



Christmas Eve Carols at S. Bartholomew's



Wednesday 24 December 2025

10:30 p.m.

Good King Wenceslas

Original melody: the Piae Cantiones (1582)

Text: J.M. Neale (1818-66)

ALL:

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,
Gathering winter fuel.

MEN:

'Hither page, and stand by me;
If thou know'st it, telling —
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?'

WOMEN:

'Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain.'

MEN:

‘Bring me flesh and bring me wine!
Bring me pine logs hither!
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither.’

ALL:

Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind’s wild lament
And the bitter weather.

WOMEN:

‘Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer.’

MEN:

‘Mark my footsteps, good my page,
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter’s rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.’

ALL:

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.

Hark, how all the welkin* rings

English traditional melody

Text: Charles Wesley, Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739)

*VAULT OF HEAVEN



1. Hark, how all the wel-kin rings! 'Glo - ry to the King of_Kings,
Peace on_earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin-ners re - con- ciled.'

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
Universal nature say
'Christ the Lord is born to-day.

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 men to appear
Jesus, our Emmanuel here!

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!

Now display thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore,
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to thine.

In the bleak midwinter

Melody: Gustav Holst (1906)

Text: Christina Rossetti (1872)

ALL:

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.

MEN:

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.

WOMEN:

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.

ALL:

Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But his mother only in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

(INTERLUDE)

ALL:

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.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night

Traditional Cornish melody

Text: Nahum Tate (1700); paraphrase of S. Luke 2

1. While shep-herds watched their flocks by night, All seat-ed on the ground:
The an-gel of the Lord came down, And glo-ry shone a -
round, And glo-ry shone a - round, And glo-ry shone a - round.

‘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 spake 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 on the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.’

Here we come a-wassailing*

English traditional melody, late 18th or early 19th century

Text: English traditional, 17th century

*GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR, SINGING AND WISHING PEOPLE GOOD HEALTH FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR, WHILE APPEALING TO THE HOUSEHOLD'S GENEROSITY TO PROVIDE A BIT OF FOOD, DRINK AND MONEY. THE TERM WASSAIL COMES FROM OLD ENGLISH WÆS HÆL, MEANING 'BE WELL!'

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wandering
So fair to be seen.

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a happy New Year,
And God send you a happy New Year!*

Our wassail cup is made
of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
Of the best barley.

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a happy New Year,
And God send you a happy New Year!*

Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring;
Let him bring us a glass of beer
And better we shall sing!

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a happy New Year,
And God send you a happy New Year!*

Bring us out a table,
And spread it with a cloth,
Bring us out a mouldy cheese
And some of your Christmas loaf.

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a happy New Year,
And God send you a happy New Year!*

God bless the Master of this house,
Likewise the Mistress too;
And all the little children
that round the table go.

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a happy New Year,
And God send you a happy New Year!*

A very warm welcome to S. Bartholomew's and a very merry Christmas to you!

This evening we will be singing a few carols together in the style of the English West Gallery tradition, meaning carols from the 18th and early 19th centuries, accompanied by a home-grown parish band. Many small parish churches in this era had no organ, so local singers and instrumentalists provided musical support to the congregation. As this practice became more and more popular, galleries were installed at the west end of churches to house these bands, or 'Quires', as some of them were known. Thomas Hardy's 1872 novel Under the Greenwood Tree, a love letter to a bygone age, features the stout-hearted, multi-generational Mellstock Quire, in this case comprising singers, fiddles and a cello. Other instruments were included in various bands, including flute, clarinet, trumpet, and some earlier 18th century instruments, such as the viola da gamba (a cello-like instrument with six strings and frets) and the serpent (a bass wind instrument made out of wood, with a brass mouthpiece).

Tonight we will sing some old favourites and revive a couple of less familiar but irresistible carols from the West Gallery tradition, joining our voices with those humble yet exultant singers of Christmases past.



LED BY

The S. Bart's Gallery Band
Fr Hannam, *guitar and bouzouki*
Katherine Hill, *bass viola da gamba*
Jesse Billett, *tin whistle*
Brian Harris, *guitar*
Sofia Moniz, *viola*