

ORDER OF SERVICE - 24 DECEMBER 2025

GREYFRIARS KIRK



WELCOME
TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Calum Macdougall
Prof. Bert Kerrigan KC
Dr. Caroline Cradock

Locum Minister
Reader
Director of Music



GREYFRIARS

life in all its fullness/beatha na lànachd

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Tuesday 24 December 2025 – Christmas Eve

You are very warmly welcomed to worship at Greyfriars. All our services are available on our YouTube channel for viewing at any time at bit.ly/greyfriarstv.

Organ: Chorale prelude on 'Wachet auf!'

J. S. Bach

Call to Worship

Hymn 315 (verses 1 and 2, choir only; verses 3 and 4, all):

Irby

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Cecil Frances Alexander

Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Rev. Calum Macdougall

Lesson 1: Genesis 1: 1 – 5 and 26 – 28
(New Revised Standard Version)

Reader: Anne Bradbury

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

Hymn 303:

Noël

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 you 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 strains have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not the love-song which they bring;
oh, hush the noise and still the strife to hear the angels sing.
4. And you, 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-rolling years, still dawns the Age of Gold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendours fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears

Lesson 2: Isaiah 9: 2 and 6 – 7
(Authorized Version)

Reader: Catherine Alexander

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Choir: Magnificat in C

My soul doth magnify the Lord. and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessèd. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scatterèd the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath fillèd the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He rememb'ring his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promisèd to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Luke 1: 46-55

C. V. Stanford

Lesson 3: Luke 1: 26 – 33
(Good News Translation)

Reader: Stan Brown

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!"

Choir: There is no Rose

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu: *Alleluia*.
For in this rose containèd was heav'n and earth in little space: *Res Miranda*.
By that rose we may well see there be one God in persons three: *Pares forma*.
Now leave we all this wordly mirth and follow we this joyous birth: *Transeamus*.

15th century

Jack Oades

Lesson 4: Luke 2: 1 – 7

Reader: Nigel Robb

(New Revised Standard Version)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Choir: Sir Christèmas

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.
Who is there that singeth so, *Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell?*
I am here, Sir Christèmas. Welcome, my lord, Sir Christèmas!
Welcome to all, both more and less, Come near, come near, come near, come near.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell. Dieu vouse garde, beaux sieurs,
tidings I you bring: A maid hath borne a child full young, which causeth you to sing:
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell. Buvez bien, buvez bien par toute la compagnie.
Make good cheer and be right merry, and sing with us now joyfully,
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! Nowell!

Anon. c. 1500

William Mathias

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay." Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God." After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay. When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant. As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Hymn:

Winchester Old

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,
an angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.
2. "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind;
"glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind.
3. "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:
4. "The heavenly babe you there shall find to human view displayed,
all simply wrapped in swaddling clothes and in a manger laid."
5. Thus spoke the angel. Suddenly appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
6. "All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
to those on whom his favour rests goodwill shall never cease."

Nahum Tate, from Luke 2: 8-14

Lesson 6: Matthew 2: 1 – 12
(Lorimer's New Testament in Scots)

Reader: Leslie Munro

Jesus wis born at Bethlehem in Judaea i the days o King Herod, an it wis nae time efter his birth or a curn spaemen frae the Aist cam tae Jerusalem an begoud speirin, "Whaur is the King o Jews at hes come hame eenou? We saw the risin o his stairn, an ar come wast for tae wurship him." King Herod wis sair pitten about tae hear that, an een sae wis the haill o Jerusalem. Sae he convened aa the Heid-Priests an Doctors o the Law i the kintra an speired at them whaur the Christ wis tae be born. "At Bethlehem in Judaea," said they, "een as the Prophet says in his buik:

'An thou, Bethlehem i the Laund o Judah, is naegate the least amang the Clans o Israel, for frae thee will gang furth a leader at will herd my peiple Israel'."

Herod than caa'd the spaemen til him in hidlins, an whan he hed lairnt frae them the day an hour o the stairn's kythin, he sent them awà tae Bethlehem, biddin them gang their waas an seek out aa the speirins they coud win at anent the bairn: "An whan ye hae fund him," qo he, "bring me back wurd, sae at I may gae an wurship him mysel."

They did een as the King baud them, an tuik the gate; an, behaud, thair wis the stairn gaein on afore them, on an on, or it stappit abuin the houss whaur the bairn wis; an byous blythe war they tae see the stairn! Syne they gaed ben, an saw the bairn, wi Mary his mither; an they fell on their knees an wurshippit him, an apnin their treisur-kists, they laid gifts afore him — gowd, an frankincense, an myrrh. Than they fuir awà hame anither gate nor they hed come, sin they hed been warnished in a draim no tae gae back til Herod.

Hymn 304:

Forest Green

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Phillips Brooks

Lesson 7: John 1: 1 – 14

Reader: Prof. Bert Kerrigan KC

(Authorized Version)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Choir: The Three Kings

Three kings from Persian lands afar to Jordan follow the pointing star:
and this the quest of the travellers three, where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King; gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

How brightly shines the morning star!
With grace and truth from heav'n afar our Jesse tree now bloweth.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray; the kings to Bethlehem make their way,
and there in worship they bend the knee, as Mary's child in her lap they see;
their royal gifts they show to the King; gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

Of Jacob's stem and David's line,
for thee, my Bridegroom, King divine, my soul with love o'erfloweth.

Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem the kings are trav'ling – travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace, shall lead thy heart to its resting-place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring; offer thy heart to the infant King. Offer thy heart!

Thy word, Jesu, inly feeds us, rightly leads us,
life bestowing. Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing.

Peter Cornelius, *tr.* H.N. Bate

arr. Ivor Atkins

Address

The Rev. Calum Macdougall

Prayers for the community and the world

Prof. Bert Kerrigan KC

*The Lord's Prayer: 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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen*

Hymn 301:

Mendelssohn

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 the angelic hosts 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!
Hark! the herald angels sing 'Glory to the new-born king'.
3. 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'.

Charles Wesley

Dismissal and Blessing

Amen

Organ: Toccata on 'Mendelssohn'

David Willcocks

After the service, all are warmly invited to join the congregation at the west end of the Kirk, under the organ, for mulled wine or apple juice with home-made mince pies.

NOTES

This evening's **Choir** items are sung by the combined choirs of Greyfriars Kirk and St. Cuthbert's Parish Church.

The image on our front cover is of the Edinburgh **Nativity Scene**, just down from the Christmas tree on the Mound, which was unveiled last year on the first Sunday of Advent. It was an ecumenical initiative of Archbishop Leo Cushley of the Catholic Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, along with the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. They turned for help to the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, because at almost 70 years, Edinburgh is Munich's oldest city partnership. The sculpture, in the Upper Bavarian tradition, was commissioned specially from wood sculptor Thomas Hildenbrand of Ilshofen, near Schwäbisch Hall. It draws inspiration from a small relief in the diocesan museum by the leading late gothic sculptor Erasmus Grasser (c 1450-1515), but introduces a contemporary and local element by perching Edinburgh Castle on the crag behind the life-sized figures.

Forthcoming Services:

Tomorrow	10.30 am: Christmas Morning Worship at Greyfriars. No mid-week prayers this Thursday.
Sunday 28 December	10.30 am: Holy Communion at the Parish Church of St. Cuthbert. There will be no Gaelic service at Greyfriars..
Thursday 1 January	No mid-week prayers this Thursday.
Sunday 4 January	9.15 am: Holy Communion at Greyfriars. 10.30 am: Morning Worship at Greyfriars. There will be no Gaelic service.
Thursday 8 January	1.10 pm: Mid-week Prayers
Sunday 11 January	10.30 am: Morning Worship 12.30 pm: Gaelic Service