

11:00pm Christmas Eve – Advent 4

24 December 2023

Welcome

Call to Worship

We count it in mere hours now.

Soon the first pains of labour will be felt.

**Soon the Light will shine in the darkness,
soon the baby will be born.**

Soon God will once again break into our lives,

**Coming in a way that is expected yet unusual, challenging our
expectations and calling us to see life differently.**

All that I am sings of the God who brings his life to birth in me.

My spirit soars on the wings of my Lord.

**He has smiled on me and the blaze of his smile
no one shall ever forget**

My God is a gentle strength

who has caught me up and made me his child.

His love endures forever

Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark the herald angels sing,

Glory to the newborn King!

Peace on earth and mercy mild,

God and sinners reconciled

Joyful all ye nations rise,

Join the triumph in the skies

With the angelic host proclaim,

“Christ is born in Bethlehem”

**Hark the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!**

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord
Late in time, behold him come,
Offspring of the favoured one.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate deity
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel

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 we no more need die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth

Public Domain. Used by permission CCLI Licence 156788

Song: O come, O come Emmanuel

O come, O come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;

From depths of hell thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

CCLI Song # 31982 © Public Domain CCLI License # 156788

Advent Wreath: Love

Today we relight the first three candles of the Advent Wreath — the candles of **HOPE**, **PEACE**, and **JOY**. Now we light the fourth candle of Advent. This is the candle of **LOVE**. Jesus demonstrated self-giving love in his ministry as the Good Shepherd. Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and sharing. It is a time to love as God loved us by giving us his most precious gift. As God is love, let us be love also.

In the Book of Deuteronomy 10:17-19, we find these words:

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

How great is the love the Father has showered on us! This is how God showed His love: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.

Let us pray:

Teach us to love, O Lord. May we always remember to put you first as we follow Christ's footsteps so that we may know your love and show it in our lives. As we prepare for our celebration of Jesus' birth,

also fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know your love and the one whom you have sent, your son, our Saviour. Amen.

Bible Reading: John 1.1-14 (Jaq)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.^[b]

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to what was his own,^[c] and his own people did not accept him. **12** But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,^[d] full of grace and truth.

Message

Offering Song: O Little Town Of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

CCLI Song # 27879 Lewis Henry Redner | Phillips Brooks Words and Music: Public Domain CCLI Licence # 156788

Thanksgiving for the Offering

We give in grateful thanksgiving for all that God has given us.
In the upside-down world of the gospel,
we measure our wealth not by what we have,
but what we can give away.
Let us give away generously, in this offering,
To bless your church, your people, your creation.

Confession

**Merciful God our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:**

**we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.**

Father forgive us.

**Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Declaration of Forgiveness

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all
who turn to him in faith:

pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers (Zilpha)

Lord's Prayer

Song: Christmas Hallelujah

The Great Thanksgiving (Zilpha & Jaq to assist)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, ever living God.

We give thanks and praise for our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of the Spirit was born of Mary
and lived as one of us. In your Word made flesh
You have caused a new light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
By his death on the cross and rising to new life,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.
Therefore, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
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.**

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation,
this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.
On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
After Supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died.

**Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

Therefore, we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his
coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people into the joy
of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Prayer

God of heaven, dwelling among us,
we thank you for feeding us
with this holy food.

By your grace keep us ever faithful to your Word made flesh
that as his body in the world
we may bring your presence
to all people.

Father,

**we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.**

Notices

- Christmas Day 9:30am St Chad's
- Services in January
- Lunch with the Vicar
- We wish you a merry Christmas & see you next year

Song: Angels we have heard on high

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angel's praise.
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid
While our hearts in love we raise.

Public Domain CCLI License # 156788

Song: 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**

True God of true God,
Light of Light eternal,
lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created:

Sing choirs of angels, Sing in exultation
O sing all ye citizens, Of heav'n above
Glory to God all
Glory in the highest

Yea Lord we greet Thee
Born this happy morning
Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing

Public Domain. Used by permission CCLI Licence 156788

Blessing

By the tender mercy of our God
love has broken upon us!
Light is given where once there was darkness
and hope where there was only death.
We go into this season knowing
that God will guide our feet into the way of peace. **Amen.**