



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 28th December 2025

*compiled by Michael Winter - Local Preacher
& Anglican Lay Minister*

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2.

Hymn - 210 StF

1] Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

2] Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

3] Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Prayer

Merciful Father, I acknowledge before You the sins that dwell in my heart - thoughts, words, and deeds that have grieved Your Spirit. Your Word reminds us, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*. (1 John v9)

Lord, forgive me for every hidden offence and every act of disobedience. Create a clean heart within me. As I meditate on the nativity, help me to live a life worthy of Your calling. I confess my pride, impatience, and lack of faith in Your timing, and I ask that You restore my soul. May this Christmas season mark a renewal of my devotion and a fresh commitment to walk in righteousness. Amen

Hymn - 212 StF

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!
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

2] True God of true God, Light of light eternal,
lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created;

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

4] Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy
morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!

Latin, 18th century

Prayers

Holy Jesus,
by being born one of us,
and lying humbly in a manger,
you show how much God loves the world.
Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven,
and see you on your throne of glory. Amen

Christ, for whom there was no room in the inn,
give courage to all who are homeless;
in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

Christ, who fled into Egypt,
give comfort to all refugees;
in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

Christ, who fasted in the desert,
give relief to all who are starving;
in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

Christ, who hung in agony on the cross,
give strength to all who suffer;
in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church - **hear our prayer,**
and make us one in heart and mind to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew 2. 13-23

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,

Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Hymn - 205 StF

1] 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.

2] Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

3] Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring.
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing.

4] For lo, the days are hastening on,
to prophets shown of old,
when with the ever-circling years
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)

Reflection

The Matthew reading for the first Sunday after Christmas is a stark reminder of how quickly the Christmas story moves on from the joyous and peaceful scenes with shepherds and angels and wise men. We are thrust so soon into a harsh world of threat and persecution, with the holy family as migrants and refugees searching for a place of safety. How familiar it seems in our contemporary world where those seeking refuge from tyrannical regimes make the headlines week after week. We know that through the incarnation Christ came to share in human suffering and gosh it started soon. We are told that babies and infants are sensitive to change and to anxiety, so we can imagine the infant Christ absorbing the anxiety but also that it was filtered through the steadfast love of Mary and Joseph.

On this first Sunday of Christmas, we continue the Christmas festivities of rejoicing and thanksgiving, but we do so with a deep sense of the realities Mary and Joseph faced and which are faced by countless families today. The incarnation is a message of hope to a hurting world, but the infant Christ needs and urges us to play our part. The world cries out for compassion and justice and the babe in the manger by an incomprehensible mystery is the source of that compassion, the arbiter of justice, the lover of all people.

So - as we eat the remainder of our turkey, dip into the box of quality streets, take a sip of our favourite tippie, bid a fond farewell to family visitors, or may be just long for all the fuss to die down so that life can get back to normal – let's not forget the enormity in spiritual terms of what we are celebrating and the heart-rending story of a simple Jewish family that lies at the heart of the Christmas story.

The Collect

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Hymn 202 StF

1] Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"*

3] 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 we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

2] Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Prayer of Blessing

May God, who has called us out of darkness
into his marvellous light,
bless us and fill us with peace. Amen