

Christmas Day

**All Age Service with
Holy Communion**



December 25th, 2023



The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you **and also with you.**

CAROL O come, all ye faithful Words: tr F Oakley, Music: JF Wade

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;

Refrain O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

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

Refrain O come, let us adore Him,

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, / Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, / Now in flesh appearing.

Refrain O come, let us adore Him,

Gathering Prayer

God of surprises, may we sing like the angels, may we be amazed like the shepherds, and, like the wise men, may we worship the newborn king. Amen.

Lighting of Wreath

Prayer Lord Jesus, Light of light, you have come among us. Help us who live by your light to shine as lights in your world. Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph: 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus the Saviour of the world. *cf Matthew 1.21*

God our Father, you sent your Son full of grace and truth: forgive our failure to receive him. Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus our Saviour, you were born in poverty and laid in a manger: forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

Christ, have mercy: **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call: forgive the hardness of our hearts. **Lord, have mercy:** Lord, have mercy.
Absolution.

Gloria

Words and Music: Donna Adkins & Colin Mawby

Father, we love You / We worship and adore You
Glorify Your name in all the earth /
Glorify Your name / Glorify Your name
Glorify Your name in all the earth
Jesus, we love You ... Spirit, we love You ...

Collect Prayer (Christmas Day)

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen.**

The Nativity Story

Act 1: Mary and Joseph

Matthew 1:18-21 (NIV) *(read by Joseph)*

1:¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem Words: P Brooks; Music: R Vaughan Williams

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 to-night.

Luke 2:6-7 (NIV) (*Read by Mary*)

2:¹ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

CAROL Away in a manger Words & Music: WJ Kirkpatrick

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 bedside till 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.

Act 2: The shepherds

Luke 2:8 (NIV) (*Read by Mary*)

2:⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Shepherds talk

Luke 2:9-20 (NIV) (*Read by Angel*)

⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town

of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem Words: P Brooks; Music: R Vaughan Williams

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

Act 3: The wise men

Two wise people talk

Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12 (NIV) *(Read by a Wise Person)*

2:¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” ...
⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” ⁹ After they had heard the king, they went

on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

CAROL The First Noel Words: Trad English Carol; Music: arr Crowder

The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Chorus Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
 Born is King of Israel!

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. *Chorus*

Then let us all with one accord
sing our praises to our heav'nly Lord,
that hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
and with his blood mankind hath bought. *Chorus*

Bridge And when angels sing, it was heavenly

Act 4: Refugees

Matthew 2:13-15 (NIV) (*Read by Angel*)

2: ¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.' ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

Reflection & Gift

John 1:1-5,9-14 (NIV) (*Read by an Older Member*)

1:¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.
³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Reflection

CAROL In the bleak mid-winter Words: C Rosetti, Music: G Holst

In the bleak midwinter / frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, / water like a stone:
snow had fallen, / snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, / long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, / nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away / when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter / a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty, / Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom cherubim / worship night and day,
a breastful of milk / and a mangerful of hay:
enough for him / whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel / which adore.

Angels and archangels / may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim / thronged the air,
but only his mother, / in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the Beloved / with a kiss.

What can I give him, / poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, / I would bring a lamb,
if I were a wise man / I would do my part,
yet what I can I give him, / give my heart.

Prayers

This response may be used: Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

And at the end: Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Affirmation of Faith

**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.**

cf Ephesians 3

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9.6*
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

Preparation of the Table

SONG Mary did you know Words & Music: Buddy Greene & Mark Lowry

Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Would one day walk on water
Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters
Did you know / That your baby boy
Has come to make you new
This Child that you delivered / Will soon deliver you
Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Would give sight to the blind man
Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Would calm a storm with His hand
Did you know / That your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod
And when you kiss your little baby / You've kissed the face of God

Bridge The blind will see / The deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap / The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Oh Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation
Mary did you know / That your baby boy
Will one day rule the nations
Did you know / That your baby boy / Is heaven's perfect Lamb
And the sleeping Child you're holding / Is the great- I- Am

Taking of the Bread and Wine (Prayer E: Christmas)

The Lord is here **His Spirit is with us.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God. We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled himself, and was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us. In this mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused his light to shine in our hearts, to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see. Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Rejoicing in God's presence among us, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

Communion is shared.

After the post-communion prayer.

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

NOTICES

CAROL Joy to the World

Words: Isaac Watts; Music: George Frideric Handel

Joy to the world! / the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing, / And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

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

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, wonders of His love.

Blessing

May the Father, who has loved the eternal Son from before the foundation of the world, shed that love upon you his children. **Amen.**

May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give you grace to carry the good news of Christ. **Amen.**

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

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Liturgical texts from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London) © The Archbishops' Council 2000.

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Our worship services and ministry in Groningen are made possible by people voluntarily offering their time, talents and financial support.

As God has blessed us, so we thank Him by giving accordingly.

To help support Grace Church, there is an opportunity to put an offering in the collection basket near the exit after the service.

It is also possible to donate by electronic transfer to Grace Church (Groningen Anglican Church), account: NL 67 RABO 03012946 23.



Morning worship:

2nd Sundays, Holy Communion (said) at 9:00 am & Morning Prayer/Service of the Word at 10:30 am; **4th Sundays** (Holy Communion) at 10:30 am, all at **St Maarten-langs-de-weg** (Oud Katholieke Kerk), Witte de Withstraat, 2, Groningen.

Evening services:

with the Martiniwijkgemeente: **1st Sundays** at 17:00 in the **Martinikerk/Het Pand**.

Web-site: <http://gracechurchgroningen.com/>

Facebook (Grace Church Groningen).

Chaplain: the Ven Sam Van Leer,

Working Days: Mon-Wed-Fri, chaplaingracechurchgn@gmail.com or 050 785 0703.

Safeguarding Officer: Debbie Kramer; gracesafeguarding@gmail.com

Grace Church Forthcoming Services and Events:

- Sunday 7 January, 17:00: Grace & Martini International Service, Martinikerk.
- Sunday 14 January, 9:00: Grace Holy Communion (said), Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 14 January, 10:30: Grace Service of the Word, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 28 January, 10:30: Grace Holy Communion, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 4 February, 17:00: Grace & Martini International Service, Martinikerk.
- Sunday 11 February, 9:00: Grace Holy Communion (said), Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 11 February, 10:30: Grace Service of the Word, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 25 February, 10:30: Grace Holy Communion, Old Catholic Church.