A great and mighty wonder,  
A full and holy cure!  
The Virgin bears the Infant,  
With virgin honour pure.

*Repeat the hymn again!*  
*'To God on high be glory,*  
*And peace on earth to men!'*

The Word becomes incarnate  
And yet remains on high!  
And cherubim sing anthems  
To shepherds from the sky.

Since all he comes to ransom,  
By all be he adored,  
The Infant born in Beth'lem  
The Saviour and the Lord.

While thus they sing your monarch,  
Those bright angelic bands,  
Rejoice, ye vales and mountains,  
Ye oceans clap your hands.

And idol forms shall perish,  
And error shall decay,  
And Christ shall wield his sceptre,  
Our Lord and God for ay.

BCB 43

**The Gospel**

Alleluia! Alleluia! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
and we have seen his glory.

**Alleluia!**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

When the angels had left the shepherds 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. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*St Luke 2: 15–21*

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**The Creed:**

Let us declare our faith in the living God.

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Offertory Carol: While shepherds watched their flocks by night**

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 on the earth be peace;  
Good will henceforth from heav'n to men  
Begin, and never cease.'

*BCB 47*

**Anthem: Nativity Carol**

Born in a stable so bare  
Born so long ago  
Born 'neath light of star  
He who loved us so

*Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day*

Cradled by mother so fair  
Tender her lullaby  
Over her son so dear  
Angel hosts fill the sky

Wise men from distant far land  
Shepherds from starry hills  
Worship this babe so rare  
Hearts with his warmth he fills

Love in that stable was born  
Into our hearts to flow  
Innocent dreaming babe  
Make me thy love to know

*John Rutter (b.1945)*

**Communion Carol: See amid the winter's snow**

See amid the winter's snow,  
Born for us on earth below;  
See the tender Lamb appears,  
Promis'd from eternal years:  
*Hail, thou ever blessed morn;*  
*Hail, redemption's happy dawn;*  
*Sing through all Jerusalem,*  
*Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

Lo, within a manger lies  
He who built the starry skies;  
He who, throned in height sublime,  
Sits amid the cherubim:

Say, ye holy shepherds, say  
What your joyful news today;  
Wherefore have ye left your sheep  
On the lonely mountain steep?

'As we watch'd at dead of night,  
Lo, we saw a wondrous light;  
Angels singing "Peace on earth"  
Told us of the Saviour's birth:

Sacred infant, all divine,  
What a tender love was thine,  
Thus to come from highest bliss  
Down to such a world as this:

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,  
By thy face so meek and mild,  
Teach us to resemble thee,  
In thy sweet humility:

34 BCB

**Final Carol: Ding dong! Merrily on high**

Ding dong! Merrily on high  
In heaven the bells are ringing;  
Ding dong! Verily the sky  
Is riv'n with angel singing.  
*Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!*

E'en so here below, below,  
Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And i-o, i-o, i-o  
By priest and people sungen.  
*Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!*

Pray you, dutifully prime  
Your matin chime, ye ringers;  
May you beautifully rime  
Your eve-time song, ye singers.  
*Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!*

BCB 10