

This short act of worship for Christmas Day has been produced for you by Revd Dan Haylett.



### Opening prayer

God of grace, coming to us as a child in Jesus: we praise you!

Gracious God, taking on our human story and making it holy by your presence, we praise you!

Spirit of God, bringing salvation to all who will take the Christ child to heart, we praise you!

At this season of giving, may our hearts be turned to you. May we find you at the heart of all our giving and receiving this season. May Jesus' love renew and restore us.

All praise to you, our loving God, coming to us in Christ. Amen.

### Hymn O come, all ye faithful (Singing the Faith 212)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8dgl4-bVPU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8dgl4-bVPU)

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:

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

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

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,

leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;

we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

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

Lo, star-led chieftains, Magi, Christ adoring,

offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;

we to the Christ-child bring our hearts' oblations:

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

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

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:

'Glory to God in the highest:'

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

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

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be glory given:

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

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

Latin, 18<sup>th</sup> century possibly by John Francis Wade (c1711-1786)

### Reading: Luke 2:1-7:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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.

### Reflection:

In all the Christmas services and carols you will have shared in down the years, I wonder if you've ever noticed and paid attention to the simplicity of what we are told about Jesus' birth?

Luke gives us a cast list of many who were there as part of the nativity scene. Matthew adds some extra Eastern visitors for good measure, whilst Mark and John take radically different approaches!

Yet actually, for all that, the stories of Jesus' birth are relatively straightforward and simple. Verse 7 is quite stark: "And she [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped in him bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn".

The heart of the story is that "she gave birth" and the detail is about the poverty of the scene. Think about the contrast of

the birth stories told about legendary figures and those who set themselves up to be heroes or strong people. Luke – even with all the angels and shepherds – probably downplays the drama of the moment if anything. Or perhaps he’s simply offering a male perspective on the experience of giving birth!

The child, Jesus, is born. Jesus comes to share in our human life to the uttermost, sharing in the humility of what it means to be fully human, and to be in need of the care of another.

The child, Jesus, comes to offer reconciliation as he reveals the fullness of God to a world that needed and still needs hope and grace.

As you celebrate today, take time to give thanks for the simplicity of the message that God’s love has found you and is offered in vulnerability to all. The Word became flesh and lived among us – the child was born. In the complexity of our lives and in the crises of our world, may the simple truth of God’s coming in Christ light up your hearts and lives today and every day. Amen.

### Prayers

Joy to the world! May the earth rejoice in being made new as we celebrate the Coming one of God in our midst.

Joy to the world! May the joy of Christ’s love be found by all who live in darkness at this time. May those who grieve in

these days know they are held in your love. May those who suffer find in you a pain-bearing Saviour to help.

Joy to the world! May Christ’s peace reconcile us with one another and with God. May those relationships that are frayed or damaged find repair and newness.

Joy to the world! May our lives speak of the simplicity of God’s love in Christ for us and for all.

Joy to the world – this day, and every day.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

### **Song See him lying on a bed of straw (Singing the Faith 216)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=79h\\_5jhzT7Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79h_5jhzT7Q)

See him lying on a bed of straw:  
a draughty stable with an open door;  
Mary cradling the babe she bore  
the prince of glory is his name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem  
to see the Lord of love again:  
just as poor as was the stable then,  
the prince of glory when he came.*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,  
show where Jesus in the manger lies;

shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise  
to see the saviour of the world:

*O now carry me to Bethlehem  
to see the Lord of love again:  
just as poor as was the stable then,  
the prince of glory when he came.*

Angels, sing again the song you sang,  
sing the story of God's gracious plan;  
sing that Bethl'em's little baby can  
be the Saviour of us all:

*O now carry me to Bethlehem  
to see the Lord of love again:  
just as poor as was the stable then,  
the prince of glory when he came.*

Mine are riches, from your poverty,  
from your innocence, eternity;  
mine, forgiveness by your death for me;  
child of sorrow for my joy:

*O now carry me to Bethlehem  
to see the Lord of love again:*

*just as poor as was the stable then,  
the prince of glory when he came.*

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### **Blessing**

May he, who by his incarnation gathered into one thing earthly  
and heavenly, fill our lives with his light and joy and peace; and  
the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with you always. Amen.

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