

Worship Material
A promise made real
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 5th January

Begin with an opening prayer

Light of the world, shine upon us.
We gather, in the glow of your love
and the warmth of our fellowship,
to draw courage and guidance
for the year ahead.

Amen.

Read John 1:(1-9),10-18

Bible notes

The wonderful passage at the beginning of John sets the scene for the rest of his Gospel. It is commonly called the 'prologue of John' because it functions similarly to the opening scenes in a play, outlining the key players and the unseen forces and powers. The setting is the whole of creation, rather than the geographical location that Jesus takes up in his ministry on earth. The passage points to the creator God, who, in the second person of the Trinity causes the earth to exist and sustains it – 'in the beginning' is a deliberate reference to Genesis 1:1. The theme of John's Gospel is guiding people to see the God of the beginning of creation as the same God who became human and walked among them. There is also a spiritual element that is set up in verse 5 when the light overcomes the darkness. This is not only the darkness in the void before creation but also other elements that, as the rest of the Gospel declares, will be overcome by Jesus Christ. Then there is a dramatic shift (v.6) from the whole of creation to a particular person, God's messenger, John. Like Moses and the prophets, John points towards God's presence, appearing in flesh and blood on earth and not just in the spiritual realms. Not all will recognise this, however (vv.10-11).

Prayer

Almighty God, praise be to you.

We give you thanks for the blessings you have poured out upon us,
for the difference you have made to our lives.

For gifts beyond measure: not the gold, frankincense and myrrh
the wise men brought to Jesus at Epiphany,
but gifts of forgiveness way beyond what we deserve,
for love everlasting, light in our darkness and hope in our despair.
Almighty God, **praise be to you.**

We give thanks for the constancy of your being, eternal,
unchanging, reliable and secure, which grounds us
when life around us seems constantly in flux.

Almighty God, **praise be to you.**

We give thanks for the glimpses we catch of you unexpectedly
as we go about our daily living.

Glimpses in the light and in the dark.

Glimpses that uphold and sustain us.

Almighty God, **praise be to you.**

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

As we savour the presents of Christmas
and begin to make them part of our lives –
things to use, to wear, to play with –
so may we savour and use
the blessings we have unwrapped
in the gift of Jesus,

and make his promise real in our lives.

Amen.