Silent Night
Carols

www.greaterlove.org.uk
An invitation to hope

On Christmas Day 1914 the guns fell silent on the western front as German and British soldiers laid down their weapons to exchange greetings, play football and sing carols. But they then returned to their hostilities.

This Christmas we are invited to leave our defended positions and meet those we might consider to be our enemies, exchange greetings, make peace and sing carols.

We do this not because of the actions of those soldiers 100 years ago but because of the actions of God more than 2,000 years ago as he came to us, at great cost, to bring reconciliation and peace, joy and hope, life and light. And he came to us not just to bring change for one day, but for the whole of our lives.

As you sing today, raise your voice and imagine what it might mean if what you were singing were true, not just for you but for those you most need to be reconciled with. Pray for peace for you and your community, and peace for the troubled areas of this world. And then leave, and live differently.

Silent Night Carols

Thank you for coming to this Silent Night Carols event. It is one of thousands of events all over the country, in football stadiums, schools, churches and wherever people sing Christmas carols. The Christian churches, military chaplaincies and sports chaplains who have met to plan Silent Night Carols invite you to celebrate, reflect and join us as we pray that this Christmas people will find fresh hope for the future. Most of all we’d love you to discover the peace and hope found in knowing Jesus personally – supernatural peace that you can experience even when you are surrounded by fighting.

In the stillness of the night, at Christmas one hundred years ago, the carol Silent Night could be heard ringing out across No Man’s Land. Soldiers from both sides tentatively came out of the trenches to exchange gifts and play football. For twenty-four hours, the fighting stopped for the 1914 Christmas Truce.

Even at the bleakest of times, Christmas offers peace and hope. This Christmas, the Silent Night carol services are a powerful way to remember the sacrifice made by so many in the Great War and to celebrate the peace we enjoy today.

As we sing this special carol in our football clubs and in our churches, and celebrate Christmas in our villages, towns and cities, let us take inspiration from the truce of 1914. Let us resolve to build bridges of friendship, let us give new generations hope for a peaceful future and let us never forget.
The 1914 Christmas truce

At Christmas in 1914, British soldier Albert Moren was in the front-line trenches near the village of La Chapelle d’Armentières. Suddenly he heard a familiar tune. This is how he described what happened: ‘It was a beautiful moonlit night, frost on the ground, white almost everywhere... There was a lot of commotion in the German trenches and then there were those lights – I don’t know what they were. And then they sang Stille Nacht – Silent Night. I shall never forget it. It was one of the highlights of my life.’

Football
Letters from the front line also refer to a football match played in No Man’s Land on Christmas Day 1914.

One soldier’s letter home was printed in Newcastle’s Evening Mail on 31 December 1914. He wrote:

‘On Christmas Day one of the Germans came out of the trenches and held his hands up. Our fellows immediately got out of theirs, and we met in the middle, and for the rest of the day we fraternised, exchanging food, cigarettes and souvenirs. The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started the bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part... We did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us.’

Silent Night
The carol Silent Night (Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht in German) was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 in an Austrian village near Salzburg. The carol has since been translated into about 140 languages, and a new verse and chorus have been written for the First World War centenary commemorations.

The 1914 Christmas truce shows the remarkable power of the Christmas story to bring change: peace broke out in the midst of battle. Sadly the 1914 Christmas truce was a brief moment in a war that left millions dead. The earthly peace and hope those troops were fighting for is still not a reality. But Christians still believe that ‘peace and hope have come, through Jesus Christ, the Son’, as the new chorus of the carol Silent Night says.

Peace and hope
Around the world today there are millions of Christians who believe that Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to have peace with God now. One of them is the Brazilian-born footballer Ricardo Kaká, who says: ‘My need for Jesus has nothing to do with money, fame or success. Jesus is more than that. He wants us, ourselves, our hearts. I truly believe that Jesus doesn’t care much about Kaká the football player, but is more concerned about Ricardo the person.’
1. 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

2. 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

3. Silent night, holy night
   Son of God, Love’s pure light
   Radiant beams from Thy holy face
   With the dawn of redeeming grace
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

4. Silent night, holy night
   God’s great love giving life
   Let the world together rejoice
   Sing forever with one voice
   Heaven’s hope is here
   Heaven’s hope is here

   Christ the Saviour
   Christ the Saviour is born
   Peace and hope have come
   Through Jesus Christ, the Son
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

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LIFE-GIVING LOVE

Austrian priest Joseph Mohr, who wrote the carol Silent Night, packed a lot of meaning into three short verses: a miraculous birth, shepherds, the angelic choir – all focusing on God’s love and something new: Mohr called it ‘redeeming grace’.

Songwriters Ben Cantelon and Nick Herbert have put that thought into more contemporary language in their new verse and chorus for this much-loved carol. Just like those soldiers 100 years ago who stopped fighting and sang Silent Night, we too can sing about ‘God’s great love, giving life’.

Visit www.greaterlove.org.uk to find out more.
2. Away in a Manger

Words: Anonymous

1. Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus,
asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing,
the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus,
no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus,
look down from the
sky and stay by my side
until morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask thee to stay
close by me forever,
and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to
live with thee there.

4. In the Bleak Midwinter

Words: Christina G. Rossetti, 1830-1894

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Joy to the World

Words: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks,
hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth
and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love.

Jesus said
‘I will not leave you as orphans;
I will come to you.’
(John 14:18)

‘I will not leave you as orphans;
I will come to you.’
(John 14:18)

‘reconciled’
made friends again
‘incarnate Deity’
God in the flesh
‘emmanuel’
God with us

‘cherubim and
seraphim’
angelic beings

Jesus said
‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.’
(John 14:1)
6. O Come, All Ye Faithful

Words: John F. Wade; tr., by Frederick Oakeley and others

1. O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem. Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2. God of true God, Light from Light Eternal, lo, he abhors not the Virgin’s womb; Son of the Father, begotten not created;

(Refrain)

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, glory in the highest;

(Refrain)

4. See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle, leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze; we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;

(Refrain)

5. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

(Refrain)

7. O Little Town of Bethlehem

Words: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

1. 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 shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

(Refrain)

2. 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.

(Refrain)

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 in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

5. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

(Refrain)

8. Once in Royal David’s City

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895

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.

(Refrain)
9. We Three Kings
Words: John H. Hopkins Jr., 1820-1891
1. We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
Refrain:
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.
2. Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain, gold I bring to crown him again, King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.
(Refrain)
3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh; prayer and praising, voices raising, worshipping God most high.
(Refrain)
4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom; sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.
(Refrain)
5. Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice: Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.
(Refrain)

10. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
Words: Nahum Tate, 1652-1715
1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground; the 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 meanly wrapped in swaddling bands, and in a manger laid.”
5. Thus spake the seraph and forthwith 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; good will henceforth from heaven to earth begin and never cease!”

GOD’S LOVE
The words ‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ are often quoted at Remembrance events. These words were first said by Jesus before his own death. The ‘friends’ he talked about were his followers and he was talking to them about God’s love. You can read the words in context in the Bible.
(John 15:9-17)

READ ALL ABOUT IT
You can read about the birth of Jesus, the shepherds and the wise men who visited him in the Bible.
(Matthew 1:18 - 2:12; Luke 1: 26 -2:40)
Longing for peace in Syria

One hundred years on from the ‘war to end all wars’, we still live in a world where conflict leaves people longing for peace. Syria is one nation in which lives are being torn apart by conflict. An estimated 170,000 lives have been lost; homes have been destroyed, hopes and dreams have been dashed. For the survivors who now live as refugees, life is an ongoing fight.

With the help of our supporters, Tearfund is caring for refugees, who now find themselves homeless, and without enough income to support their families.

PROVIDING ESSENTIALS
We’ve helped families like Hisham’s,* who left Syria after witnessing great atrocities in his own street. He, his wife and their five sons left for Jordan. They were unable to bring any of their belongings with them.

Hisham and his wife walked across the border with their sons, all under the age of ten. After a difficult search to find suitable shelter, they found a room they could rent. But, having left Syria with nothing, they were starting from scratch.

We were able to provide Hisham and his family with blankets, helping them sleep through the cold nights.

With little or nothing to fall back on, Syrian refugees struggle to afford the day-to-day necessities of life. Last winter we provided 4,880 refugees with essentials to help them keep warm, such as blankets, mattresses and stoves. With support from people like you, we’re supplying other basic essentials such as food, kitchen utensils and hygiene kits. This all helps those who have fled war to get through daily life. But these aren’t the only problems facing the Syrian people.

WHOLENESS AND HEALING
Many refugees are traumatised by the atrocities they have witnessed in Syria. As well as delivering psychological and emotional support to children in the pre-schools, we also provide trauma care for Syrian women in Jordan.

One woman lost her daughter in the fighting after sending her out to buy something. Grief, guilt and trauma meant Sharifah* didn’t speak for three months after the killing.

Sharifah fled the fighting and arrived in Jordan, where she attended Tearfund-supported counselling sessions run in connection with a local church. Within two weeks she was speaking again.

With trauma care from Tearfund, refugees are given a chance to grow in an atmosphere of forgiveness and wholeness, building foundations for the future even as the war continues to tear their homeland apart.

WAITING FOR PEACE
Fighters in the First World War famously expected to be ‘home by Christmas’. The war continued for another four years and went on to be one of the bloodiest of its time.

In Syria, the war shows no sign of ending. Please give what you can today, and bring peace to the hearts of Syrian refugees this Christmas. Your money will go towards helping refugees in Syria and other countries suffering conflict, such as Central African Republic and South Sudan.

*not real name
Thank you for coming to this Silent Night Carols event

We hope you will keep this souvenir programme as a gift from HOPE, Tearfund and Sports Chaplaincy UK.

www.hopetogether.org.uk
www.tearfund.org
www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk

You can read more of the story we've been singing about in the Bible. You can find out more about the Christian faith at www.greaterlove.org.uk or at a Christian church near you.

‘Mary... will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,* because he will save his people from their sins.’

(Matthew 1:20-21)

*Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means ‘the Lord saves’. His birth fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah said about 700 years earlier.

(Isaiah 7:14)