

Worship At Home – 20th December 2020

4th Sunday during Advent

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all people shall see it.

Welcome to Worship at home, may each know the love, joy and peace of God as we worship.

Let us pray;

God of all glory,

You spoke and brought the universe into existence. Across the generation's witnesses have been raised up to Your greatness and love.

We come with our hearts full of adoration and praise, offering all that we are in this moment to worship and serve you.

*Grant that by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit we may be found seeking after you and living to bring glory, honour and praise to your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Read aloud or quietly this Advent verse below as we to seek God to led us in this worship time.

StF N°165 Advent 4

Words © Mark Earey

⁴ Mary's gift, beyond all telling,
was to give Christ room.
She gave God a human dwelling
in a mother's womb.
Who could guess the final story?
- cross and glory;
empty tomb!

Prayer of confession

*Let us confess our sins to God, trusting in his mercy and forgiveness. **Silence***

'I am making all things new' says the Lord.

This is Christ's gracious word:

'Your sins are forgiven.'

Amen. Thanks be to God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S63rjDtYRYg>

StF N°178 – Long ago, prophets knew

¹ Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!

Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!

When he comes,

When he comes,

Who will make him welcome?

² God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
he will come, as a man,
born himself of women,
God divinely human:

chorus

³ Mary, hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed,
in her womb, God is laid;
till the time expected,
nurtured and protected:

chorus

⁴ Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!

Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!

Jesus comes!

Jesus comes!

We will make him welcome!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)
Words © 1971, Stainer & Bell Ltd

Reading: Luke 1:26-38

'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' These words spoken in response to God having received the message from angel Gabriel that she was to conceive Jesus, the Son of the Most High moves me everytime I hear them.

I am moved by the beauty displayed in the trust shown by Mary, through her willingness to receive the Word of God made flesh.

I am moved by the obedience to accept the path that is laid out before her, again trusting God in the unknown destinations it will lead.

I am moved by the acknowledgement of whom Mary belongs as the servant of the Lord. Wholly placing herself dependant upon God.

There is a popular Christian song written by Mark Lowry in 1984, entitled 'Mary, Did You Know?'. It captivates the seekers heartfelt questions that one might have for Mary. In fact, Mark Lowry wrote the lyrics having spent time considering the questions you might have asked Mary if you had gone out for a coffee together.

What might your question be for Mary?

In the song it unpacks the miracles that Jesus performed following on from His divine miraculous birth being placed in a manger. Within the lyrics it asks Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? It is a beautiful song and yet how might Mary answer. I am not sure, but what I am sure of is that Mary said yes to God.

'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word'. Mary didn't answer God having compartmentalized her life. Instead, the opposite, with her words spoken from her whole self. Trusting God, being obedient in accepting God shaping her life which she gives freely to serving God.

I am moved by Mary's words. Moved in such a way that inspires me to emulate that same way of trusting God, of being obedient in accepting my own God shaped life and saying yes serving God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Perhaps spend some time reading and rereading through the passage again during these next days as we get ever closer to Christmas day. How might God be moving you? And how will you respond?

Amen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBGx_4PxO3g
StF N°169 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

¹ Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

² Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

³ Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

⁴ By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)



Prayers of thanksgiving

Let us offer our prayers of thanksgiving...

*...bring to God your thanksgiving for all things
great and small.*

*...And now we give you thanks
because in Christ's coming among us
the day of deliverance has dawned,
and through him you will make all things new.*

Amen.

Prayers for others ...*let us pray,*

We pray for the lonely. Lord we hold all those young or old who are feeling lonely or are feeling anxious about spending Christmas alone. We ask You to prompt neighbours to be aware of each other with considerate care and love. May the lonely know your comfort and joy.

We pray for those who are bereaved and for whom Christmas carries with it a sense of lost and deep sadness. We pray that you would draw near by Your Spirit and hold each person in Your loving embrace. May those bereaved know your comfort and joy.

We pray for those struggling because of financial hardship and especially with the unhelpful projection of consumerism at Christmas. We pray that the true reason of Christmas would be known and enrich the lives of all. May those struggling in anyway know your comfort and joy.

We pray for people who are homeless, both surviving on the streets and in refugee camps. We pray that aid and provision from charities would find those vulnerable in this way, and shelter given. May the homeless know your comfort and joy.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught his disciples, 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.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKlc8JvxGbU>
StF N°187 The Angel Gabriel from heaven came

¹ The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady,'
Gloria!

² 'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady,'
Gloria!

³ Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name:'
most highly favoured lady,'
Gloria!

⁴ Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever
say,
'Most highly favoured lady,'
Gloria!

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)



A Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine on us and scatter the darkness from before us;
and the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be ours, now and always. **Amen.**

The day of the Lord is surely coming.
Be faithful in worship,
unwavering in hope,
fervent in the work of God's kingdom
and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



Afterglow... please find below some additional material to aid quiet times and devotions.

HERE are the lyrics of the song referenced in today's reflection. What questions would you ask Mary?

Mary, Did You Know?

Mary did you know that your baby boy would
one day walk on water?
Mary did you know that your baby boy would
save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to
make you new?
This child that you've delivered,
will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy would
give sight to a blind man?
Mary did you know that your baby boy would
calm a storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked
where angels trod?
And when your kiss your little baby, you have
kissed the face of God.

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead
will live again.
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the
praises of the lamb.

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of
all creation?
Mary did you know that your baby boy would
one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's
perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding
is the great I – AM.

Songwriters: Greene Lee Rufus, Lowry Mark Alan

A poem.

I recognise that Christmas time can prove extra difficult for some as it draws to the surface the sadness carried each day for loved ones who we miss dearly. The poem below is written by Revd. Gareth Baron and offered to aid a time of remembering our loved ones. It is entitled Candlelight and you may want to light a candle as a focus point.

Candlelight

Candlelight, small and vulnerable breaks into the darkness of the night.
Small the flame, it burns with hope, drawing courage from within.

Candlelight, expanding it enlightens memories of the warmth of love shared and love treasured in the heart.

Small the flame, it burns with joy, drawing strength from within.

Candlelight, glowing with brightness, a glimpse of the glory known by loved ones in Your eternal embrace.

Small the flame, it burns with love, drawing comfort from within.

Candlelight, small the flame, ignites with thanksgiving and floods with love for those who have given light into our lives.

And now with Our God, loves pure light,
may each moment for eternity,
we,
like them,
be found.

A circular meditation prayer

Christ by Your light, lead me to the Father,
Father, hold me in Your Spirit's embrace,
Holy Spirit inspire me to shine like Christ.