

In this anniversary year in which we commemorate the life of Ralph Vaughan Williams (12 October 1872 – 26 August 1958), the choir's carols are taken from his 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' (1912) which he dedicated to Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), the avid song-collector and founding father of the English Folk Song & Dance Society.

Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney, where his father was vicar of All Saints. Educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity, Cambs, he was a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the RCM, after which he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris - who described VW as "*the only one of my pupils who does not write my music.*"

In the early 1900's he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy. As musical editor of The English Hymnal he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (For all the Saints, Come down O love Divine), and he later helped edit The Oxford Book of Carols.

VW's music has been said to be characteristically English, in the same way as Holst, Delius, Butterworth, and Walton! Music critic J. A. Fuller-Maitland wrote, in 1911, "*..one is never quite sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new.*" His style expresses a deep regard for and fascination with folk tunes which, to him, were both a basis and an influence: simultaneously the music shows patriotism toward England in the subtlest form, engendered by a feeling for ancient landscapes and a person's small yet not entirely insignificant place within them.

The carol "The Truth sent from above" was collected by Cecil Sharp in Herefordshire, and he also preserved the tune "There is a fountain" from its Somerset origins, which RVW wove into "God bless the Master ..".

"The Blesséd Virgin Mary .." also comes from Somerset.

"On Christmas Night" is now well-known as 'The Sussex Carol'; and the main theme for "God bless the Master .." was transcribed by RVW in Herefordshire.

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**"We wish you a 'Merry Christmas' . . .
And the joy of a Peaceful New Year"**

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Barbara Mapley
Rector

Pauline Jones
Lay-Reader

Anne Harris Rosemarie Buchan
Church Wardens

Harry Grove
Organist & Choirmaster



A Service of Nine Lessons And Carols



**Saint Leonard's Church
Clent
2008**

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour

Voluntaries: Chorale: "Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier" J.S. Bach
'Dearest Jesus, we are here'
Variations: BWV 730, 731 and 706 (A & B)

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Carol "Once in Royal David's city .. " 46 (A&M)
Verse 1 ~ Choir: Verse 2 ~ Harmony: Verses 3+ ~ Congregation

BIDDING PRAYER

Carol O Come, O Come, Emmanuel 26 (A&M)

FIRST LESSON

God announces in the garden of Eden .. Genesis iii

Choir: "This is 'The Truth' sent from above .."

SECOND LESSON

God promises to faithful Abraham .. Genesis xxii

Carol Come, thou long-expected Jesus 31 (A&M)

THIRD LESSON

Christ's birth foretold .. Isaiah ix

Choir: "On Christmas Night all Christians sing .."

FOURTH LESSON

God's people called to be ready Isaiah lx

Carol Of the Father's Love be-gotten 3 (A&M)

FIFTH LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary St. Luke i

Carol The angel 'Gabriel' from heaven came 313 [NH&WS]

Choir: "The Blesséd Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray .."

SIXTH LESSON

St. Matthew tells of the birth St. Matthew i

Carol See amid the winter's snow 287 [NH&WS]

SEVENTH LESSON

The shepherds go to the manger St. Luke ii

Carol Good Christians all, Rejoice ! 108 [NH&WS]

Choir: "God bless the Master of this house .."

EIGHTH LESSON

The wise men are led by the star St. Matthew ii

Carol When morning gilds the skies 146 [A&M]

There will be a short pause before starting the second verse

NINTH LESSON

St. John unfolds the great mystery St. John i

Carol "O Come, all ye Faithful ..." 34 (A&M) Verses 1 - 3

COLLECT & PRAYER

BLESSING

Carol "Hark, the herald angels sing ..." 35 (A&M)

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Concluding Voluntary:

Magnificat (Fugato) J.S. Bach
(The Song of Mary) BWV 733