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# Order of Service

*Christmas Day Family Worship 2023*  
*United with South Croydon United Church*



Welcome to St Paul's!

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This morning's service is being led by: **Rev'd Martin Knight**  
The Organ is played by: **Mr Lee Michael Walton**

## **It is a joy to welcome you to this service!**

If you do not attend a church elsewhere, we invite you to join with us in our Sunday worship and other activities – see [www.stpaulsurc.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsurc.org.uk)

Feel free to spend time before worship for quiet preparation, especially once the music begins. We light a candle during worship to remind us of Christ's message of peace.

The Reformed Church recognises God's Word as its supreme authority and **you are asked to stand as the Bible is brought in** at the start of worship, **and again as the Bible is taken out after the blessing.**

*Please use 'T' on your hearing aid if you need to use the Hearing Loop.*

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## ***Church Notices***

### ***Lighting our Peace Candle***

#### **Call to Worship**

*Come and see!*

**WE HEAR THE CALL OF LOVE,  
RINGING IN OUR EARS.**

*Come and see!*

**WE SEE THE LIGHT OF STARS AND CANDLES,  
LEADING THE WAY.**

*Come and see!*

**WE LONG FOR A SIGN, AN EXPERIENCE,  
TO KNOW GOD FACE TO FACE.**

*Come and see!*

**WE COME, TO BE PART OF GOD'S STORY OF LOVE.**

**CAROL: 166 COME AND JOIN THE CELEBRATION**

**Lighting the Christmas Advent Candles**

Jesus

Leader: *A candle burns,  
the last marker of our Advent journey.  
As we arrive at our journey's end,  
may we arrive with wonder and worship.  
As we arrive at journey's end,*

All: **GOD, EMMANUEL, WELCOMES US.**

Sing: **Journey ends! Where afar  
brightly shines, heavens star,  
stable door stands ajar.  
Newborn Son of Mary,  
all the earth shall greet thee  
*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes, when he comes,  
who will make him welcome?***

*(Tune: 274 'Theodoric')*

**Prayers of Celebration!**

***Lord's Prayer***

*...and as we gather this joyful morning,  
let our Alleluias rise from willing lips,  
from lives opened to Your gift,  
and from hearts filled with Your love.*

**ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA, AND AMEN!**

## **CAROL: 135 JOY TO THE WORLD**

**Reading:** *Isaiah 9: 2-7* (pg.555)

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

# Is this who we wait for?

**Reading:**     *Luke 2: 1-7*                    (*pg.832*)

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. <sup>2</sup>When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, <sup>6</sup>and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. <sup>7</sup>She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

## Born as one of us

**CAROL:**     **'JESUS IS THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS'**

*(Tune: 625 'Rhuddlan')*

**Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
give the Lord his rightful place!  
Garlands gleam with his charisma,  
tinsel, glisten with his grace!  
Jesus is the heart of Christmas  
welcome him with love and praise!**

**Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
light your candles from his flame!  
Hand your holly in his honour,  
trim each fir tree in his name!  
Jesus is the heart of Christmas  
celebrate the day he came!**

**Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
share him in each card you send.  
Give each gift in love and friendship,  
share his gifts which have no end.  
Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
Lord and Saviour, Guide and Friend.**

**Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
find his peace on busy days.  
May the messages of advent  
guide us through the Christmas maze.  
Jesus is the heart of Christmas,  
sing each carol in his praise!**

*Marguerite Kendrick*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

*Into our emptiness, Into our brokenness:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our loneliness, Into our neediness:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our busyness and our distractedness:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our chaos and our unsettledness:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our shallowness and our small-mindedness:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our past and into our present:*

**LORD, YOU ARE BORN**

*Into our future, with all its uncertainty:*

**YOU OPEN THE HEAVENS  
AND ARE BORN AS ONE OF US.**

...

*For those on the margins and all the forgotten:*

**WE SEE AND HEAR YOUR STORY  
AND RESPOND WITH LOVE**

*For those in the dark, in chains of despair:*

**WE SEE AND HEAR YOUR STORY  
AND RESPOND WITH LOVE**

*In places of war and violence and conflict*

**WE SEE AND HEAR YOUR STORY  
AND RESPOND WITH LOVE**

*In all of our darkness we still see and hear your story.  
Send us as light to banish the night.*

**LORD, YOU OPEN THE HEAVENS AND ARE BORN  
AS ONE OF US.  
AMEN. ALLELUIA! AMEN**

**CAROL: 160 O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL**  
*(Vs's. 1,5&6 in book)*

**'Epilogue' by Godfrey Rust**

*Our story told, the mystery remains—  
God's hiding everywhere. This is the way  
the love that made the universe sustains  
the broken world of our every day.*

*There's nothing to pay back, nothing to earn,  
nothing we need to do; yet it may be  
a lifelong enterprise for us to learn  
the secret power of humility.*

**Sending Forth & Blessing**



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