

Worship Material
Risking everything for God
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 24th December

Begin with an opening prayer

Father God, you are faithful and true, full of power and mercy.
You grace the world with salvation,
the gift of your Son who we eagerly await.
Your Holy Spirit moves among us, filling us with joyful expectation.
Your love knows no end.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we lift our hearts to you. **Amen.**

Read Luke 1:26-38

Bible notes

The visit of the angel to Mary is recorded in only two of the Gospels, Matthew and Luke. The story is well known and central to every nativity play. But what is happening? One possibility is that Luke chapters 1–2 (the announcement and birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus) and Luke 24 (the resurrection stories) were written to ‘bookend’ the main Gospel account. So, what might they have in common that leads to this conclusion? Well, both feature angelic messengers. In Luke 24, Jesus is not initially recognised on the road to Emmaus; his birth was in many ways anonymous too (the story of his public presence and ministry begins many years later). But, above all, they are both accounts of new life, of the renewing and resurrection of Israel and the people of God by God’s action. In Luke 1:26-38, God acts in way that seems to be impossible to us. In Luke 1, it is not just the greatness of God, but the willingness of Elizabeth and especially Mary to risk all for God by their faithfulness, fulfilling a potentially difficult and demanding role. We see a God who acts and faithful people who are willing to rise to what God asks of them. Sometimes, we just need to allow ourselves to say ‘Yes’ to God.

Prayer

A Prayer of thanksgiving

Father, how can we thank you enough for your Christmas gift to us?
We give thanks as labour pains intensify, heralding Jesus’ birth,

the empty cradle soon to be filled and overflowing with love –
a love that touches, convicts, renews and blesses.
We thank you for the joy that fills us
as we wait with baited breath to celebrate our Saviour.
We give thanks for your loving glory which comes down
this Christmas time. **Amen.**

A prayer to conclude

‘Our Lord, we will sing of your love forever.
Everyone yet to be born will hear us praise your faithfulness.
We will tell them, “God's love can always be trusted,
God’s faithfulness lasts as long as the heavens.”’
(Psalm 89:1-2, based on CEV)

**Lord, let us feel your steadfast love,
and sing your praises this Christmas time.
Let us proclaim to our friends and family how great you are.
Let us see the power of the baby in the cradle.
Let us say ‘Yes, let it be’ this Christmas time. Amen.**