

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

25 December 2022

Welcome
Advent Candle

We light all the candles to remember that
God is with us all the time, in every time and
for all time.

Worldly God,
your Word in season
enters our neighbourhood
bringing grace and truth:
Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace to all people

Beckoning God,
your child in a manger invites us
to lean close and bow down:
Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace to all people

Unbounded God,
your angel brings good news
and great joy
to all on the margins:
Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace to all people

Intimate God,
your power seeds hope for the lowly and
judgement for the proud:
Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace to all people

Saviour God,
your Spirit gifts one like us,
one of us, one with us,
to save us from ourselves:

Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace to all people. Amen

Song: Joy to the world

Prayer

Song: Immanuel

Amazing days video

Reading : Matthew 1.18-23

¹⁸This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. ²⁰While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. ²¹She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, ²³“A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel” (which means, “God is with us”).

Song: O little town of Bethlehem

Sermon: A star frame for life

Today we're thinking about what the Christmas story means using this lovely star cardboard wreath. In the UK we use wreaths to decorate our front door as sign of welcome to the Christmas season. This wreath frame is going to tell us the story of Jesus birth and why it is important.

Tip out the stickers in your bags onto the pew near you and your adult.

Can you find the Mary and the Joseph? And stick them close to each other.

In the bible there are only two versions of the story of Jesus birth. We get all we know about it from two gospels – two books in the bible. One from Luke who talks from Mary's perspective, and the second from Matthew who talks about it from Joseph's point of view.

Next – can you find Jesus?

Now I'm a big fan of Baker Ross who produce these stickers. But look closely at this baby Jesus. What colour hair does he have? And what colour skin does he have? From Matthew's gospel, we know, because he spent a whole chapter, the very first chapter of his gospel, that Jesus was Jewish, born into the ancient family of King David. His family were from Nazareth and Bethlehem, so it is more likely that Jesus had brown hair or black hair and brown skin.

I wonder if Mary or Joseph drew a picture of Jesus when he was a baby? Maybe. We only really get paintings of Jesus hundreds of years after he died. If we think of this star shape as a frame, what kind of Jesus would you draw? Jesus, son of God came as a baby but died and rose again as a saviour of the whole world, which means we draw him in lots of different ways, for there are lots of different people in the world. Everyone can know Jesus as saviour.

Who comes after Jesus? Can you find the angels?

There are angels everywhere in the Christmas story, they are God's messengers. Through the angels God tells the shepherds to go and find Jesus. Shepherds were not important in

society, but they were the most important to God.

Do you have a donkey and a sheep?

Jesus was born in part of a house where animals were kept. Jesus was a country lad, connected to the natural world in the simple rural life of his family and as the son of God he was part of the creation of the world.

Did you know that's all that Luke's story includes?

So, let's turn over and finish the story from Matthew, with the much later arrival of the starwatchers, or the kings. Please find and stick your kings, and gifts onto the star.

We think there were 3 kings because there were 3 gifts. Who can remember them? We know the kings came from a long way away. So, we guess that they had some money to travel and means of transportation – find your camel and a palm tree and add them as symbol of long journey.

And finally, the star. The star leads the kings from the East to Jerusalem and then onto Bethlehem to Jesus' feet. Matthew tells us: what joy was theirs! The kings went into the house and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshipped him.

Why does Matthew spend two long chapters talking about Jesus' family tree and the story of his birth? He writes his story after Jesus died and rose again. He begins the story with a framework. He begins by saying this baby is from the family of king David, which means he is Jewish, and he is fulfilling ancient prophecies about a saviour for the people of Israel. He begins by saying that this baby's birth was special, with angels and shepherds, and kings visiting – this was not a normal baby. He begins by saying that this baby was Immanuel. God with us. Immanuel a promised child who would save his people. And the people of God needed saving, under

oppression, under a terrible ruler King Herod – a fake king with a brutal regime.

Matthew begins his gospel by saying this baby Jesus was not ordinary, Jesus was not just a good man from a good family. He says this baby is different, he is the son of God. The promised son of God, with us. This is the framework he starts his story with. At the end of Matthew's gospel story, we see Jesus resurrected from the dead, alive and talking to his disciples telling them to tell the whole world about him. And he says: I will be with you always. From beginning to end of his book, Matthew wants us to know that God is with us from beginning to the end of our lives and the world. God is with us as a baby and with us the resurrected Christ by the presence of the Holy Spirit. So much so that the presence of Christ is here now.

That's what the bible says, what do you say? Take a look through the star frame. There is an empty space. This space allows each of us to look into this story and ask, where do I fit in this story? And how does this story frame Christmas? And how does it frame our life? For God is present in whatever life we have. God is with us, given to us as a child. May this framework reshape our lives and give space for us to grow in faith in Jesus the saviour of the world.

Song: Prepare him room

Communion

A sign will be given to you
A young woman will become pregnant
And have a son
He will be called Immanuel
Which means, God is with us.

Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, he has come to his people
and set them free.

Immanuel : **God is with us**

The Word became flesh
and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.

Immanuel : **God is with us**

Through Jesus life, death and resurrection
We see the presence of God.
Through his Spirit and promise to us, we
know in our hearts today”

Immanuel : **God is with us**

Confession

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a
manger: forgive our greed and rejection of
your ways. Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of Love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to
your call: forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

God here with us,
light in the midst of us,
bringing us into his light and life.

Christ is the true bread which has come
down from heaven.

The Cup

We take the cup of the new covenant in his
blood

**God here with us,
light in the midst of us,
bringing us into his light and life.**

Song: On Christmas day

Intercession for the World

**O Wisdom - we remember those in
authority over us**

Come to us, Wisdom from on high,
help us to order our lives with
thoughtfulness.

**O Lord, Adonai - we remember creation
and our neglect of the planet**

Come to us, Lord and leader of your people.
Save us from our sins.

**O Root of Jesse - we remember our
history and ask that you transform our
relationships**

Come to us, Root of Jesse
and be a sign.
Come quickly to save us.

**O Key of David - we remember those
who feel stuck, or imprisoned at home.**

Come, Key of David,
release us from all that imprisons us.

**O King of the nations - we pray for
peace among the nations.**

Come, King of the nations,
Christ, our cornerstone,
come to save your people.

**O Morning Star - may your light bring
hope and reframe our lives**

Come, Morning Star,
shine your righteousness upon us
and lighten our darkness.

**O Emmanuel - may your presence
give us hope**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
our King, our Teacher, our Hope and our
Saviour.

Come and save us.

Song: O come, all ye faithful, joyful and
triumphant!

Blessing