

The Blessing of the Crib



St Stephen's Church
Monday 24th December 2018
4.00pm

*Photographs are taken during this service for use on our website and in our community magazine Spire. If you do **not** wish your children's photos used for this purpose, please identify yourself and your children to the photographer. Thank you.*

The Blessing of the Crib

Welcome to St Stephen's Church for this service during which we bless our crib in anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day.

As the church is darkened you are invited to stand. An introductory sentence is read and during the first two verses of 'Once in royal David's City' a child brings a candle to the front of the church to be lit.

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.

All **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.**

**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;
Where like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.**

Responses and Bidding

Christ has brought us out of darkness

To live in his marvellous light

The shepherds kept watch by night

And your glory shone round about them

The darkness is not dark in you

the night is as bright as the day

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.

Mary

We sit while the tableau of the nativity is being set up at the front of the church.

A reading about Mary – Luke 1.26-38. *Mary hears from an angel that she is going to have a son who is going to turn out to be very special.*

The figure of Mary is brought to the front and placed in the crib on the high altar and we stand to sing 'Long ago, prophets knew'.

**Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
when he comes,
who will make him welcome?***

**God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human:**

Refrain

**Mary, hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid:
till the time expected,
nurtured and protected,**

Refrain

**Journey ends! Where afar
Beth'lem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes!
Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!***

Joseph

We sit for

A reading about Joseph – Matthew 1.18-21. We hear about how Joseph was involved in the birth of Jesus.

The figure of Joseph is placed in the crib and we stand to sing 'Little donkey'.

**Little donkey, little donkey
On a dusty road
Got to keep on plodding onwards
with your precious load.**

**Been a long time, little donkey,
through the winter's night
Don't give up now little donkey,
Bethlehem's in sight.**

**Ring out those bells tonight,
Bethlehem, Bethlehem;
Follow that star tonight,**

Bethlehem, Bethlehem!

**Little donkey, little donkey,
Had a heavy day
Little donkey, carry Mary
Safely on her way,
Little donkey, carry Mary
Safely on her way.**

The Animals

We sit for

A reading about the Animals – Luke 2.4-7. We hear about how Jesus was born and placed in a manger, the eating trough for the animals.

The figures of the animals are placed in the crib and we stand to sing ‘See him lying on a bed of straw’.

**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 appear to men;
Just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of Glory when He came.**

**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.

Refrain

**Angels, sing again the song you sang,
bring God's glory to the heart of man.
Sing that Bethlehem's little baby can
Be salvation to the soul.**

Refrain

**Mine are riches - from Thy poverty;
From Thine innocence, eternity;
Mine, forgiveness by Thy death for me,
Child of sorrow for my joy.**

Refrain

Visitors to the crib

We sit for

A reading about the visitors to the crib – Luke 2.8-12 & 15-17 & Matthew 2.1-2 & 9-12.

The figures of the angels, the shepherds and the wise men are placed in the crib.

We stand to sing 'Hurrying to Bethlehem the shepherds went' during which some of our shepherds will be hurrying to our crib. Please make space for them in the aisle!

**Hurrying to Bethlehem the shepherds went,
They knew what the message from the angels meant;
They waved their crooks in the air,
Felt God's presence with them there –
On their way to Bethlehem.**

**Hurrying to Bethlehem the shepherds went,
They knew what the message from the angels meant;
They leapt up high in the air,
Felt God's presence with them there –
On their way to Bethlehem.**

**Hurrying to Bethlehem the shepherds went,
They knew what the message from the angels meant;
They clapped their hands in the air,
Felt God's presence with them there –
On their way to Bethlehem.**

The holy baby

We remain standing to sing 'O little town of Bethlehem' during which all the children form a procession to follow the figure of the baby Jesus to the crib.

**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.**

**O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.**

**For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**

**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.**

The baby Jesus is placed in the crib.

Please be seated.

Blessing of the Crib

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father, on this night
your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary
for us and for our salvation:
bless this crib,
which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;
may all who see it be strengthened in faith
and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,
who is alive and reigns for ever. **Amen.**

Please remain seated to sing 'Away in a manger'

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he
lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

*We stand and sing the final two verses of 'O little town of Bethlehem'
as we go back to our places.*

**Where children pure and happy
pray to the blessed Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the Mother mild;
where charity stands watching
and faith holds wide the door,
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.**

**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!**

We sit for

The Address and Notices *after which we remain seated to listen to*

The Choir Carol: *Rutter Christmas Lullaby*

We stand to sing 'O come, all ye faithful', during which a collection to support the work of St Stephen's will be taken, please use the blue envelopes provided or use our digital giving option: Text SSSD01 £2/£5/£10 to 70070 to donate to St Stephen's South Dulwich

**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.**

**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.**

**See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;**

Refrain

**Lo! Star-led chieftains, magi, Christ adoring
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christchild bring our heart's oblations:**

Refrain

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

Refrain

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory in the highest;**

Refrain

We remain standing for the blessing

God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds
the good news of Jesus' birth.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

You have heard his story,
the story of God's own Son.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

May he fill you with joy
to bring this good news to others today.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

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

Organ Voluntary: 'Prelude on Resonet in Laudibus' by Colin Mawby

*Please join us for our 10am service
on Christmas Day
to celebrate the birth of
Jesus Christ*





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