

are filled with the message of the Gospel. When we sing carols at Christmas, we should perhaps take the time to think about the messages of the songs and what they mean. Consider the words we are singing and the truths they proclaim about the Saviour we are worshipping. As we do, we can all join Wesley in saying “Glory be to the new-born King.” **-Bernard Kellett**

**Entrance antiphon: Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.**

**First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14**

**Psalm 23: Response: Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.**

**Second Reading: Romans 1: 1-7**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means ‘God-is-with-us’. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24**

**Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.**



*“Mary sustains our journey toward Christmas, for she teaches us how to live this Advent Season in expectation of the Lord. For this time of Advent is a time of waiting for the Lord, who will visit us all on the*

*feast, but also, each one, in our own hearts. The Lord is coming! Let us wait for him!”. Pope Francis, Angelus, 8 December 2013*



## **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

### **Cycle A, 2022 Weekly Reflection**

**Hark the Herald Angels Sing:** One of the things that makes Christmas such a memorable time of the year is the music. We know the songs and carols so well we can often recite the words without think-

ing about it. Many carols we sing have a rich theological tradition and “Hark the Herold Angels Sing” is no exception. It was written by Charles Wesley, who was a Methodist leader and hymn writer. His goal in writing hymns was to teach the poor and illiterate sound doctrine. His brother John Wesley, a theologian and founder of Methodism, said that Charles hymnal was the best theological book in existence. Some have even suggested that Methodism was born in song and Charles was the chief songwriter.

Wesley, inspired by the sounds of London church bells while walking to church on Christmas Day, wrote the “Hark” poem about a year after his conversion to be read on Christmas Day. The poem first appeared in Hymns and Sacred Poems in 1739 with the opening line of “Hark, how the welkin (heaven) rings.” In 1753, George Whitefield, a student and eventual colleague of Wesley’s, adapted the poem into the song we know today. It was Whitefield who penned the phrase “new-born king”. The first stanza describes the good news of the saviour’s birth. God has sent the One who will reconcile the sinner back to Himself. All nations should, therefore, rise and sing and proclaim the good news, which is Christ the King. The next stanza speaks to the mysticism of Christ’s coming and the good news in it. The final stanza tells of the accomplishment of Christ and the power that it brings. For well over two hundred years, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” has been a Gospel anthem pointing people to the Saviour.

This time of year, despite the over commercialisation, our culture turns its attention toward a baby in a manger, a new-born king. The songs many people, Christian or not, have on their lips and in their heads during this season,