



Carol Service



**Sunday 21st December
2025**



ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH
LOWESTOFT



A warm welcome from St. Margaret's Church

As we journey towards Christmas, with the excitement and anticipation this special season brings, we hope you enjoy your time with us here at

St. Margaret's. We hope you feel refreshed and closer to God as you spend time with us, through the joyful and uplifting music and worship.

There has been a church on this site for over 1100 years, with parts of this building dating back to Medieval times. Generations of people have come to us to worship, pray or for reflection; whether in times of joy or in times of sadness, seeking the presence of God. St. Margaret's is here

for everyone, meeting you wherever you are on life's journey.

Please feel free to speak to one of our welcomers or leaders, and they'll try to answer any questions you may have. We want you to feel relaxed as we enter worship together, so feel free to chat quietly while you take in the beauty and spirituality of this special place.

You are also very welcome to come along and join us for any of our other services, which are listed on the back page of this service booklet.

Toilets

There are toilet facilities located across in the Church centre.

If you need them during the service,

the code for the Church Centre door is: **6387**

(the keypad is located on the wall to the right of the door)

There are also baby changing facilities available in the church centre,
next to the accessible toilet.

Please feel free to use these facilities at any point during the service.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face

to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

*May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

Welcome & Introduction

Carol:

Once in Royal David's City (The Choir will sing verses 1 & 2)

*1. 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. 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. 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.***

<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>
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***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;
When like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.***

Bidding prayer

I bring you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people.
Today in the town of David
a Saviour has been born to you:
he is Christ the Lord.

Confession

For times when we knew your wonderful truths
yet did not rejoice
We turn again to you, O Lord.

For times when we did not receive you
with humility or welcome
We turn again to you, O Lord.

For times when we doubted your mercy and might
We turn again to you, O Lord.

For times when we ate richly
yet sent the hungry away
We turn again to you, O Lord.

For times when we forgot
your great acts in human history
We turn again to you, O Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,
who comes again to the holy and humble
in heart with forgiveness
Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Choir:

Away in a Manger - Reginald Jacques

Reading 1

‘The Author of Creation’

Genesis 1: 1-5 and Colossians 1: 15-17

In the beginning, when God created the universe,
the earth was formless and desolate.

The raging ocean that covered everything
was engulfed in total darkness,
and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.

Then God commanded,
“Let there be light” - and light appeared.

God was pleased with what he saw.

Then he separated the light from the darkness,
and he named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.”
Evening passed and morning came - that was the first day.

The Son is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.

For in him all things were created:

things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been
created through him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

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.

Choir:

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree - Elizabeth Poston

Reading 2

‘The Incarnation of love’

Luke 1: 26 – 31, 34 – 35 and Colossians 1: 15-17

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Choir:

In the Bleak midwinter – Harold Darke

Reading 3

‘The promised One of Israel’

Luke 2: 1-7 and Galatians 4: 4-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba*, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Carol:

See him lying on a bed of straw

- 1. See him lying on a bed of straw,
a draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore -
the Prince of glory is his name.
O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when he came!*
- 2. Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the Saviour of the world!
O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when he came!*
- 3. Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the glory of God's gracious plan;
sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
be salvation to the soul.
O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when he came!*
- 4. Mine are riches, from your poverty;
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.
O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when he came*

Choir:

Torches – John Joubert

Reading 4

‘The Light of God’s Glory’

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7 and Galatians 4: 4-7

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David’s throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Carol:

While shepherds watched, their flocks by night

- 1. While shepherds watched
Their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The Angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.*
- 2. 'Fear not,' said he, (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind),
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.*
- 3. 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:*
- 4. The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
And in a manger laid.*
- 5. Thus spake the Seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:*
- 6. 'All glory be to God on high
And to the Earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin and never cease.'*

Reading 5

‘Dawning of God’s Grace’

Luke 2: 8-20 and 1 John 4: 7-9

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Choir:

Good King Wenceslas – Traditional arranged by David Wilcox

Carol:

The First Nowell

***1. The first "Nowell" the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep...***

***...Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
Born is the King of Israel!***

***2. They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night...***

***3. And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went...***

***4. This star drew nigh to the north-west:
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay...***

***5. Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there, in His presence,
Their gold and myrrh, and frankincense...***

***6. Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
Who hath made Heaven and Earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought...***

Reading 6

‘The expression of God’s Being’

Matthew 2: 1-12 and Hebrews 1: 1-3

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea, for this is what the prophet has written: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people, Israel.” they replied. Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After he had provided purification for sins,
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Carol:
Silent night

1. Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin mother and Child
Holy Infant, so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

2. Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from Heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born
Christ, the Saviour is born

3. Silent night, holy night
Son of God, Love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

Reading 7

‘The Word of the Father’ John 1: 1-5, 10-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Choir:

Joys Seven – Arranged by Stephen Cleobury

Carol:
Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world, the Lord has come!
Let Earth receive her King;
Let every Heart prepare Him room,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks,
hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, and wonders of His love.

Talk

Carol:

O come all ye faithful

**1. O Come all ye Faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
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.**

**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. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven 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.**

The Blessing

**Wishing you a joyful Christmas
&
a peaceful New Year
from everyone at St. Margaret's Church**

PLEASE JOIN US AGAIN ON:

Christmas Eve

Christingle at 4pm

Midnight Mass at 11.30pm

Christmas Day

Informal Family Communion Service at 10am

