

Christmas Day 25 December 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you. You might like to find a Christmas card with a nativity scene on it. Place it where you can see it during this worship. If you would like to, then light a candle and place it nearby.

Opening Prayer

Here we are, Jesus, on this Christmas Day
Here you are, Lord Jesus, always ready for us.
Here I am God, ready for you
Here you are Emmanuel, always with us
Grant us your Spirit of joy and peace.

Hymn: StF 202 Hark! The herald angels sing

Read /pray /proclaim the words or join in with a congregation singing it here
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDPwNPAV6tA>

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 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 man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth:

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together

Glory to God in the Highest!
Glory to our newborn King Jesus!
Glory to the Spirit of peace and joy!
Glory to God who loves the world so much that
he sent His Son to live and work and show God's
Kingdom here on earth.
Glory to Emmanuel God here and now, who joins
me with all the followers of Jesus across the
globe as we offer our Christmas worship.

Amen

A Christmas Collect

God of light and hope,
Of stars and surprises:
Open our eyes to your glory
and our hearts to your presence,
that we may respond with joy to the angel song;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(MWB p526)

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament
Isaiah 9:2-7**

Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 2:(1-7)8-20

Time to Reflect

If you are feeling shut out from normal worship this morning then the shepherds are in the story just for you. Out in the fields they rarely had a chance to "go to worship". They "knew their place" as Ronnie Corbett said repeatedly in that old sketch about the British class system. It is characteristic of Luke that he records the loving

action of God to reach out to the least, the lost, the excluded, the lonely. The angel brings to *them* Good News. After fear, their response is joy and action, leading to wonder, delight and worship.

How might this apply to you on this most strange of Christmas Days?

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

I wonder what treasured memories of Christmases past you hold in your heart?

What joyous memories can you ponder in the quiet moments of this day?

Take a time to sit quietly, and perhaps listen to this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxclAv-gLp8>

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
For poor on'ry* people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.

But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
For poor on'ry* people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

*Means “ordinary”

Note:

This carol from the Apalacian mountain region was Collected by John Jacob Niles in Murphy, NC in July 1933 from a young traveling evangelist Annie Morgan. According to Niles, he asked her to sing the song repeatedly until he had memorized it. It was published in his 1934 Songs of the Hill-Folk. Written in a minor key, it's qualities of pensiveness make it one of today's most popular carols.

**GOD
IS WITH
US**

During this season the Methodist Church is proclaiming “God is with us”. God is with us is more than a statement.

It's a reminder that God is always with us. We are

encouraged to share our story (and other people's stories) of walking with God in this extraordinary year. How might you share how God has been with you this week? Find out more here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/christmas/>

A time of prayer

God of outreach,
we thank you for coming amongst us in Jesus.
We marvel at your humility, emptying yourself
“of all but love”.

We recognize our privilege
and pray for those with no home,
those who have had to travel to foreign lands,
those who flee persecution.
Emmanuel, God with us, be with them.

God of the familiar,
we thank you for the familiar scriptures at
Christmastide.
Speak through them of hope renewed,
of steadfast love,
of faith that flows full and free within and beyond
the familiar carols and services.
May your spirit call out goodness from all who
feel tired and estranged from the familiar today.
Emmanuel, God with us, be with them.

God of the strange,
we pray for all those
who today miss familiar rituals and traditions -
both family and religious.
We pray for all those today who are sad or lonely,
all those who feel cut off from loved ones.
Emmanuel, God with us, be with them.

God of good will,
we pray that these difficult times may call out
goodwill from all who are made in your image.
Bless, we pray,
all those who reach out with Good News,
with practical help, with simple friendship.
Where we become caught up in ourselves,
break in with your message that
“it is in giving out to all that we receive”
Thank you for love and hope made known to us
in our Saviour, Christ Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father

Hymn: Listen to the Calypso carol with 2500
voices singing together (StF 216)

or sing a carol that comes to mind.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2ujyrrL9_s

See him lying on a bed of straw;
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:

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the story of God's gracious plan;
sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
be the Saviour of us all:

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

Michael Perry (1942-1996)

A prayer of blessing

May the wisdom of the Wonderful Counselor,
The peace of the Prince of Peace,
The love of the everlasting Father
And the blessing of our mighty God
Rest on us and all those we pray for
This Christmas Day and always. Amen

Original Materials by Phil Challis

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Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

The Big Church Sing Christmas Special was
broadcast live on the Methodist Church's
YouTube channel on Sunday 29 November. Have
you seen it yet? If you have access to the internet
go to

<https://www.youtube.com/methodistchurch>

Isaiah 9:2-7

New Revised Standard Version

² ^[a] 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.

³ 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.
⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
 and the bar across their shoulders,
 the rod of their oppressor,
 you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶ For a child has been born for us,
 a son given to us;
 authority rests upon his shoulders;
 and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ 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 onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

² In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
 and on earth peace, goodwill among people.

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.