



A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21 December 2025 at 7.00pm



Following the Dean's welcome the congregation stands and all are silent when the carol starts. All join in singing the last four verses.

Processional Carol – Once in Royal David's city

1. - Solo

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.

2. - Choir only

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.

3. - All

**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.**

Words: C. F. Alexander

4.

**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.**

5.

**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.**

6.

**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;
where like stars his children
crowned
all in white shall wait around.**

Music: J. Gauntlett arr. D. Willcocks

We remain standing for the bidding prayer:

Friends, at Christmas it is our joy to get ready to hear again the angels' message and, in our hearts, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, and the baby lying in the manger.

So tonight let us listen to the story told in the Bible – the story of God's love from the very beginning, through our failings, and into the hope and new life that came with this child. And let us fill this place with the sound of carols and songs of joy.

But first, let us pray. Let us pray for the needs of the world – for peace and goodwill everywhere, for unity among Christians, and especially for our own Diocese of Waiapu.

Let us remember those who need God's care in a special way: the poor and the powerless, the hungry and the oppressed; those who are sick in body or mind; those who grieve; the lonely and the unloved; the very old and the very young; and those who do not yet know Jesus or who have turned away from him.

And let us also remember those who have gone before us – those who now live in God's light and joy, whose hope was in Jesus, the Word made flesh, and who are still one with us in him.

We bring all these prayers and praises to God, using the words Jesus himself taught us:

**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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

All sit

First Lesson Genesis 3: 8 – 15

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman

whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol – *Adam Lay y-bounden*

Adam lay y-bounden.
Bounden in a bond.
Four thousand winters,
Thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple.
An apple that he took.
As clerkes finden,
Written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been.
The apple taken been.
Ne had never our lady,
A-been heavené queen.

Blessed be the time.
That apple taken was.
Therefore, we moun singen,
Deo gracias.

Words: anon

Music: P. Ledger

Second Lesson Genesis 22: 15 – 18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

Thanks be to God.

All stand

Congregational Carol – *Of the Father's love begotten*

1. **Of the Father's love begotten**
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are,
that have been,
and the future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2. **At his word they were created;**
he commanded; it was done:
heaven and earth and depths of
ocean,
in their threefold order one;
all that grows beneath the shining
of the light of moon and sun,
evermore and evermore.

3. **O that birth for ever blessed**
when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bare the Saviour of our race,
and the babe, the world's
Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

4. **O ye heights of heaven,**
adore him;
angel-hosts, his praises sing;
powers, dominions,
bow before him,
and extol our God and King:
every tongue his name confessing,
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore.

Words: tr. J. M. Neale & H. W. Baker

Music: Trad arr. D. Willcocks

All sit

Third Lesson *Isaiah 9: 2, 6 – 7*

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah

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 onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol – *O Oriens*

O Oriens, splendor lucis
aeternae, et sol justitiae:
veni, et illumina sedentes in
tenebris, et umbra mortis.

Words: trad. - *O Antiphons*

*O Morning Star, splendour of light
eternal and sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten those who dwell
in darkness and the shadow of death.*

Music: *Melissa Dunphy*

Fourth Lesson *Isaiah 11: 1-3a, 4 – 9*

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol – *A Shoot shall come forth*

1. A shoot shall come forth out of
Jesse
And a bud shall grow out of his roots
The spirit of life shall be with him
The spirit of wisdom and truth

Chorus
*Then the lamb shall lie down with the
leopard*
And the lion eat straw with the ox
For the hand of a child shall lead them
To the peaceable kingdom of God

Words: *Isaiah 11 (paraphrase)*

2. From out of the wells of salvation
Will he draw us the water of life
His waist shall be girded with justice
The heart of his heart shall be love.
Chorus

3. He'll come from the end of his heaven
And the earth shall be torn from its place
Our lives shall be filled with his radiance
As flood waters cover the sea
Chorus

Music: *Horn*

Fifth Lesson *St Luke 1: 26 – 38*

The angel Gabriel greets Mary

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.

Thanks be to God.

All stand

Congregational Carol – *Angels from the realms of glory*

1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo

2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light:
[Refrain]

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star:
[Refrain]

Words: J. Montgomery

Music: Trad French arr. R. Jacques

All sit

Sixth Lesson St Matthew 1: 18 – 23

Joseph is obedient to the angelic message.

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 fulfil 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.'

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol – *Angels' Carol*

Have you heard the sound of the angel voices
ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?
Have you seen the star shining out so brightly
as a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?

Have you heard the news that they bring
from heaven
to the humble shepherds who have waited long?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.

He is come in peace in the winter's stillness,
like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night.
He is come in joy, like the sun at morning,
filling all the world with radiance and with light.

He is come in love as the child of Mary.
In a simple stable we have seen his birth.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing 'Peace on earth'.

He will bring new light to a world in darkness,
like a bright star shining in the skies above.
He will bring new hope to the waiting nations,
when he comes to reign in purity and love.

Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour's coming.
Let the heavens answer with a joyful morn:
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing, 'Christ is born'
Hear the angels singing, 'Christ is born'

Seventh Lesson *St Luke 2: 8 – 18*

The shepherds go to the manger.

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.

Thanks be to God.

All stand

Congregational Carol – *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears
of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2. O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.

3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will
receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

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!

Words: P. Brooks

Music: arr. R.V. Williams

All sit

Eighth Lesson *St Matthew 2: 1 – 12*

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

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 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol – *A Babe is Born*

A babe is born all of a may,
To bring salvation unto us.
To him we sing both night and day.
Veni creator Spiritus.

At Bethlehem, that blessed place,
The child of bliss now born he was;
And him to serve God give us grace,
O lux beata Trinitas.

A fair song that night sung they
In worship of that child:
Gloria tibi Domine.

A babe is born all of a may,
To bring salvation unto us.
To him we sing both night and day.
Veni creator Spiritus,

There came three kings out of the East,
To worship the King that is so free,
With gold and myrrh and
frankincense,
A solis ortus cardine.

Words: trad.

O lux beata Trinitas,
A solis ortus cardine,
Gloria tibi Domine.
Noel!

Music: Mathias

All stand

Ninth Lesson John 1: 1 – 14

Saint John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

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.

Thanks be to God.

All sit

Choir Carol – *All this Time*

All this time this song is best:
'Verbum caro factum est.'

This night there is a chid yborn
That sprang out of Jesse's thorn;
We must sing and say thereforn

All this time this song is best:
'Verbum caro factum est.'

Jesus is the childe's name
And Mary mild is his dame;
All our sorrow shall turn to game:

All this time this song is best:
'Verbum caro factum est.'

Words: Trad.

All stand

Congregational carol - *O come all ye faithful*

1. O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye,
O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him,
born the King of angels!

*O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*

It fell upon high midnight:
The starres shone both fair and bright;
The angels sang with all their might

All this time this song is best:
'Verbum caro factum est.'

Now kneel we down on our knee
And pray we to the Trinity
Our help, our succour for to be;

All this time this song is best:
'Verbum caro factum est.'

Music: Walton

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
lo, He abhors
not the virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten not created;

*O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*

3. Child, for us sinners,
poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee
with awe and love;
who would not love thee,
loving us so dearly?

*O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*

Words: tr. F. Oakley &
W. T. Brooke

4. Sing, choirs of angels;
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens
of heav'n above!
Glory to God,
in the highest!

*O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*

Music: 18th arr. D. Willcocks
Descant: D. Willcocks

Collect and Blessing

We remain standing

The Lord be with you.
The Lord bless you.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly festival
of the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ,
the light of the world;
grant that we,
who have known the revelation of that light on earth,
may see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
all things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Recessional Carol – *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

1. Hark! the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King,
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem':
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

2. Christ, by highest heaven
adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as one with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace:
hail the Sun of Righteousness.
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth:
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Words: C. Wesley, T. Whitefield,
M. Madan

Music: Mendelssohn arr. D. Willcocks
Descant: D. Willcocks

Organ Voluntary – *In Dulci Jubilo* – J. S. Bach

Collection:

We invite you to make a retiring offertory as you leave the Cathedral.
We have the provision for cash and EFTPOS.

Cathedral Upcoming Christmas Events

Wednesday 24 Dec	6.00pm	Family Christmas Play
Wednesday 24 Dec	11.00pm	Midnight Mass – the first Eucharist of Christmas
Thursday 25 Dec	8.00am	Christmas Day Eucharist with Carols
Thursday 25 Dec	10.00am	Christmas Day Choral Eucharist
Thursday 25 Dec	9.00am	Ormond Chapel Family Eucharist – Napier Terrace

Every Sunday of the year we gather for Eucharist at 8am and 10am.

CONTACT INFORMATION

*The Cathedral Office is closed from the 24th December
and re-opens on the 12th January.*

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