

Christmas Day 2021

WHAT'S THE TIME (5)

It's time to celebrate the birth of Jesus– Luke 2:1-7

25th December 2021



WELCOME, CALL TO WORSHIP

Good morning and happy Christmas! As we meet in the joy of this Christmas day let us open our hearts and lives to God, that we may receive him as Light and Word, as Bread and Wine. Let us offer ourselves and all we have that we may serve him as Lord and Saviour, to the glory of his holy name. 'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord' (Luke 2:11).

CAROL: JOY TO THE WORLD

<https://youtu.be/vZhgp97y7Q>

Joy to the world the Lord has come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns;
let men their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

OPENING PRAYER

God our Father, you invited Mary to be part of your plan of salvation, becoming the mother of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Like Mary, move in us today.

Glory to you, God our Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, you came down from heaven in humility and poverty.

Receive our lowly worship.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus.

Holy Spirit of God, you brought joy to simple shepherds when they saw the Messiah.

Bring joy to us in our worship today.

Glory to you, Holy Spirit.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

CONFESSION

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph: 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Therefore, let us seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

Lord of grace and truth, we confess we stand in your presence as your children but we have sinned: **Forgive us, Lord.**

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty and placed in a manger. Forgive us for always wanting more. **Forgive us, Lord.**

The shepherds went around telling everyone about the birth of your Son. Forgive us for keeping silent about you. **Forgive us, Lord.**

May God forgive us that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. He came so that your sins can be forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

BLESSING OF PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS STORY: BROTHER FROILAN

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COME AND JOIN THE CELEBRATION

<https://youtu.be/pMqG5M76tFE>

Come and join the celebration

It's a very special day;

Come and share our jubilation,

There's a new King born today!

See the shepherds

Hurry down to Bethlehem;

Gaze in wonder

At the Son of God who lay before them.

Come and join the celebration...

Wise men journey,

Led to worship by a star,

Kneel in homage,

Bringing precious gifts from lands afar, so

Come and join the celebration...

'God is with us,'

'round the world the message bring;

He is with us,

'Welcome!' all the bells on earth are pealing.

Come and join the celebration...

READING: Luke 2:1-7 (NIV UK)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

CHRISTMAS DAY MESSAGE: WHAT'S THE TIME (5) It's time to celebrate the birth of Jesus

In 2020 there were 613,936 births in the UK, down nearly 161K since 2016. But simple statistics don't tell the whole story. Each birth is the story of a real mother and child, real people and real lives which are transformed by the birth of a child or children. When a child is born there is usually a celebration of some sorts.

That's why historically it was such a tragedy when mothers had their babies forcibly taken away from them in times gone by because they were unmarried. Imagine if that had happened to Mary and Joseph? She too was an unmarried mother when she received the news that she would bear God's Son.

Through Advent we have been going through a series called 'What's the time', and we have seen in Scripture that it is time to trust God for the future, it's time to get ready for Christ's coming, it's time to confront injustice, and it's time to glorify God. Today it's time to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Messiah.

So what are you celebrating this Christmas? Some will be celebrating just because it's what we always do at Christmas. Some will be celebrating just because they got through the year, while others won't be celebrating anything but will just be trying to get through Christmas unscathed. If that's you, you're not alone. For many, even though Christmas is a time for celebration, they feel like they have nothing to celebrate. What with covid, maybe the loss of a job, or the break-up of a marriage, or the death of a loved one, for many this Christmas won't be a time for celebration. For others Christmas is a time of busyness and

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stress. We are so busy getting ready for the celebration that we can lose sight of the reason for celebrating.

But the good news of Christmas is worth celebrating for three reasons.

1. God loves us.

That's why he sent his Son into the world to be born, live, suffer and die. Because he loves us. if you remember nothing else this Christmas, remember God went to such lengths because

you're worth it! Even if my children went off the rails, I will always love them because they're my children. God's love is even greater than that of a parent for their child.

2. God is with us.

In Jesus we see the human face of God. He has shown us what God is like. No longer can we say God is distant. In Jesus Christ God came to earth, lived among us. This tells us that God is a God of adventure, of risk, of challenge.

3. God is for us.

We may think that God is against us, especially when the circumstances of life are hard. But God is for us. Christmas shows us that. If God were against us he would have left us alone. But in the coming of Jesus into the world, we are not alone. God is for us.

God loves us, God is with us, and God is for us. That's why we celebrate Christmas. So, however you are celebrating the day, may it be a day when you come close to God and he comes close to you.

PRAYER AFTER MESSAGE

Loving God, we thank you for your gift of grace this Christmas.

Help us to recognise all you have given us in Jesus your Son. **Amen.**

PRAYERS

Jesus, Light of life

Shine in your world today

We give thanks for who celebrate Christmas this day, all who are worshipping you, Lord, in churches and homes, and over the internet, on radio and TV, in hospitals and prisons, especially those worshipping you in secret or for fear of others.

Jesus, Light of life

Shine in your world today

We pray for peace on earth and goodwill among all peoples, that we may learn to value one another and live in peace. We remember before you all who suffer from war or violence. We continue to pray especially for Afghanistan, and for Afghan refugees who have settled here in Norfolk.

Jesus, Light of life

Shine in your world today

We give thanks for our homes and families. We pray for all those who will have to be alone this Christmas for whatever reason. May each one know you are only a prayer away. We also pray for families separated this Christmas.

Jesus, Light of life

Shine in your world today

We pray for all who have to work over Christmas, and for all who have lost their jobs because of covid. We pray for Connecting Bowthorpe and the continuing work of helping feed those in need, and also for all charities seeking to make life better for others.

Jesus, Light of life

Shine in your world today

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and for ever. Amen.

CAROL: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

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!*

God of God, Light of light,
Lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God, Begotten, not created:

O come, let us adore Him...

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...

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...

THE PEACE

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace to all in whom he delights.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, it is our joy and delight to offer you our thanks and praise. Through your Word you spoke creation into existence and made us in your image. When we disobeyed you, you did not leave us in darkness but sent your Son, the Word made flesh, to be the light of the world. Emptying himself of all but love, he was born of Mary, shared our human nature and died on the cross. Yet you raised him from death; and through him you have sent your holy and life-giving Spirit to make us a people of light.

And so with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your glory, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy and redeeming God, we see your grace and truth in Jesus Christ our Lord, who, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the new

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covenant, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

And so, in faith we proclaim:

**Christ is born!
The Saviour has come!
God is with us!**

And so, Father, we remember and celebrate all that Christ has done for us. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we give ourselves to you. May your Spirit draw us together in the one Body of Christ.

BREAKING OF BREAD

Christ is the bread of life and the true vine, the light of the world.

Lord God, you are here with us, bringing us light and life.

Please remain in your seats to receive the bread and wine. If you only want a blessing, please indicate by keeping your hands on your lap.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Son of Mary, Son of God, we have rejoiced at the news of your birth; help us to proclaim that message in word and deed, to your praise and glory. **Amen.**

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

<https://youtu.be/1IGP68i3JvU>

**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 man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing:
'Glory to the new-born King.'**

**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.
Hark! the herald angels sing:
'Glory to the new-born King.'**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

Go, praising God for his gift of grace, and share your Christmas joy with a world in need of good news.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you this Christmas Day and for ever more. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Happy Christmas!