

Carol        Hark the herald angels sing

Introduction   &   Collect for the first Sunday of Christmas

***The Humility and the Glory of Christ - his down-to-earth-ness!***

Readings    John 1 : 14   &   Philippians 2 : 6 – 11

Comment and Poem : 'O Emmanuel ' by Malcolm Guite

Carol        Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour

***The dark side of Christmas***

Reading     Matthew 2 : 13 – 20

Comment and Poem : 'Refugee' by Malcolm Guite

Carol        Unto us a boy is born!

***The Compassion of Christ***

Readings   Luke 19 : 41   &   2 Corinthians 1 : 3 – 4

Comment and Poem : 'Jesus weeps' by Malcolm Guite

Prayers for a broken world   &   The Lord's Prayer

Carol        See amid the winter's snow

***Jesus : God's last word to us....***

Reading    Hebrews 1 : 1 – 3   &   John 1 : 9 – 13

Comment   and   Prayer for the New Year

Hymn : Lord, for the years

Blessing



**O Emmanuel     by Malcolm Guite**

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us  
O long-sought With-ness for a world without  
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.  
Come to us, Wisdom, and unspoken Name,  
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame.  
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,  
Be folded with us into time and place,  
Unfold for us the mystery of grace  
And make a womb of all this wounded world.  
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,  
O tiny hope within our hopelessness  
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,  
To touch a dying world with new-made hands  
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

**Refugee     by Malcolm Guite**

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,  
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,  
But he is with a million displaced people  
On the long road of weariness and want.  
For even as we sing our final carol  
His family is up and on that road,  
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,  
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.  
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower  
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,  
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,  
And death squads spread their curse across the world.  
But every Herod dies, and comes alone  
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.

**Jesus weeps     by Malcolm Guite**

Jesus comes near and he beholds the city  
And looks on us with tears in his eyes,  
And wells of mercy, streams of love and pity  
Glow from the fountain whence all things arise.  
He loved us into life and longs to gather  
And meet with his beloved face to face.  
And often has he called, a careful mother,  
And wept for our refusals of his grace,  
Wept for a world that, weary with its weeping,  
Benumbed and stumbling, turns the other way;  
Fatigued compassion is already sleeping  
Whilst her worst nightmares stalk the light of day.  
But we might waken yet, and face those fears,  
If we could see ourselves through Jesus' tears.