

Worship at Home - Christmas Day - 25 December 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Call to Worship: John 1: 14

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.

A very happy Christmas to you. May you know the peace and joy of Jesus the Christ child today as you worship.

A time to be still and pray

Yea Lord we greet you,
born this happy morning!

We greet you as love:
love that lifts up the lowly;
love that includes the outcast;
love that heals the broken hearted.

We greet you as hope:
hope that injustice will end;
hope that the vulnerable are cared for;
hope that life in all its fulness is a reality for all of creation.

We greet you as peace:
peace that passes our understanding;
peace that comforts the fearful;
peace that is everlasting.

Yay Lord, we greet you,
born this happy morning! Amen.

Hymn: StF196 Come and join the celebration
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/sp2QIKTYTZ8>

*Come and join the celebration, it's a very special day;
come and share our jubilation, there's a new King born today!*

Valerie Collison (b. 1933)
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Introduction

Today is a day to celebrate. The waiting and the preparation of Advent is over and Christ has come.

However you are marking today, whatever your circumstances, be assured of God's presence with you as you worship. Be assured that Christ, the one promised long ago has come, is coming to you now and is coming again.

Why not light a candle as you continue to worship to signify that Jesus the Light of the World has come.

Today's Bible Reading: Luke 2: 1-19.

Time to Reflect

Wizzard famously sang: "Oh I wish it could be Christmas every day!" Most of us recoil at the thought! Having the Christmas tree and all the decorations up all year round; preparing a Christmas dinner every day; forced to spend a whole 24 or 48 hours with people you might spend the rest of the year avoiding! And then there's the expense of buying presents.

The sort of Christmas we've come to understand in today's Britain is definitely an impractical suggestion to celebrate every day. And if many of us are honest, by the time we get to Christmas Day itself, we're a bit over the hype. What were they thinking with those lyrics?!

But there is a sense in which it *can* be Christmas every day, a sense in which it *should* be Christmas every day, in fact a sense in which it *is* Christmas every day.

The Word became flesh and lived among us. The promise of the incarnation was a real event in time and still has an impact today.

It wasn't an event just for Mary, Joseph, some shepherds and (eventually) some magi bearing gifts for Jesus. It was an event that changed history and continues to do so - if we look beneath the paper wrappings of Christmas to find the promises of God being fulfilled.

Christmas changes things: Christmas means humanity isn't alone anymore - God - the creator of all we see is close by us every day.

Christmas means humanity isn't without hope anymore. Love came to earth at Christmas promising to bring down the powerful from their thrones and lifting up the lowly; promising to fill the hungry with good things and sending the rich away empty. (Lk 1: 52-53).

Christmas means no one is excluded from God's love. Shepherds and visitors from the East weren't at the top of the list of people who would be expected to meet a new king, let alone The King of kings.

We may look at the world and think these promises are far from fulfilled and we would be right. But perhaps that's why it is Christmas every day. We need to be reminded of the eternal nature of Christ's coming. We need to look for signs of his coming again. And we need to be part of the fulfilment of those promises in our own lives in the small ways possible to us.

As a reminder that Christ comes every day, not just once a long time ago in Bethlehem, why not, when it comes to packing up your Christmas decorations, if you have them up, leave just one small ornament out. It might be a tree decoration, or a small nativity set. Leave it somewhere where you might see it every day and remind yourself that Christ comes to you every day, not just on Christmas Day and let that be a reminder that we are part of the fulfilment of Christ's eternal promises, praying for and looking for signs of his coming again.

Wizard wished it could be Christmas every day. The irony is that the incarnation means that it is Christmas every day! Amen!

A time of prayer

On this Christmas Day let us give thanks to God for coming among us in Jesus, bringing eternal hope...

On this Christmas Day, let us give thanks to God for those we love, whether they are near or far today...

On this Christmas Day, let us call to mind those for whom the promises of God seem far away:

...those who are lonely.
...those with increasing financial pressures.
...those without permanent accommodation.
...those seeking refuge in unfamiliar countries due to the fear of war.

On this Christmas Day, let us call to mind those who have gone before us who have faithfully told the Christmas story of God's love coming to earth to younger generations. On this Christmas Day, let us call to mind our own needs, and ask that the promises of Christmas might be true for us and for those we meet not just today, but every day...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn StF202 Hark! The herald-angels sing.

<https://youtu.be/XmtKLOB-0-I>

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 men 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)
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic
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A prayer of blessing

May the joy of the Christ Child surround you.
May the peace of the Christ Child fill you.
May the love of the Christ Child uplift you.
May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit be with you now and always.
Amen