

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 11.00 am

The Third Sunday in Advent

Sunday School Nativity

Minister: Rev. Ian Taylor, A.C.I.B.S., B.D., Th.M., Dip. P.S.R.P.

Assistant Minister: Mrs. Julie Hearty, B.D.

Musical Director: Mr. Alan A. Craig. B.Mus., P.G.C.E.

Welcome & Intimations

Introit

Call to Worship

**Hymn 543 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.**

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,  
light for the world to see.

*Chorus*

*Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in our hearts.*

*Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

*Chorus*

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

*Chorus*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.

*Chorus*

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

*Chorus*

Bernadette Farrell(b.1957)

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Approach and Confession

The Advent Wreath

Sunday School Nativity

**Hymn 304 O little town of Bethlehem,  
(CONGREGATION)**

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie!

Above your deep and dreamless sleep,  
the silent stars go by;

Yet in your streets is shining  
the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in you tonight.

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.

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 in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.  
Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) (alt.)

**Little donkey**  
**(vv. 1-3 SUNDAY SCHOOL, CONGREGATION v.4)**

Little donkey, little donkey  
On the dusty road  
Gotta keep on plodding onwards  
With your precious load

Been a long time little donkey  
Through the winters night  
Don't give up now little donkey  
Bethlehem's in sight

Ring out those bells tonight  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem  
Follow that little 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-

**Hymn 312 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,**  
**(v.1 SUNDAY SCHOOL)**

1 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.

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

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

Sometimes attributed to John Thomas Macfarland (1851-1913), *Gabriel's Vineyard Songs* (1892 Louisville), *Little Children's Book: For Schools and Families* (1885 Philadelphia) Copied from HymnQuest 2010: CLUE Version  
HymnQuest ID: 50822

**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**  
**St. John 1:6-8, 19-28**

## Reflection

The Offering (& Sung Doxology: Hymn 807)

Prayer of Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father which 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:**

**For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for  
ever. Amen.**

**Hymn 321 Come and join the celebration,**

*Come and Join the celebration*

*It's a very special day*

*Come and share the jubilation*

*There's a new King born today*

See the shepherds

Hurry down to Bethlehem

Gaze in wonder

At the son of God who lay before them

*Chorus*

Wise men journey

Led to worship by a star

Kneel in homage

Bringing precious gifts from lands afar, So

*Chorus*

God is with us

Round the world the message bring

He is with us

Welcome all the bells on earth are peeling

*Chorus*

Benediction

Choral Amen (3-fold)