

# Welcome to Carols on The Green 2024

## Welcome

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, child in a manger, Thank you for your gifts of peace, hope, love and joy.  
We pray for the world into which you were born.  
We lift to you those living in poverty, those who are oppressed, those forced to flee their homes.  
Recognizing their stories in the tale of your nativity.

**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;**

**Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest:**



## **Reading - Luke 2**

read by Marilyn Watts

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 room available for them.

**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.*

**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!**

**Angels, sing again the song you sang,  
bring God's glory to the heart of man;  
Sing that Beth'lem's little baby can  
be the saviour of us all.**

**Mine are riches, from your poverty,  
from your innocence, eternity;  
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,  
child of sorrow for my joy.**

**Reading—Nativity Play** by Peter Dixon

read by Flo Taylor

This year...

This year can I be Herod?

This year, can I be him?

A wise man

Or a Joseph?

An inn keeper

Or a king?



This year...

Can I be famous?

This year, can I be best?

Wear a crown of silver

and wear a golden vest?

This year...

Can I be starlight?

This year, can I stand out?

...feel the swish of curtains  
and hear the front row shout  
'Hurrah' for good old Ronny  
he brings a gift of gold  
head afire with tinsel  
'The Greatest Story Told...'  
'Hurrah for good old Herod!'  
and shepherds from afar.

So-- Don't make me a palm tree, or the back end of the donkey, or a sheep

So please... can I be a Star?

**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.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in,  
be born to us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

**Reading—John 1: 1-14—read by Jayne Insley**

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.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize 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.

**Long time ago in Bethlehem  
so the Holy Bible say  
Mary's Boy Child, Jesus Christ  
was born on Christmas Day!**

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
they see a shining star  
they hear the angels sing the song  
the music seems so far**

***Hark! Now hear the angels sing:  
"a King was born today  
and man will live for evermore  
because of Christmas Day!"***

**Now Joseph and his wife Mary  
came to Bethlehem that night.  
they found no place to bear her Child,  
not a single room in sight.**

**By and by they found a little nook  
in a stable all forlorn.  
and in a manger cold and dark  
Mary's little Boy was born**

***Hark! Now hear the angels sing:  
"a King was born today  
and man will live for evermore  
because of Christmas Day!"***

**Mary's Boy Child, Jesus Christ  
was born on Christmas Day!**

**Reading—** Finding Christmas by Donna Ashworth  
read by—Elizabeth Eyre

You won't find Christmas,  
perched on shelves,  
or made in a grotto,  
by hard-working elves.

You can't find Christmas,  
in glittering wrap,  
or nestled in boxes,  
so beautifully packed.

You can't fail Christmas,  
or not have enough,  
there are ways to bring cheer,  
without all of that stuff.

The Christmas you seek,  
is a feeling my friend,  
and it lives in the thoughts  
and the greetings we send.

It glitters in kindness,  
at charity's door  
and glimmers in deeds,  
we were never asked for.  
Christmas you see,

is a magical thing,  
which no pot of money,  
can actually bring.  
It's grace and humanity,  
goodwill and cheer.  
But most of all, peace,  
and all those, you hold dear.

It's opening your door,  
then your heart opens too  
and it's not in the things,  
Christ's love and Christmas lives,  
within you.



**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**

**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**

**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 "**

**Prayers**—led by Dominique Hardiman

*Response:*

Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

Concluding with the Lord's Prayer  
**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that 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.**

**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.**

**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 man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark, the herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.**

**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 man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth.  
Hark, the herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.**

### **Final Blessing**

May our lives and our prayers  
be like lights  
shining in dark places.  
And may the blessing of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit –  
fill our hearts and homes  
with light this Christmas  
and in the new year to come.  
**Amen.**

