

Worship at Home service Sunday 22nd December 2024 with Revd Ian Forsyth

Opening liturgy:

Preparations almost complete, the time is nearly here. Promises and praises echo all around, Silencing the noises of injustice.

O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**

The promise of God for the servant lowly, God who comes to the help of all, whose ancient promise still stands today.

O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**

And we watch and we seek, we learn and we pray, we praise, and we wait. O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing. Amen.**

Immanuel by Michael Card

Our God is with us and if God is with us
Who could stand against us Our God is with us.
Immanuel.

For all those who live in the shadow of death
A glorious light has dawned for all those who stumble in the darkness
Behold your light has come.
Immanuel.

Our God is with us and if God is with us Who could stand against us Our
God is with us.
Immanuel.

So, what will be your answer? Will you hear the call? Of Him who did not
spare His son. But gave him for us all on earth there is no power There is
no depth or height that could ever separate us.
From the love of God in Christ.
Immanuel

Our God is with us and if God is with us,
Who could stand against us Our God is with us. Immanuel, Immanuel.
Our God is with us And if God is with us Who could stand against us Our
God is with us.

Immanuel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9L3ZOBQB-Oo>

Bible readings

Micah 5 v 2 – 5 and Luke 1 v 39 – 55.

Hush the noise Reflection:

This Advent and Christmas 2024, the Methodist Church has called us all to 'Hush the Noise.' This phrase is taken from the carol 'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear,' which we have used as a basis for our worship at home service.

We are now only a few more days before Christmas day, people have been shopping for presents, eating countless mince pies and attending carol services. We may have been enjoying opening an advent calendar every day especially if it has a chocolate behind each door. The excitement levels are rising, and many children are excited about receiving gifts over the Christmas period. Before the birth of Jesus, Mary was initially apprehensive however in Mary's song there is an emotion of feeling humble as well as giving praise and thanksgiving. What would make you celebrate wildly, without inhibition?

Perhaps hearing the news of a missing child had been reported missing in the community and now has been found.

Perhaps hearing on the global stage, a country had escaped from tyranny and oppression or there has been an end to war.

Perhaps it would be the message that all your money worries, or your business worries have been sorted and you can relax.

Perhaps you have received a telephone call to say you had been appointed to the job you have always wanted.

When and however, you celebrate the good news, dancing around a room, or with shrieks whilst punching the air. You might even telephone or email all your friends or you might even sing a song.

I invite you now to read Mary's song from Luke's Gospel on the final Sunday of Advent, we focus on Mary and her song which is often called the Magnificat because that is the first word in Latin. It is one of the most famous songs in Christianity. It's been whispered in monasteries, chanted in cathedrals, recited in small remote churches by evening candlelight, and set to music with trumpets and kettledrums by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Lukes's record of Mary's song I would describe as a theme of Joy. We see three persons rejoicing in the Lord. The joy of Elizabeth v 39 – 45, the joy of an unborn son v 41 – 44, and the joy of Mary v 46 – 55.

I am closing today's reflection from the 'Hush the noise,' materials to close our reflection in her song of praise. Mary thanks God for the child Jesus, who will announce God's kingdom, which "brings down the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly." To engage in God's mission and be part of that transformation, we believe the Methodist Church is called to become an increasingly evangelistic, inclusive and justice-seeking Church. Ways that people can respond to take a couple of minutes now to 'Hush the Noise'.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife, the world has suffered long.

Beneath the angel strain have rolled, two thousand years of wrong.

And man, at war with man, hears not, the love song which they bring.

O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing. Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

A quiet Christmas prayer

Loving God, whose song of love is being sung always, offering unconditional love and grace to all you have made. Thank you for your love.

Living Lord Jesus, who came to share our humanity, our fragility, and our pain. Thank you that you do not leave us alone.

Holy Spirit, who came upon the Virgin Mary, Bringing the eternal Son into the world through a human body. Thank you for bringing God's love to us.

Eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an everlasting communion of love, whose song of love the angels sing, we confess that so often our ears are closed to you. There is so much that drowns out your song of love.

We hurt ourselves and others, and others hurt us.

And sometimes we are simply sick and sad, and our pain makes it hard to pay attention. Please forgive us for the things we can control and help us with the things we can't. Break through the Babel sounds of our world and help us hear the song of the angels and send back their song to you. We pray in the name of Jesus, whose birth we are here to remember. **Amen.**

All of our tomorrows

This spinning world by Your own hand Hurls ever on around the sun the seasons march at Your command the old departs, the new year comes And though celestial is Your gaze You search and care for all our ways We offer up to You this day And all of our tomorrows.

May zealous youth and cautious age Determine not the steps we choose Great Shepherd, guide us through each day Oh, how we want to follow You Come Living Way, our way make clear Let perfect love drive out our fear Be Thou our vision, now and here and all of our tomorrows.

When winter makes us reminisce of warmer days so distant now of cherished saints the sun once kissed Whose beauty passed behind the clouds

Let all our fond and longing tears Remind us we are pilgrims here We trust you, Sovereign of our years with all of our tomorrows.

Hands to the Plow, we're pressing on and running hard to win the prize Empowered by the love of God With grace before and grace behind for lo, what hope before us stands You finish all that You began Eternal joy is in Your hands and all of our tomorrows.

For lo, what hope before us stands You finish all that You began Eternal joy is in Your hands And all of our tomorrows And all of our tomorrows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=346G857QYkE>

Prayer of blessing.

The angels are still singing. Prophets are still speaking. Hush the noise, hear them sing, repeat the song, seek justice. And the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be yours/ours, now and always.

Amen.