

Lifeline

Weekly news & worship from St Anne's

Dear friends,

Well, it's not quite Groundhog Day, but as I write this letter it looks as though, of necessity, Christmas may be a bit quieter than we hoped.

As a result of this we have made some changes to our service plans. Please do take a look at the **revised schedule of services on PAGE 5** and note that this edition of Lifeline takes us to Sunday 16th Jan.

Sunday worship in person will continue as normal. Thursday Communion is moving onto Zoom for the meantime, beginning on Thursday 23rd December.

Unfortunately there are three Sundays where it won't be possible to offer Zoom: 26th Dec, 2nd Jan and 9th Jan. This is because we don't have the capacity to run a hybrid service while I am on annual leave. Sunday "Zooms" resume on 16th Jan. In the meantime, you'll find a short written reflection in this edition corresponding to the readings for the Sundays when we can't offer worship online.

Turning to what *really* matters though, in the midst of all that is going on around us: Advent draws on, and Christmas *is coming*. Throughout the pandemic God has been constantly present, and as Christmas approaches we pause to wonder again at the most extraordinary gift of God: the

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Christmas 'What's On'



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Harbour Lights



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incarnation of his Son, come to dwell among us in human form. Both fully God and fully human, he was born as a defenceless infant. He grew up knowing all the complexity of human life, was *with us* in it, and then overcame sin and death so that we might have everlasting life.

I'm sad that we'll miss our Crib Service this year, but it's a strong tradition, and it will be back! For this Christmas though, there will be a short family service on Zoom service at 6.15pm on Christmas Eve reflecting on motherhood. And as we welcome the Christ Child again into the midst of our troubled world and wonder "what does it all mean?" these words of Howard Thurman remind me that the infant Jesus is the root of the Good News our world needs. He writes:

"The symbol of Christmas - what is it? It is the rainbow arched over the roof of the sky when the clouds are heavy with foreboding. It is the cry of life in the newborn baby when, forced from its mother's nest, it claims its right to live. It is the brooding Presence of the Eternal Spirit making crooked paths straight, rough places smooth, tired hearts refreshed, dead hope stirred with the newness of life. It is the promise of tomorrow at the close of every day, the movement of life in defiance of death, and the assurance that love is sturdier than hate, that right is more confident than wrong, that good is more permanent than evil."

May you know the transforming love of the Christ Child, God incarnate, dwelling with and in you this Christmas and as we look forward to the beginning of 2022.

With love,

Diana



YOUNG CHURCH

Young Church meets on the 1st, 3rd (and when there is one, the 5th) Sunday of the month during Church. We gather at the back of church. There's always something fun to do!

Next Dates: 2nd, 16th & 30th Jan

Joining in with Worship

The high vaccination rates now achieved in Scotland mean we can offer more in-person worship.

There is a single main Sunday service, in Church, at 10.30am.

From this week, updated Covid guidance requires 1m Social Distancing between households in Church. Stewards will help direct you to appropriate seats. You will have to wear a mask during worship (including for singing).

For those who cannot come to church, we try to offer this service **on Zoom** too. However, this is much more of a 'back-up' provision, with a static camera and mic giving a view of what is happening in church. Only leaders and not the congregation will be visible on camera.

How to join worship online

Our online worship takes place on Zoom, a free video conferencing platform. You can download the Zoom app from the internet to your computer, tablet or smartphone. In the app, you can enter a meeting ID number to join a meeting. The meeting ID number for our Sunday and Thursday services is **857 7044 2212**. You can turn your own camera and microphone on and off. During a service the meeting host will mute everyone except the leader.

How to join worship by phone

You can join in with online worship by telephone. You will be charged for the call (to an Edinburgh number) based on your phone package. To join, dial **0131 460 1196**. You will be prompted to enter the Meeting ID number (**857 7044 2212**). You will be prompted for another number, which you don't need - just press #. You will now be able to hear the service. You can mute and unmute your microphone by pressing #6.

Worship at St Anne's

SUNDAYS

10.30AM COMMUNION SERVICE

IN CHURCH

With fortnightly Children's Church (2nd, 16th, 30th January)

The services on Sundays 19th December and 16th January, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will also be **on Zoom**: to join these [click here](#) or enter Meeting ID **857 7044 2212**.

Please note that services on 26th December, 2nd and 9th January will not be available virtually, for which we apologise.

THURSDAYS

10.30AM MIDWEEK MORNING PRAYER, COFFEE & CHAT

ON ZOOM

To join [click here](#) or enter Meeting ID **857 7044 2212**

Please note there will be no midweek service on 30th December.

This Christmas Eve...

There will be a short family service on Zoom at 6.15 on Christmas Eve. Come and see this year's alternative to a Crib Service! To join [click here](#) or enter Meeting ID **857 7044**



Pastoral Care

If you are in need of any kind, please call one of the pastoral care team. Whether you just fancy a friendly chat, want to share a problem, have something you'd like practical help with, a prayer request, or would like to receive Communion at home, we can help or help you find someone who can.

ARE YOU IN HARDSHIP? DON'T SUFFER ALONE - PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.

If you or someone else you know is in trouble with money, doesn't have enough food to put on the table, or simply can't make ends meet...

St Anne's can help with Food Bank referrals, giving small emergency grants, and signposting local assistance to get you help with benefits applications, debt advice and other issues. These services are free, confidential and open to *everyone* regardless of church connection, gender, age or anything else.

All contacts are treated with the utmost discretion, maintaining dignity and privacy.

Please get in touch with any of the pastoral care team.

DEBT ADVICE SERVICE

The Dunbar Debt Advice Service drop-in will be **closed on Tuesday 28th December**, and will **reopen on Tuesday 4th Jan 10am-12noon** in church

The Service offers free, confidential and impartial advice about money worries including debt and budgeting.

To seek help or advice from the service:

- **Phone: 01368 238028;**
- **Text: 07741 905 799;**
- **Email:**
dunbardash@salvationarmy.org.uk

Working in association with Community Money Advice, authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Pastoral Visiting

If you, or someone you know from St Anne's, needs a pastoral visit from one of the team to meet at home or in the garden, please get in touch.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Liz Gordon	07802 809 725
Rev'd Diana Hall	07970 105 725
Sharon Morgan	01368 864 582
David Mumford	01368 840 361



Missed a Sermon?

No problem! You can listen again on the church website, [here](#)

CUPPA, CAKE & CHAT



**IS CLOSED ON 28TH DEC,
BACK ON TUES 4 JAN
10AM-12NOON**

St Anne's Church

COME ON IN, THE KETTLE'S ON.

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED,
GIVE WHAT YOU CAN.
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk



St Anne's Church What's on? Christmas 2021

*Sadly we have cancelled the Christingle and Crib Services.
Below current plans for the Christmas season.*

Family Worship Online

Christmas Eve, 6.15pm

A short family service on Zoom only. Join using the usual Zoom link (see pg 3)

Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve, 11.15pm

The first Eucharist of Christmas. A reflective service in Church and on Zoom.

Christmas Day Celebration

Christmas Day, 10.30am

Holy Communion for all the family in Church and on Zoom.

Methodist Worship

Boxing Day, 10.30am

Holy Communion in Church. No Zoom provision.

There is no midweek Communion on 30th December

Eucharist

Sunday 2 Jan, 10.30am

Holy Communion in Church, with Young Church. No Zoom provision.

Morning Prayer on Zoom

Thursday 6 Jan, 10.30am

Morning Prayer on Zoom, followed by coffee and conversation

Eucharist

Sunday 9 Jan, 10.30am

Holy Communion in Church. No Zoom provision.

Morning Prayer on Zoom

Thursday 13 Jan, 10.30am

Morning Prayer on Zoom, followed by coffee and conversation

Zoom provision on Sundays resumes on Sunday 16th January

Resources for Worship

Sunday 19th December: 4th Sunday of Advent

COLLECT

Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour: now fill us with your grace, that we in all things may embrace your will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

MICAH 5: 2-5A

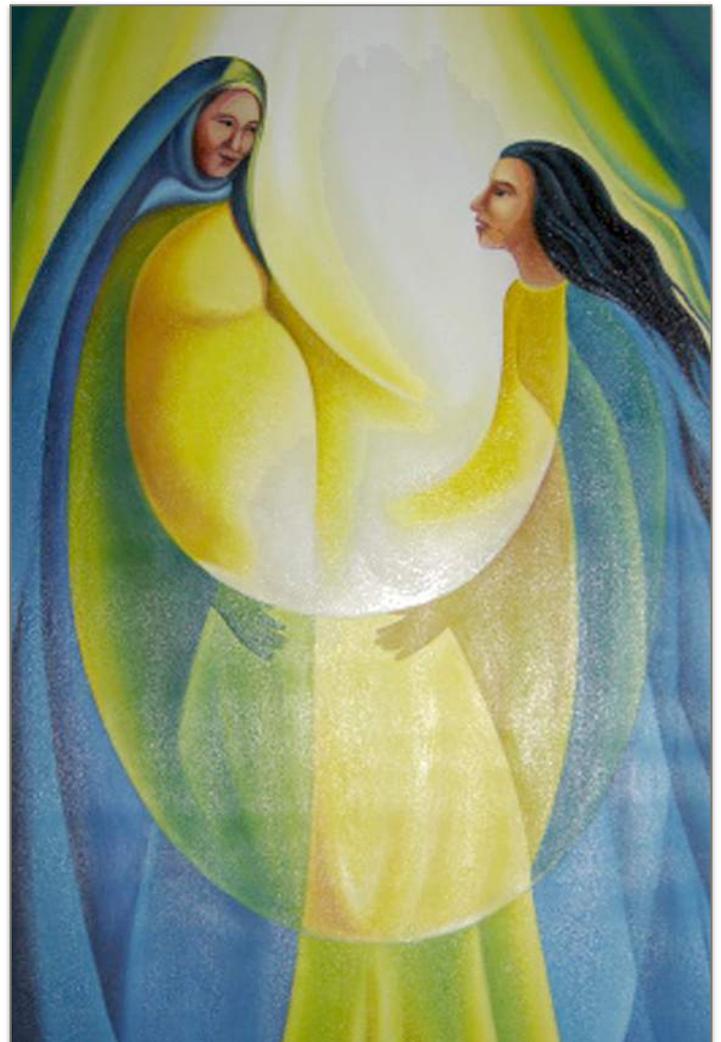
But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

LUKE 1: 47-55

"And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Image>>

Visitation (20th Century)
in the Church of St. Elizabeth, El Sitio, El Salvador.



Hymns for Sunday 19th December

THE ANGEL GABRIEL (STF 187)

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!

'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers
foretold;
most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy
name:'
most highly favoured lady.
Gloria!

Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will
ever say,
'Most highly favoured lady.'
Gloria!

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

ADVENT CANDLES (STF 165) - VERSE 4

Mary's gift, beyond all telling,
was to give Christ room.
She gave God a human dwelling
in a mother's womb.
Who could guess the final story?
- cross and glory;
empty tomb!

Mark Earey (b. 1965)

WALKING TO BETHLEHEM

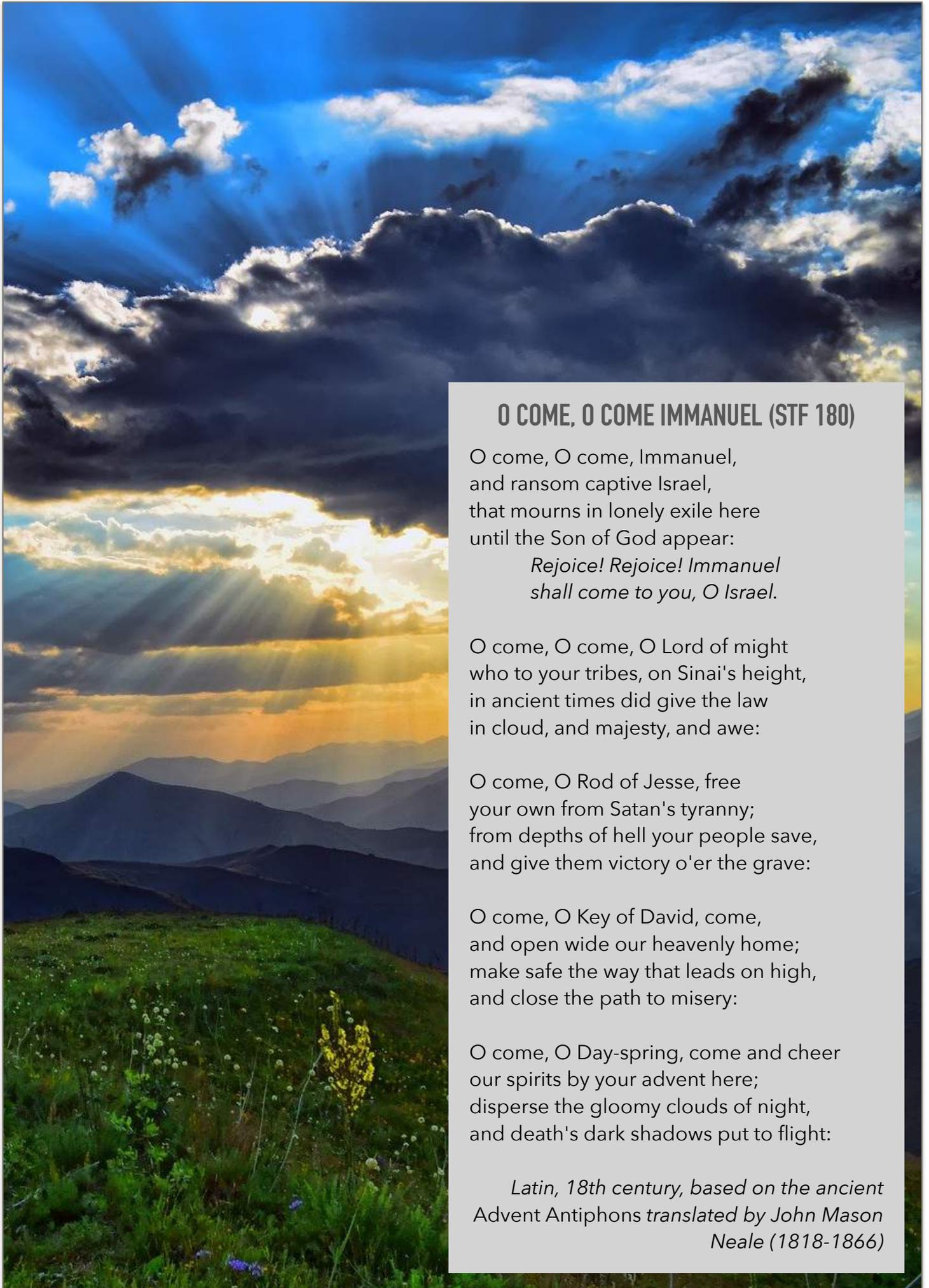
When Mary travelled to Bethlehem
her mind was surely a storm,
the angel light that had changed her life
and the baby about to be born at last;
and the baby about to be born.

And Joseph walking by Mary's side,
a kindly man in distress -
the place was strange, and the child not his,
but he loved her, and did what was best for
them;
but he loved her, and did what was best.

When Jesus sang of a father's love,
forgiving, endlessly kind,
was Joseph walking to Bethlehem
the face that he held in his mind, and loved;
the face that he held in his mind?

Roddy Cowie





O COME, O COME IMMANUEL (STF 180)

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

O come, O come, O Lord of might
who to your tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe:

O come, O Rod of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:

O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:

*Latin, 18th century, based on the ancient
Advent Antiphons translated by John Mason
Neale (1818-1866)*

Resources for Worship

Christmas Eve: Midnight Mass

COLLECT

Eternal God, in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation: give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

ISAIAH 52: 7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who
announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

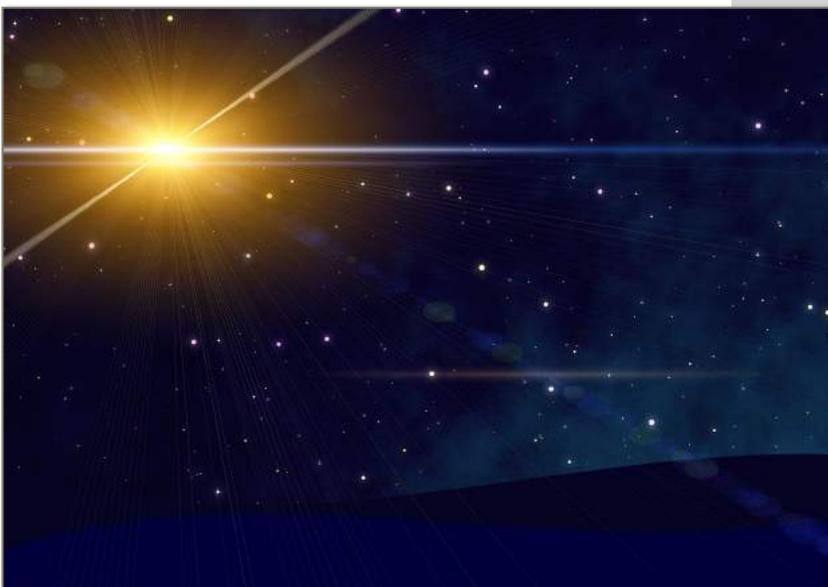
JOHN 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.



Carols for Christmas Eve: Midnight Mass

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY (STF 214)

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.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the needy, poor and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)



O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM (STF 213)

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.

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.

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 Immanuel!

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

AWAY IN A MANGER (STF 191)

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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
O love you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

*Verses 1 and 2: Little Children's Book, Philadelphia, 1885. Verse 3: Vineyard Songs, C.H.Gabriel, 1892
Anonymous*

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL (STF 212)

*See Carols for Christmas Day,
pg13*



Resources for Worship Christmas Day

COLLECT

Almighty God, you wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored our human nature.
May we share the divine life of your Son Jesus Christ, who humbled himself to share our humanity, and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

ISAIAH 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this
time onwards
and for
evermore.
The zeal of
the Lord of
hosts will do
this.



LUKE 2: 1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

Carols for Christmas Day

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL (STF 212)

(verses 1, 2, 5 and 6)

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:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

True God of true God,
Light of Light eternal,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
begotten not created:

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest:'

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

*Latin, 19th century, possibly by John
Francis Wade (c. 1711-1786) and others*

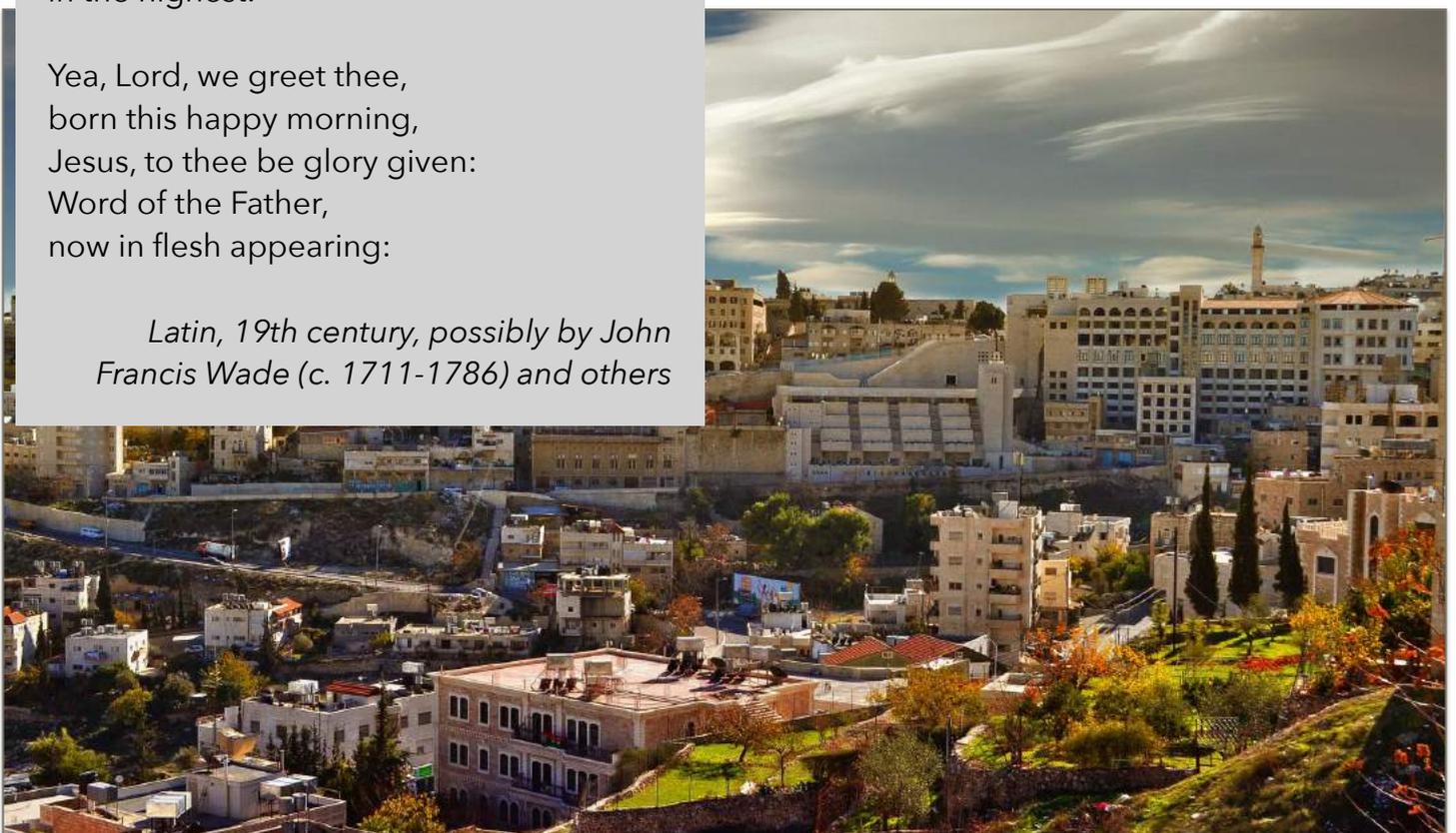
IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR (STF 205)

(verses 1 and 4)

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
to prophets shown of old,
when with the ever-circling year
shall come the time foretold,
when the new heaven and earth shall own
the Prince of Peace their King,
and all the world repeat the song
which now the angels sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)



ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY (STF 190)

(verses 1, 2 and 5)

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
you who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

*Come and worship,
Christ the new-born King,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.*

Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant Light:

Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:

*verses 1-4 James Montgomery (1771-1854)
verse 5, unascribed text in The Christmas
Box, 1825*

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING (STF 202)

Hark! The herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim:
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

*Hark! The herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel:

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild, he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth:

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Image>>

*Angels attend Mary and Jesus, c. 1665.
San Diego Museum of Art.*



Resources for Worship

Sunday 26th December: St Stephen

Methodist Service (note not available on Zoom)

COLOSSIANS 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

LUKE 2: 41-52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.



<<Image

Albrecht Dürer, 1494-1497. *Christ as a Twelve-Year-Old in the Temple*.

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

Reflection for Sunday 26th December

WHEN DOES CHRISTMAS BEGIN, AND WHEN DOES IT END?

If you go by what is on sale in the shops the Christmas season starts sometime in September and finishes with the arrival of Easter Eggs on the shelves on the 26th December. Well that is an exaggeration, but not too far from the truth. We did receive our first Christmas card at the end of October. I will excuse my cousin George for this as he was also letting us know his new address after moving.

As a church fellowship our celebration can be said to start with Advent, a time of preparation. Preparation is important. I was on the phone to a friend last week whose husband died earlier this year. I asked what she was doing this first Christmas alone. Christmas day, she said, would see her going round to her daughter's for a traditional Christmas day lunch. But, her daughter and grandchildren would come round to her house for a Christmas day tea. Without the preparation needed to provide a meal she felt Christmas day would be, well, a bit flat. She needs that sense of preparation. As a Local Preacher and key player in her local Methodist Church she would also have her time of Advent reflection.

When does Christmas end? Tradition does say the decorations come down on 12th Night. I always feel a bit sad when you see the lights and trees coming down soon after Boxing Day. This year our Bible reading for Boxing Day does seem to be rushing us away so quickly from the birth story. One day after Jesus is born he is 12 years old. (And they say children grow up quickly today)

So when does Christmas start and finish?

Actually that is not a good question. We need at least three questions to get a better answer.

- When do we prepare for the Christmas story?
- When do we celebrate the birth story?
- When does the story of Christ start and finish?

You can answer the first two. The Bible answers the third. John's Gospel tells that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Christmas story has no bounds, it was there in the beginning, will be there beyond any ending.

So maybe we shouldn't grumble when we see Christmas cards for sale in the summer or Easter eggs for sale in January for our celebration of the Christmas event should never end. One story from the beginning, in a stable, on a cross and beyond, a never-ending tale of love and forgiveness.

The reading from Colossians on the 26th guides us in how to join in this story of forgiving love.

Geoff Shutt

Resources for Worship

Sunday 2nd January: Epiphany (note not available on Zoom)

COLLECT

O God, who, by the guidance of a star, revealed your only-begotten Son to the nations: Grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at the last be led to see your flory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

EPHESIANS 3: 1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

MATTHEW 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Resources for Worship

IF THIS IS THE END OF THE STORY, IS IT ENOUGH?



Image: Edward Burne-Jones, **The Star of Bethlehem**, 1887-90.
Watercolor and bodycolor, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

Three magi have walked into the scene. They bring gifts. They represent various ages and various races. They are pilgrims. Melchior is a knight in armour, so perhaps we are supposed to see him as a crusader. Balthasar at the right wears a robe decorated with a ship, an indication of his journey. We might see Gaspar's white hair and beard as an indication of his wisdom.

The three have followed the star, here carried in the hand of an angel. They stand before the Christ child, Mary and Joseph. The baby shrinks away from the three toward his mother. Do you think this is what they thought they would find at the end of their journey? Are they pleased with the wicker and thatch shelter? Are they disappointed with who and what they find? They have taken off their crowns, and Gaspar's is on the ground. What if the story ends here? Is it enough?

Though they have found their way to the Holy Family, they have not yet bowed down and worshiped Christ. Not yet acknowledged this baby as the king they were seeking. Will they now? Will they ever?

Burne-Jones has left them as eternal seekers. On the brink of redemption.

It was a story in which the artist saw himself. In a memoir by his wife, Burne-Jones is quoted as saying that the painting was physically exhausting: "...a tiring thing it is, physically, to do, up my steps and down, and from right to left. I have journeyed as many miles already as ever the kings travelled." (G. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*. 2:209) In the photo he stands in line with the three visitors. Are his brush and palette the gift he brings to the child?

Perhaps this is the story of each of us. Making the journey as we seek God, and getting to the moment. The moment where we must decide about worshiping and presenting our gifts. Will they - and we - make the journey and arrive but never commit, kneel, acknowledge?

Reflection from: <http://artandfaithmatters.blogspot.com/2014/12/epiphany-art-lectionary.html>

Sunday 9th January: Baptism of the Lord (note not available on Zoom)

COLLECT

Almighty father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant that we, being born again, and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

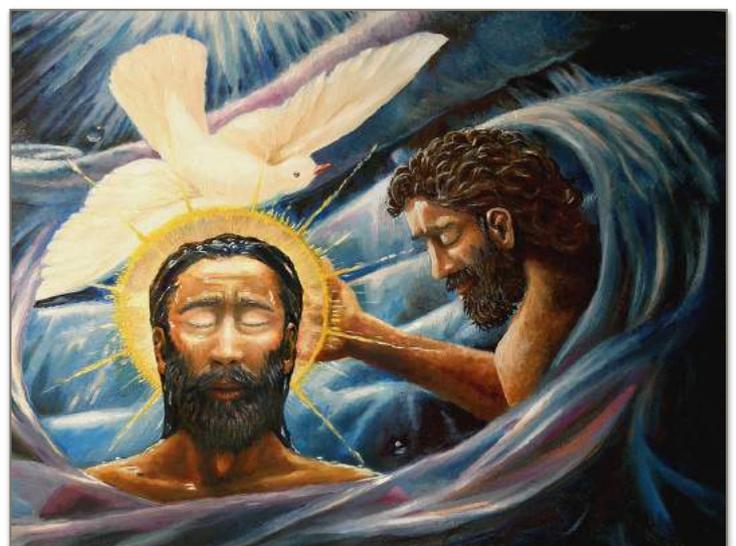
ISAIAH 43: 1-7

But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
 When you pass through the waters, I will be
 with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not
 overwhelm you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be
 burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
 For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
 I give Egypt as your ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
 Because you are precious in my sight,
 and honoured, and I love you,
 I give people in return for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.
 Do not fear, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you;
 I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
 and to the south, 'Do not withhold';
 bring my sons from far away
 and my daughters from the end of the
 earth –
 everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made.'

LUKE 3: 15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'



Reflection for Sunday 9th January

Some of us like our names, and some of us, perhaps, don't. But they are ours and they belong to us. When a child is adopted, sometimes it is the only thing they bring with them. No clothes, no toys, nothing but their name; it is all they've got and it is therefore very important to them. Sometimes our names may be said with care, delight and love. Sometimes they may be said with hatred, sadness or disappointment. Some of us will be used to using shortened forms of our names; when we were children, we knew we were in trouble if our full names were used!

We can perhaps imagine the warmth and sincerity of God's voice, the voice from heaven, when Jesus came up from of the water and received the Holy Spirit. 'This is my Son, my beloved son, and with him I am well pleased'. Can you imagine God saying the same of you? Close your eyes for a moment, and listen to the words again, beginning with your name: '...you are my beloved child and with you I am well pleased'. Know the warmth and the love of God's voice. What is it like? A strong and forceful voice or one that is gentle and calm?

There's no right or wrong answer to that, by the way. But here is a truth: that we, each and every one of us, are God's beloved, and God wants us to know and receive that love. Sometimes we may not feel loved, or even worthy of being loved. Sometimes we may feel quite the opposite. But the message of Scripture, Jesus' message, is that God wants us to know that no matter what we have done, no matter what our circumstances, no matter what we currently think: we are God's children, we are forgiven and loved, and all we have to do is reach out and receive that love.

Two simple ideas for creative worship today:

1. Go outside for a little while. Look for something in the world around you, that represents God's Holy Spirit to you, or that speaks to you of God's presence. Spend a few minutes resting in or near whatever it is that inspires you. "Inspire" literally means breath in, and inspire and Spirit come from the same root. As you do this, to think about the words: 'You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased.' You might like to say them gently to yourself, perhaps repeating them several times as a mantra. Allow yourself God's love for you.
2. Recognise who we are and why you are loved.... You'll need a sheet of A4 paper and some pens.
 - Draw two lines on the paper, dividing it into four quarters. Write a heading to the page: 'Loved by...'
 - One quarter of the sheet of paper, write what they like/love about themselves (no-one else needs to see this... it's for your eyes only)!
 - In a second quarter, note down what you think your family might love about you. In a third, write what they think your friends might love about you.
 - In today's the Gospel reading, God declares Jesus to be a beloved Son. We too are beloved sons and daughters of God. Spend some time reflecting prayerfully on this, and then in the fourth quarter not down what you think God loves about you.
 - Hopefully you now have an aide memoire of some ways in which you are loved. Why not keep it somewhere safe. When you need encouragement or want to feel surrounded by God's love, take it out and look at again, to remind you that you are loved - by other people and by God.

- Reflection adapted from materials offered by from Roots on the Web

Resources for Worship

Sunday 16th January: Epiphany 2

COLLECT

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of heaven and earth: mercifully hear the prayers of your people, and grant your peace to our times; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

JOHN 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Hymns to follow...

ADVENT-ure

On Saturday 4th December we started what we hope will be a new tradition of gatherings for the whole community - people of all ages from St Anne's and beyond - to get together informally to mark different seasons of the church year.

Our inaugural event was ADVENT-ure... an opportunity to reflect on what happened to the Holy Family as they prepared for the first Christmas. Val told an interactive story and led an advent craft session starting to make stained glass windows depicting themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We had a song, and seasonal drinks and snacks (thanks Jo and Judy!). We wrote prayers about our hopes for and hung them on a giant Advent wreath. The window in the picture was made by Lucy, Sophie and Liz Henderson. Isn't it great?!



Advent Assembly for Dunbar Primary School

One or two people were slightly surprised to see Diana dressed in some rather unorthodox "fashion items" the other day. She was in fact filming a Christmas Video Assembly for Dunbar Primary School where Covid restrictions mean it hasn't been possible for chaplains to visit since the start of the pandemic. However this does mean that if you'd like to, you can watch the assembly too! Click on the link to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH1sNb3h68I>.



Fix your Bike Workshops



Sustaining Dunbar and St Anne's Eco Group have teamed up to offer a series of workshops.

At St Anne's Church

On Sat 22nd Jan, 19 Feb, 19 March
at 10am (til 12.30pm)

Sessions offer an introduction to basic bike maintenance for everyday cycling. The aim is for you to feel more confident cycling more often, and maybe even further!

Learn how to do a bike safety check (M check), fix a puncture, perfect your wheel removal technique and totally nail your tyre replacement. Adjust your gears and brakes, whether discs, V's or callipers.

There will be tips on cleaning, tyre pressures, bike fit and what to take in a toolkit.

Cycling is part of the solution to the Climate Emergency. Its also part of civilising our local community. We'd love you to learn some new skills and even have fun whilst doing it.

Contact Val on ecogroup@stannesdunbar.org.uk or Mark 07914 602123 for more information or to book a place.

Sessions are free. Donations to Sustaining Dunbar.

Harbour Lights update

Over the last four weeks, a small number of children connected with Harbour Lights Youth Club have been meeting at St Anne's on Friday afternoons to do a planned seasonal craft each week, to give them the opportunity to spend time with the leaders, to stay in touch and chat about how life is for them just now.



With numbers restricted for Covid safety reasons, there has been ample opportunity for quality time with the young people. Volunteers have been generous with their time, preparing activities for the children to enjoy and spending time listening to them and hearing about and supporting them with what's going on in their lives. Each week they have also gathered round to see the Advent candles lit and to share a prayer they've written if they choose to.

There have been few opportunities for these young people to have this kind of gentle support and friendship with adults during the pandemic, and it has really been appreciated by them.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the Christingle and Crib services, which they would have enjoyed, because of Covid. However more sessions are being planned for the New Year



(Covid regulations permitting). For now please do keep praying for the young people. For some of them this has been a really tough year. Pray too for Richard Taylor, Kathryn Robertson, the Harbour Lights volunteers and the DACYP team.

Thank you





Let's Sing!

***Informal singing, companionship
& refreshments***

**Sunday 23rd Jan, 2.30pm
St Anne's Church, Dunbar**

All Welcome... Free!

I will light candles this Christmas



I will light candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Howard Thurman lived during the most amazing time in history. Born in 1899, in horse and buggy days, and the grandson of a former slave, Thurman died in 1981, the year the IBM personal computer debuted. In 1953, *Life* magazine named Thurman one of the 12 greatest preachers of the century.

A Baptist pastor, Thurman led a delegation of African-Americans to India in 1935 to meet Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi's influence led Thurman to understand Jesus as liberator, and he subsequently worked to bring together the gospel and non-violence resistance to combat white racism.

Supplied by Sharon Morgan

Recipe: Puy lentil casserole

Our shared Candlemas lunch is on 6th February. Alison Crowhurst suggests an easy, vegan recipe to try.

The cheerful colours in this warming recipe brighten the dark days of winter: grey-green Puy lentils lifted by creamy-yellow chickpeas, red pepper and chillies, and bright green coriander and peas. All the ingredients here can be found on Dunbar High Street.



Lentils are in season all year round. They can be bought dried or cooked and ready to eat, in a can or pouch. Puy lentils (grown in the Puy region of France) retain a better taste and texture than other varieties on cooking; they are usually only found in a pouch or dried.

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 150 g dried Puy Lentils
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 fresh chilli, finely chopped (or 2, if you like it spicy)
- 1 large red pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped (or 4, if you like it garlicky)
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 1 bunch fresh coriander, washed and chopped
- 400 g can of chickpeas, drained
- 50 g frozen peas
- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 4 chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- Naan bread or jacket potatoes, green salad and mango chutney, to serve

Method

1. Rinse the dried lentils in a sieve under cold running water, transfer to a saucepan and add 300 ml water, bring to the boil and simmer for 25 minutes, then drain.
2. Preheat the oven to 160°C fan.
3. Heat the sunflower oil in a separate pan and add the onion, fresh chilli and red pepper. Sauté gently until the onion and red pepper are soft.
4. Stir in the garlic, crumble in the vegetable stock cube, and add half the chopped coriander.
5. Stir in the precooked Puy lentils, drained chickpeas and frozen peas.
6. Finally, add the tomatoes and mushrooms, stirring gently.
7. Transfer the mixture into a covered casserole dish and cook in the preheated oven for 30 minutes.
8. Remove from oven and sprinkle with the remaining chopped coriander. Serve with naan bread or jacket potatoes, a green salad, and mango chutney.

Urgent help needed for Christmas...

Unfortunately we need to ask everyone to take a turn on the rotas for Christmas services this year. Please read through the following to check your name is on the list:

Silas Knight
 Holly Knight
 Alice Khan
 Alice Bright
 Rhonda Vernon
 Martha Ann Giles
 Holly n Fran Satinder
 Anne Miles Stephen
 Evelyn Pearce
 Steven Evans
 Lee Pearce



COVID-19

UPDATED ADVICE



The UK is experiencing a new wave of Covid infections caused by the Omicron strain. The First Minister has issued updated guidance on appropriate precautions.

If you have not yet been vaccinated against COVID please book a vaccination appointment.

If you have been vaccinated but not yet received a booster please book to receive this as soon as possible.

- There will be a drop-in booster clinic at Haddington Corn Exchange, 13 Court St, Haddington EH41 3DS, from 16th December, 8:30am to 4pm.
- You can also book an appointment online: <https://vacs.nhs.scot/csp> or by calling 0800 030 8013

Please reduce the number of social contacts you engage in, and limit mixing to no more than three households per day

- There is an exception to this on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, but we are still asked to exercise caution.

Please take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) before every time you intend to meet someone from outwith your household, including before you come to church.

- You can obtain free packs of LFTs at the pharmacies in Dunbar and East Linton.

If you experience Covid symptoms or have a positive LFT you must self-isolate and book a PCR test.

- You can book a test here: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-testing/> or, if you can't book a test online, by calling 119.

At Church, please be vigilant about:

- Leaving your details for contact tracing purposes
- Wearing a mask in the building
- Maintaining a distance of at least 1 metre from those from other households
- Sanitising your hands regularly

The information given here is current at the date of publishing (17th December) but the situation is fluid and you are advised to check the media regularly for public health updates.

If you do have to self-isolate please get in touch with a member of the Pastoral Care Team. We are always glad to offer support and prayer.

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St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church, Dunbar is a Scottish Charity, SC010950, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

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