

Thought for the Day – Carols

26 December – 10 January

26 December - Good King Wenceslas



*1. Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the Feast of Stephen.
When the snow lay 'round about
Deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel.
When a poor man came in sight
Gath'ring winter fuel.*

*2. "Hither, page, and stand by me
If thou know'st it, telling:
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league, hence
Underneath the mountain.
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes' fountain."*

*3. "Bring me mead and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither.
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear him thither"
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather.*

4. *"Sire, the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger.
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer"
"Mark my footsteps, good my page
Tread thou in them boldly.
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly".*

5. *In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted.
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.*

(Lyrics: John Mason Neale 1853)

Today is the Feast of Stephen. As I write, I'm uncertain whether or not we will have snow! If we have, what better way to celebrate than to re-enact the story of this carol.

It's also great fun to sing – with the lower voices taking the part of the good king and the higher voices the page. And it contains that wonderful image of the page treading in his master's footsteps as Wenceslas guides the page to safety.

When our heart fails and we feel we can't go on, I pray we, too, will find someone's footsteps to tread in; sometimes it's hard to imagine treading in the footsteps of Christ, but how about the footsteps of one of his saints? That might be easier to do.

(Rev. Wendy Sellers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ty2GogvrP4c>

27 December - It came upon the midnight clear



1. *It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's all-gracious King"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.*
2. *Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel-sounds
The blessed angels sing.*
3. *But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!*
4. *And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,*

*Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing; –
Oh, rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing!*

*5. For lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever circling years
Shall come the age of gold;
When Peace shall over all the earth,
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song,
Which now the angels sing.*

(Edmund Sears, 1849)

Mid 19th-Century Americans were as susceptible to religious sentimentality as their European counterparts, and in this challenging hymn Edmund Sears sets a wonderful ambush for them. The first two stanzas are rich in the rose-tinted imagery of Christmas. In English churches, the mood is intensified by Arthur Sullivan's richly romantic folk-song setting.

Then comes the 3rd stanza, and the ambush. The angels are still singing, but, actually, we're not really listening, are we? We haven't been listening for 2,000 years. We are still pre-occupied with war and division, with aggression and acquisition and self-assertion.

Sears' rebuke to his countryfolk was published at the end of the US-Mexican war in 1848, as the slavery issue rose higher in the national consciousness, and as Europe was wracked by violent revolutions. It has lost nothing of its relevance, anywhere in the world today. It is always my most heartfelt Christmas prayer:

*'Oh hush your noise, ye men of strife
And hear the angels sing!'*

(Geoff Oates, Lay Reader)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSn0_Zj6gjQ

28 December - Who would think...?



*1. Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army,
Proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
That a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.*

*2. Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
Monarchs scorn and angels sing;
Such a place as none would reckon
Hosts a holy helpless thing;
Stable beasts and by-passed strangers
Watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.*

*3. Centuries of skill and science
Span the past from which we move,
Yet experience questions whether,
With such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
Lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.*

*(Graham Maule ©1987 WGRG, Iona Community, Govan,
Glasgow G51 3UU, Scotland)*

'God surprises....'

Mankind tries so hard to pin God down (and it's not just a Christian trait). To tell Him what he is and isn't allowed to be, to tell him where, when and how he can involve Himself in our affairs – be they personal or political. We talk of 'orthodox' teachings and doctrines, set out lengthy creeds and rationalise the apparent 'difficulties' in our holy texts.

God will not be held back by the limits of our faith, or of our understanding. He will keep on surprising us. Giving unexpected gifts of peace, of liberation from our fears and prejudices, of hope in troubled seasons and sunrises in the depths of dark nights.

We cannot nail Him down... not even on a cross.

(Graham Maule, a leading light of the Iona Community for four decades, died in December 2019 at the age of 61)

(Geoff Oates, Lay Reader)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-o9SqfCKfg>

Tuesday 29 December - Hark the herald



*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 th' 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 man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:*

*3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail! the Son 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:*

(Charles Wesley (1739) and adapted by others)

(Originally sung to 'the Salisbury', the tune used for Wesley's 'Jesus Christ is risen today'. Take a moment to try this for yourself!)

The working title was 'A hymn for Christmas Day' and the first line in the original version was "Hark how all the Welkin rings". 'Welkin' being a word for the sky and heaven from the Old English 'wolcen', meaning cloud or sky. George Whitefield changed the first line to 'Hark! the herald angels sing' in his 1754 Collection of hymns for social worship.

This song is all about getting us to wake up and hear the News of what God has done for us anew; the message is as fresh and exciting as on that First Christmas when the Shepherds raced to see for themselves the new-born king.

An important part of Methodism has always been the Singing of theology. Although 'Christ is born in Bethlehem' and he is 'the new-born king', this carol is all about who Jesus is and what he will accomplish through his ministry, death and resurrection. It's not the Christmas of babies and swaddling clothes, it's the grown-up version of Christmas. This carol is about God incarnate coming to earth to reconcile God with all peoples, to obtain for us forgiveness and everlasting life. This is exciting stuff; as exciting as the appearance of Angels in the Welkin. Wesley is saying rejoice in the sheer wonder of the incarnation.

(Melanie Seward, Lay Reader)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_iLXNSIaYc

Wednesday 30 December - God rest ye merry gentlemen



*1. God rest ye merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray:
Oh tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy;
Oh tidings of comfort and joy!*

*2. In Bethlehem, in Israel
This blessed Babe was born;
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn,
The which His Mother Mary
Did nothing take in scorn:
Oh tidings...*

*3. Fear not then, said the Angel,
Let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Saviour
Of a pure Virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in Him
From Satan's pow'r and might:
Oh tidings...*

(Traditional)

Although we have a record of this carol being sung from the 15th Century, there are several versions of the words and some

have changed their meaning. The 'Gentlemen' were not well-mannered men but instead were members of the lowest rank of gentry. 'Rest' used to mean 'keep' and 'merry' used to mean 'strong' or 'great'. So, the first line is something like - 'Keep you gentry thriving'.

The carol became part of the folk traditions of England. It was sung by ordinary people often around the village. A fourth stanza, never included in the hymnals but which can be found in the Folk songs gathered by Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp, blesses the leader of the house and wishes them a 'Happy New Year'.

When the language of church was Latin, this was a secular song about Christmas in the mother tongue. It was also a little tongue in cheek. After wishing their betters well, the carollers sing, 'Remember Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas Day to save us all'. The Real News is that God breaks into our World as a Baby Boy reaching out to everyone regardless of our lot in society. Jesus has Good News for rich and poor alike. He calls both to serve God and to love and serve one another. To do so, indeed, will bring tidings of comfort and joy.

(Melanie Seward, Lay Reader)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrxWwdLtQ6k>

31 December – Christians awake



*1. Christians awake, salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born.
Rise to adore the mystery of love
Which hosts of angels chanted from above.
With them the joyful tidings first begun
Of God incarnate and the Virgin's son.*

*5. O may we keep and ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind.
Trace we the babe, who hath retrieved our loss
From his poor manger to his bitter cross.
Tread in his steps, assisted by his grace
Till man's first heavenly state again takes place.*

*6. Then may we hope, the angelic hosts among,
To sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song.
He that was born upon this joyful day
Around us all his glory shall display.
Saved by his love, incessant we shall sing
Eternal praise to heaven's almighty King.*

(John Byrom 1692-1763)

A Yuletide theme, often imagined but seldom experienced, is to wake on Christmas morning, open the curtains and see a pale winter sun rising silently over brilliant white newly fallen snow. Another casualty of climate change, I fear!

This carol salutes the theological equivalent – greeting the morning when God entered the world he had made, with a promise of salvation not affected by rising temperatures.

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."
(Luke 2. 13-14)*

(Rev. Bill Church)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL-7g7QeFb0>

1 January – 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 that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!*

*2. O, that birth for ever blessed,
when the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore 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;
All dominions bow before him,
and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore!*

(Aurelius Prudentius 348-405, translated by John Mason Neale 1818-66, edited by Sir Henry Baker 1821-77)

This is one of the oldest hymns in the book and one of the many contributions of John Mason Neale to the sung vocabulary of our church. Neale was a High-Church Anglican, keen to reintroduce the insights and mystery of what Christians had sung in earlier centuries (but also with his feet on the ground; he wrote 'Good King Wenceslas' which retells a medieval story to prompt social action).

His language was deliberately archaic, even for 1866, and is rapidly being overtaken by changes in spoken English, but its truth endures. No tinsel or crackers here - just a proclamation of Jesus as the Word of God, who was in the beginning and is now and for ever.

*In the beginning was the Word.
(John 1. 1)*

(Bill Church)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOF9JLJkPis>

2 January – Away in a manger



*Away in a manger,
No crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head.*

For most children, and probably adults, this populist carol conjures up the perfect Christmas image: no room in the inn and only a manger for a bed. But I got thinking. Would a child of the line of David, really be left to be born in a cattle shed? Was it true that there was no room in the inn?

As any good researcher does, I got researching! It turns out that relatives living in Bethlehem often had a guest room or lodging place that was openly shared: a kind of communal dormitory or inn where no one was turned away. During busy times, such as mandatory travel to Bethlehem to pay taxes, there would have been no privacy to give birth.

Animals were usually kept within the house and close to the owner's bedroom, being both a very precious commodity and helping to keep a house warm during cold nights (maybe I should invest in a cow). It also turns out that babies were regularly laid in a manger as it was seen as a safe place. So maybe, just maybe, Mary and Joseph's relatives were providing the very best place in the house for Jesus to be born with privacy and warmth.

I rather like that idea. It still conjures up a beautiful image, but also makes us think of goodwill towards all men, women and

children. As the carol goes on to say... 'Bless all the dear children in thy tender care'. Let us bless everyone and open our hands and hearts to our friends, our family and strangers and support each other now and forevermore. Amen.

(Jenny Mutch)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrX2oHgLqe8>

3 January - O come all ye faithful



*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem.
O 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.*

(Author (attributed to): John Francis Wade; Translator: Frederick Oakeley (1841; alt))

It is believed that the words (first written in Latin) and the music of this 'faithful' old carol were first published in 1751. It's a simple message of faithfulness, joyfulness, triumph and adoration following an awe-inspiring event: the birth of Jesus.

For me, these sentiments are as real today as when the carol was written. But it is the combination of the music with the words that makes this such a popular carol. As many a young girl, I was part of the school choir, learned the descant part to 'sing choirs of angels' and sang it with great gusto (albeit not necessarily pitch-perfect). These days I don't have a chance of getting to those sustained high B notes and, thankfully for those around me, I have accepted my alto voice.

What I really like is the last verse. Singing 'Yea, Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning' at Midnight Mass or early on Christmas morning is like an annual prayer, a reminder that Jesus' Word is that of his Father (for the musicians among you, check out the half-diminished 7th chord on the word 'Father') and, most importantly, that Christ is our Lord.

Let us pray that, by the end of this year (2021), we will once again be able to sing this carol together at the top of our voices in our churches, schools and at choir carol concerts: be able to sing out our praises to our Lord and share our joy in person.

(Jenny Mutch)

<https://soundcloud.com/leeannwomack/lee-ann-womack-oh-come-all-ye-faithful>

4 January - Silent night



*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.*

(Words: Joseph Mohr, 1816; Music: F X Gruber)

With its combination of Austrian lullaby and theme of heavenly peace, 'Silent Night' never fails to bring a tear to the eye and a lump to the throat. The carol is an invitation to still our noisy lives and to unite around the miracle of a Saviour's birth.

Every birth is a miracle, and there's something about the birth of a baby which puts everything else into perspective. I remember holding both our newborn children and thinking there was nothing more beautiful and nothing more precious in all the world. Within my wider family, I have known the birth of a child to bring with it the healing of a family feud.

Legend has it that in the unofficial Christmas truce of 1914, where French, German and English soldiers left their trenches and crossed No-Man's Land to exchange gifts and play an impromptu game of football, all three nations together sang this carol in their mother tongue.

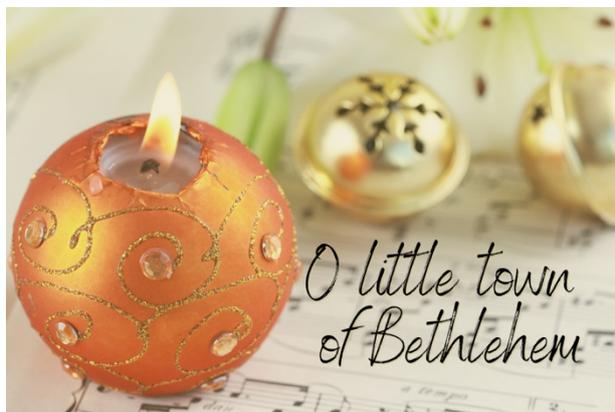
The carol invites us to cross the No-Man's Land in our own lives and to work for a world where all can sleep in peace.

Each day of this New Year, Lord, may I be a Peace-maker as I learn to rest in your Peace.

(Rev. Alan Stewart)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iZGh91-v7Y>

5 January - O little town of Bethlehem



*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.*

(Phillips Brooks, 1868)

That first Christmas, I imagine the little town of Bethlehem was anything but still. As the holy family discovered, every home was packed to the rafters with extended families returning for the census. Overcrowded and noisy, Joseph and a heavily pregnant Mary were too late to claim the guest room (often translated 'inn') in their relative's home and had instead to

slum it with the rest of the family (and the animals brought in at night) at the front of the house, or 'stable'. The pain of Mary's labour and the screams of a newborn would have meant little sleep for anyone that night.

During Lockdown, many people reported interrupted or fitful sleep. When we're anxious or stressed, often sleep is the first thing to be affected. As we enter a New Year, we offer to our God the 'hopes and fears' of this particular year. We choose to trust in the everlasting Light of Christ which, like the star, goes ahead of us. We hold on to the hope that isn't built on wishful thinking, but on the character and faithfulness of the same God who took flesh and lived among us.

Each day of this New Year, Lord, may I entrust you with my every hope, my every fear.

(Rev. Alan Stewart)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyPMDD8fGeA>

6 January - We Three Kings



*O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

(John Henry Hopkins, Jr. 1857)

If we were to leave an Amazon review of 2020, I imagine many of us would give it one star at best; 'not to be recommended'. And yet, as difficult and disappointing as this last year has been, it has also brought gifts.

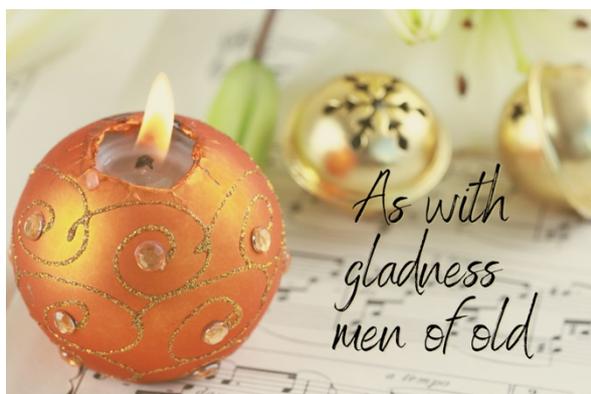
Each of the three gifts of the Magi were epiphanies. Each one revealed something of the identity and future of this infant Jesus. The gold was symbolic of a king; a king unlike other kings; a king who would know what it's like to be small and overlooked, poor and misunderstood. Frankincense was an incense which, when burnt, represented prayers rising to heaven. So, this king would be the one to bridge earth and heaven; the one who would pray for us. And finally, myrrh was used both as a perfume and to anoint the dead. This king, who would draw us closer to God, would not only understand but sit with us through all the joys and sorrows of life.

Each day of this New Year, Lord, may I give you the gold of my life; all that is precious to me. May I sense the intimacy of your company. May I share with you each joy and every sorrow.

(Rev. Alan Stewart)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cst2_-DEp_c

7 January – As with gladness men of old



*1. As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright:*

*so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.*

*2. As with joyful steps they sped
to that lowly manger-bed,
there to bend the knee before
him, whom heaven and earth adore:
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy-seat.*

*3. As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle plain and bare,
so may we with holy joy
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.*

*4. Holy Jesu, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last:
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.*

*5. In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light
thou, its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down;
there for ever may we sing
alleluias to our king.*

(Lyrics: William Chatterton Dix 6 January 1859)

This carol was written by Dix from his sickbed on 6 January 1859 (Epiphany). In spite of missing the morning church service, indeed having been in bed for many months, Dix wrote (in that one day) this gloriously happy carol. Those wise men are just completely joyful as they follow the star, meet the baby and give him their gifts. There's no grumbling about how

long it took to get there or the discomforts of the journey. Certainly, there's no disappointment at the lowly nature of the roughly made cradle.

The carol suggests we might have to wait for heaven to feel such unalloyed joy – but perhaps, just perhaps, like the wise men, we can glimpse it here on Earth today. Try listening to or singing this carol, and see if that helps!

(Rev. Wendy Sellers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB8rKNrlpDQ>

8 January - Coventry carol



*Lully lullay, thou little tiny child
By by, lully, lullay*

*O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling, for whom we do sing
By by, lully, lullay.*

*Herod the king, in his raging,
Charged he hath this day
His men of might, in his own sight,
All young children to slay.*

*That woe is me, poor child, for thee
And ever mourn and day
For thy parting, neither say nor sing
By by, lully, lullay.*

(Lyrics: 16th Century from a Coventry mystery play)

I've sung this carol so many times: it's a firm favourite of choirs at Christmas as it has lovely harmonies. But I've always hated the words. Baby murdering is not a Christmas message I'm comfortable with.

But I guess it reminds us of the world Jesus chose to be born into. It is the real world; containing love and hate, joy and sorrow. It reminds us that God is alongside us through good, bad and unspeakably terrible. It reminds us that He chose to become human and vulnerable. It reminds us that not everyone made Him welcome.

Dear Lord Jesus, we pray today for the young and helpless. For the vulnerable and powerless. For those who are hated and despised (by others, perhaps, yet never by You). Amen

(Rev. Wendy Sellers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8L71BjTL8M>

9 January – While shepherds watched ...



*While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around.*

*'Fear not,' said he - for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind -
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind:*

*'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:*

*'The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands
and in a manger laid.'*

*Thus spoke the seraph, and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:*

*'All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to men*

begin and never cease!

(Lyrics: Nahum Tate (1652-1715) based on Luke 2:8-14)

Did you know – this was the only Christmas hymn authorised by the Anglican Church until 1700? I'm guessing that's because the words are lifted almost straight from Luke's Gospel. However, if you are a carol-singer, this is now a seldom sung carol. The reason is simple – you have to sing the whole thing for the words to make sense. If you skip a verse or two, you lose that.

Today, let's enjoy the whole story of how some lowly shepherds were the first to receive the news of the birth of Jesus – and in such an incredible way. Read or sing the words, and try to imagine what it was like to be there. Join in with the angel chorus, 'All glory be to God in high'.

(Rev. Wendy Sellers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvegJ3wRLFE>

10 January – See amid the winter's snow



*See amid the
winter's snow*

*See, amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on Earth below,
See, the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years.*

*Hail, thou ever blessed morn,
Hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

*Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits among the cherubim.*

*Say, ye holy shepherds, say,
What your joyful news today;
Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?*

*"As we watched at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light:
Angels singing 'Peace On Earth'
Told us of the Saviour's birth."*

*Sacred Infant, all divine,
What a tender love was Thine,*

*Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this.*

*Hail, thou ever blessed morn,
Hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

(Lyrics Edward Caswall, music Sir John Goss 1871)

Our final carol reminds us of several things. That the birth of Jesus was long-planned and foretold. That the baby in the manger was the Word who sang into creation the 'starry skies'. That the angels offered us 'peace on earth'. And that, most importantly, all this happened because of love. A tender love so great that God left heaven to live among us in our wonderful yet terrible world.

*"Love looked down and saw hatred.
'I will go there,' said love"*

So

The Lord of Light,

The Prince of peace

The King of love

Came down

And crept in beside us.

(John Bell 1998)

(Rev. Wendy Sellers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2nyWpn-yE0>