

Worship at Home service Sunday 18th December 2022 with Revd Ian Forsyth

Opening prayer:

Lord, you alone know our hearts, our histories and our hopes.

You alone know our futures and our fears.

Lead us on, so that whatever part we may play, our story may be shaped by your story,

through Jesus, son of Mary, and given a name through Joseph. **Amen.**

StF 199 – Glory be to God on high

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7FQbOydncA>

Glory be to God on high,
And peace on earth descend;
Now God comes down, He bows the sky,
And shows Himself our friend!
God the invisible appears,
God the blest, the great I AM,
He sojourns in this vale of tears,
And Jesus is His name.

Him by the angels all adored,
Their maker and their king;
Lo, tidings of their humbled Lord
They now to mortals bring;
Emptied of His majesty,
Of His dazzling glories shorn,
Our being's Source begins to be,
And God Himself is born!

See the eternal Son of God
A mortal Son of Man,
Now dwelling in an earthly clod
Whom Heaven cannot contain!
Stand amazed, ye heavens, look at this!
See the Lord of earth and skies
Low humbled to the dust He is,
And in a manger lies!

So do the sons of men rejoice
The Prince of Peace proclaim,
With Heaven's host lift up our voice,
And shout Immanuel's name;

Our knees and hearts to Him we bow;
Of our flesh, and of our bone,
See—Jesus is our brother now,
And God is all our own!

Bible readings

Isaiah 7 v 10 - 16 NIV

Matthew 1 v 18 – 25 NIV

Advent prayers:

Lord Jesus Christ, you came to our world, but there is no place for you. You came to your own people, but they were not ready to receive you. You were born in Bethlehem, but there was no room in the inn. You walked among us, sharing our humanity, but had no place to rest your head. You returned to your hometown but were without honour in your own country. You came to bring us life to all, but you were put to death on a cross. You knew what it was like be homeless, hungry, abandoned, rejected, and so we bring you our prayers for all those who endure such need today. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have no roof over their head or no place to call their own – waiting perhaps on council housing lists, or evicted because they cannot pay the rent, homes destroyed by natural disaster, or left behind as they flee from prosecution or the threat of war. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who live in poor and overcrowded conditions, in shanty towns or refugee camps, hostels or bed-and-breakfast accommodation, tenement blocks or run-down slums. For those who sleep rough on the streets. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

And we pray too for those who feel they have no place in society- the unemployed, the poor, the lonely, the oppressed, the persecuted, the terminally ill. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, reach out to all who face such situations. Grant the assurance that you care, courage to believe in the future, and strength to meet the present. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

Grant your help to those who offer help, your support to those who campaign for justice, your blessing to all who seek to bring hope where there is only hopelessness. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.**

May we, with them, make real your love and show your compassion, working together for your Kingdom. Friend of the friendless, **hear our prayer.** Amen.

The Lord's Prayer - Our Father,

Time to reflect:

This is the third week of advent, and we are looking at the theme 'There is room'.

It all began with Luke 2 v 7 that simply says, 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. An ordinary account of Jesus born into poverty, obscurity, even rejection. The reality is he was born into nature the created world of his Father in heaven, in a unique place of geography and History.

The theme this year we have been looking at during advent is 'There is room' We have seen the nativity scene with the wise men, the sheep and the shepherds, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, sometimes a star or an angel over the crib.

We have thought about being a part of God's story knowing his love for us from the very beginning. There is room for difference and the wise men were strangers, travelling to worship a King.

Last week we thought about the sheep and the idea of nature. Thinking about all creatures and nature working together, presents us with the challenge on how do we care for the environment?

Today we are thinking of there is room for all ages. Mary was chosen by God to give birth to Jesus the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. We read the prophet said 'Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel'. God entrusted Mary a young person to love and care for him, protecting him as he grew to be a man and bring good news to the world.

I am always moved by carols and by reading Mary's song, called the Magnificat, it reminds us of who we are and helps us remember God never rejects us.

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.” Luke 1 v 46 – 55.

Finally, there is room for all ages, I recall a Christmas a carol ‘in the bleak mid-winter. The words say What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb, if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

No matter what age we are may we ask the question ‘What will you give God this Christmas?’

StF 204 – In the bleak midwinter

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

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone: snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign: in the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom cherubim
worship night and day, a breastful of milk
and a manger full of hay: enough for him
whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels, may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim, thronged the air, but only his mother, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the Beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,
if I were a wise man, I would do my part,
yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

Final prayer:

May the God who knows where you come from and where you should be going, go with you. May the God who knows your hopes and dreams, bless you – and others through you – more than you can possibly imagine. May the God who was with Joseph and Mary in all that they faced, be known to you as Immanuel – God with you. **Amen.**