

Ashburton and the Moorland Team

# Christmas Day

2021



**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

And welcome to our Christmas Day service wherever you are.....

If you are at home, before starting this service, you may like to get a candle ready to light for Christmas Day.

Geoffrey

## ¶ The Gathering

We meet in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*The Christmas Candle is lit:*

**Lord Jesus, Light of Light,  
you have come among us.  
Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest!**

**Carol – O come all ye faithful**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5rMQ6P12WY>

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 all glory given.  
Son of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing;

*O come, let us adore Him.....*

Words: John Francis Wade  
1711 - 1786

## *Prayer of Preparation*

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## *Prayers of Penitence*

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.

**God our Father,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.**

**For turning away from you,  
and ignoring your will for our lives:  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.**

**For behaving just as we wish,  
without thinking of you:  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.**

**For failing you for what we do,  
and think and say;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.**

**For letting ourselves be drawn away from you  
by temptations in the world about us;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.**

**For living as if we were ashamed  
to belong to your Son;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***The Gloria***

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**¶ The Liturgy of the Word**

**Reading**

*Isaiah 9.2-7*

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Carol - Once in Royal David's City**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw6ljbOUaJ4>

Once in royal David's city,  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,  
who is God and Lord of all,  
and His shelter was a stable,  
and His cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and mean and lowly,  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
through His own redeeming love;  
for that child so dear and gentle,  
is our Lord in heaven above,  
and He leads His children on,  
to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing by,  
we shall see him, but in heaven,  
set at God's right hand on high;  
where like stars his children crowned,  
all in white shall wait around.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander  
1818 - 1895

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Luke 2.1-14*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

***Sermon***

Think for a moment about this question:

“What has been the most important event in your life?”

(And no peeking over the page!!)

I guess you'll have come up with something like your last birthday, or winning a race, or getting that job you'd always wanted, or falling in love, or your wedding day, or when your first child was born, or that trip round the world, or whatever?

But there's one event far more important than any of these ... your birth!

Without being born, none of us would be here. Without babies, the human race would die out within, say, 120 years.

And yet none of us can remember being born. I can't. Can you? I can't remember anything before I was about 3 or 4. But I must have been a baby and then a toddler.

I've always enjoyed that bit in "Matilda" where Miss Trunchbull says "Nasty dirty things, little girls are. Glad I never was one."

Our birth started us off – and our annual birthdays are celebrations of that amazing event, the day we came into existence.

It's a bit strange, if you think about it, celebrating something we have no memory of!

So it's logical that when we come to celebrate Jesus' life, we focus on his birthday – Christmas Day – and we all have the biggest collective celebration of the year.

We can picture the scene – the stable, the animals, and all.

Jesus himself would have been completely unaware of the donkey and cattle, the shepherds and the sheep, the wise men and their presents.

He'd have been sleeping, feeding, or crying, blissfully unaware of what was going on around him. Totally dependent on his mother and father looking after him. Just as we, as babies, were totally dependent on our parents or carers.

God simply had to trust Mary and Joseph to love and care for Jesus, so that he would grow up into the preacher and prophet the angels announced, the Messiah, the "good news of great joy for all people."



And Mary and Joseph clearly did a great job. There's not many new mums who would relish a constant stream of visitors when all they want is peace and quiet and a good sleep.

What did Mary have to sleep on? In all the Christmas Cards she is shown as sitting up and cuddling Jesus – where did she get her rest?

At Christmas, God was putting his trust in a young mother, and that trust was returned as Mary simply got on with the task of bringing up her baby.

Just as God trusted Mary, so he trusts us – to be selfless and generous, to be loving and kind. To do all we can to make the world a better place. To listen to his prompting and follow our conscience.

So we, in our turn, can trust God. And through this, to encounter joy and peace, love returned.

Wherever you are, whatever constraints Covid has forced on you, may your Christmas be a celebration of God's love, and a wonderful birthday party! Amen.

### ***Affirmation of Faith***

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**



### ***The Peace***

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,  
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace

**The peace of the Lord be always with us**

## Carol – See him lying on a bed of straw

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1UI5Ko34XQ>

See him lying on a bed of straw:  
a draughty stable with an open door;  
Mary cradling the babe she bore  
the prince of glory is his name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem  
to see the Lord of love again:  
just as poor as was the stable then,  
the prince of glory when he came.*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,  
show where Jesus in the manger lies;  
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise  
to see the saviour of the world!

*O now carry me...*

Angels, sing again the song you sang,  
Bring God's glory to the heart of man;  
Sing that Beth'lem's little baby can  
be salvation to the soul.

*O now carry me...*

Mine are riches, from your poverty,  
from your innocence, eternity;  
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,  
child of sorrow for my joy.

*O now carry me...*

Words: Michael Perry  
b. 1942

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,  
let us pray to the Father.

Jesus, for whom there was no room in the inn,  
give courage to all who are homeless;  
Lord in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

Jesus, who fled into Egypt,  
give comfort to all refugees;  
Lord in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**



Jesus, who fasted in the desert,  
give relief to all who are starving;  
Lord in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Jesus, who suffered on the cross,  
give strength to all who suffer;  
Lord in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Jesus, who died to save us,  
give peace to all who seek pardon.  
Lord in your mercy  
**hear our prayer,  
and make us one in heart and mind  
to serve you with joy for ever.  
Amen.**

### *The Lord's Prayer*

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Carol** - Hark the herald angels sing  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_iLXNSIaYc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_iLXNSIaYc)

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 of 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 a Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Son 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.

Words: Charles Wesley  
(1707-1788)

**Eternal God,  
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,  
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,  
that all the world may acknowledge  
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***Blessing***

May the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the joy of the angels, the perseverance of the wise men,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
and the peace of the Christ-child  
be yours this Christmas;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**