

# Carols by Candlelight at Mill Grove, Boxing Day 26<sup>th</sup> December 2022

## Triptych Three: Eternal Day



*The triptych is open with all three panels visible. The Advent Wreath is to hand. The map of the world has one candle alight, placed at Bethlehem.*

### Welcome

Welcome to Carols by Candlelight. *Children collect their candles and lights are dimmed as carols are sung:*

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shine  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And Peace to men 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

### **The Story so Far**

*Young ones gather around the map of the world where they can see the triptych*



On **Christmas Eve** we looked at the first picture. It is a reminder that in the darkest of nights the prophets knew that a dawn was coming. There are special names for Jesus. Can you think of some of them, I wonder? (Emmanuel. Messiah. Saviour. Lamb of God.) But one that may be new to you is, “Sun of Righteousness”: that is the sun that shines in the sky, not son, a boy child. The prophets longed for the time when the Sun of Righteousness came: a new dawn or dayspring. Before we leave this first picture can you see a tree stump. If so, what’s that growing out of it, I wonder? (Isaiah 11: 1)

On **Christmas morning** we gathered around the second picture. It probably feels more familiar: like some Christmas cards, perhaps. This shows light shining on the manger from a night sky. There is a star. But it also represents the glory that the shepherds saw. We also wondered about the light of Jesus...

Like a candle flame  
Flickering small in our darkness  
Uncreated light  
Shines through infant eyes...  
God is with us, Alleluia.

**Thought for Today      Triptych Three: Eternal Day**

Here's a question for you: does anyone know how the carol, that includes these words, begins?

In the heavenly city bright  
none shall need created light  
you, its light, its joy, its crown,  
you its sun which goes not down;  
there for ever may we sing  
alleluias to our king.

(It's "As with gladness, men of old did the guiding star behold".) So, what is this part describing? It's about a time and place where there will be no more darkness or night. The name we give to this is heaven. And we find out about it in the last book of the Bible...

The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it. God's glory is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by the light of the city. The kings of the world will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut, because there will be no night there. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. The Lord God will give them light. They will rule for ever and ever.

*Revelation 21 and 22*

What is heaven like? Some things we know, but most we do not. Because the throne of God, and Jesus the wounded Lamb, are at the heart of things, God's will is done. This means that there will be no more suffering (Ukraine), and no more darkness or fear. Difficult for us to imagine: even no need for locks on doors!

How do we know this? The prophets saw into the future, but it is only because of Jesus, the light of His birth, and the Dawn of Resurrection, that we have the guarantee.

We have noticed the little shoot in the first picture. Now look again at the third, and you will see a tree. There is lots of fruit on it. It's a reminder of the Garden of Eden. The fruit is for all to enjoy, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations.

So Christmas is part of a very big story: the whole of time. The light of Jesus still shines in the darkness, and one day all will see His true glory.

*The candles are blown out with just the single candle standing for Jesus, in the middle of the map: the Light of the World.*

Please feel free to take this sheet with you as a souvenir of today. You will find it and other service programmes on the Mill Grove website.



We wish you the blessing of the light of Jesus Christ along your path in 2023,

Keith, Ruth and the Family of Mill Grove