

Worship at Home Christmas Day Celebration



Welcome to this small Christmas Day Celebration act of worship. May you know God with you now and always. Amen.

Let us pray; On this day Lord Jesus we celebrate your birth. We recall how the world changed as the earth received its Creator, King, and met Your love in the face of an infant child.

We come today to share in that same overwhelming joy experienced by Mary and Joseph, by the Shepherds and the Magi on seeing for the first time God with us, our Lord Immanuel.

Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-W4WJGnQoY>

StF N°201

¹ Good news, good news to you we bring,
alleluia!

News of Great joy that angels sing,
alleluia!

*Tender mercy he has shown us,
joy to all the world:
for us God sends his only Son,
alleluia!*

² Let earth's dark shadows fly away,
alleluia!
In Christ has dawned an endless day,
alleluia!

chorus

³ Now God with us on earth resides,
alleluia!
And heaven's door is open wide,
alleluia!

chorus

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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Reading Luke 2:1-20

Reflection

I am led to reflect on three things from the reading we have shared today.

Firstly, how Mary wrapped Jesus in cloths and placed him in a manger.

Secondly how Mary treasured all that took place at the birth of her firstborn son and pondered them in her heart.

And thirdly, how the shepherds responded by glorifying and praising God for all that they'd experienced.

It is such a profound image that Mary creates in wrapping Jesus in cloths at his birth. The Son of God wrapped in cloths is not perhaps how a script writer would have dressed the King of kings, but these cloths point us towards why Jesus was born among us. This divine Royal birth is all part of God's rescue plan and from his birth upon the earth, Jesus faces the place which his love will be displayed for all to see, yet with all humility. Wrapped in cloths at his birth, wrapped in cloths at his death, before bursting forth victorious in his resurrection. Born that people no more may die but find that same new life in Christ.

Within all the drama and splendour around the Nativity, it can sometimes feel rushed as we recall and retell this part of the greatest love story of all time. Yet, here with Mary we something significant. That precious moment a Mother has, having carried through pregnancy and given birth to her child. A moment which can never be lived twice for that one child. That moment when Mary looked into the eyes of Jesus and held him in her arms. Perhaps recalling all that the angel Gabriel had said but flooded with love's pure love. Of course, I am making assumptions, but we do have the Gospel record which tells us that Mary treasured all that took place at the birth of her firstborn son and pondered them in her heart. And it can remind us too that we have treasured memories, of loved ones that held us and we them. Of those once lived moments that gave

memories to treasure forever. Treasured memories are much more than remembering, they evoke emotions and feeling experienced. They become part of who we are and reflected in how they have shaped who we are today. They are kept in our hearts because they are precious. The same is true of our experiences of knowing the love of God through Jesus. Those treasured and precious memories of when we first came to faith and knew Salvation through receiving Christ Jesus in our hearts and lives. Those times throughout our Christian journeying that we have known God in a particular way or known that sense of a deepening in our relationship with our loving God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. By the grace of God, we have responded to God's love given to us in Jesus.

I find the account of the shepherds' response contagious. It inspires the hearts imagination and invites us all to share in responding in the celebrations by glorifying and praising God. I think I would have been in an elated state having seen the heavenly hosts fill the sky, yet they found and experienced much more still. The abundance of God's love in a manger, just had they had been told.

The shepherds experienced the joy of being there to welcome Our Lord and Saviour Jesus. We might not be rushing from field to town like the shepherds did, but we are all included in the events that unfolded that first Christmas day. For God so loved the world, loved you, me us, that He gave us Only Son, who wrapped in cloths, gave his life for you, me, the world.

Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqooC4ZG75Y>

StF N°202

¹ 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.*

² 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:

chorus

³ 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:

chorus

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A Time of Prayer.

Let us pray; This day we give you thanks for coming to us in Jesus. God You do not abandon Your people but sent Your Only begotten Son to rescue us from walking in darkness, to see and follow Your great light.

Spend some time bringing people you know by name and those you know by situation to God.

Lord Jesus, light of the world,
come to your people and set us free in your mercy.

All loving and merciful God, you have come to your people across the ages and we join the line of witlessness to your great and wonderful acts. We thank you for the light of Christ which shines in our darkness, leading us to follow your example in following your way.

We offer you these prayers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the word. **Amen.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAzQIS4-MpY>

StF N°204

¹In 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.

²Heaven cannot hold him,
nor the earth sustain;
heav'n and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
a stable-place sufficed
God, the Lord Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

³Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air –
but his mother only,
in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the Belovèd
with a kiss.

⁴What 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.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894)

A blessing

May he, who by his incarnation
gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
fill our lives with his light and joy and peace;
and the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
remain with us always. **Amen.**

We go forth in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Merry Christmas!



**A little Christmas gift and blessing
from a talented local poet.**



No room for this baby in the inn?

Tiny newborn baby sleeping peaceful in a manger
Came amid great unrest and uncertainty and danger!
Could a King's birth have ever been any stranger?
No room for this baby in the inn

The Word made flesh, God's Son, our Messiah
Announced in the skies by a heavenly choir
To some Shepherd blokes sat around a hillside fire
No room for this baby in the inn

A star caught the eyes of some eastern wise men
They set off with their camels and were led to Bethlehem
Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh were the gifts they gave Him
No room for this baby in the inn

As the baby grew, He began to realise
He saw the world around Him through His Father's eyes
The Son of God and yet some hated and despised
No room for this baby in the inn

This boy's knowledge of the scriptures left the Priests perplexed
His wisdom was beyond what any scholars would expect
He challenged understanding, left the Pharisees quite vexed
No room for this baby in the inn

As the boy became a man, He just oozed pure love
Touching those in society that no one else would
He would wash His people clean through the shedding of His blood
No room for the baby in the inn

When the time came to die, He would hardly speak
Betrayed by a friend through the kissing of His cheek
All powerful, our King and yet so humble and so meek
No room for the baby in the inn

On a cross raised up high He succumbed to death
His body taken down and in a tomb was left
But death couldn't hold Him, couldn't keep His breath
No room for the baby in the inn

Tiny baby in a manger, now the risen Saviour
Through His grace He washes clean all our sin and failure
Follow Him, through His love He died and rose to save you
This Christmas will your heart have room for Him?

by Catherine Clowes – 25th November 2019