



'Worship at home' Christmas Day 2020



We come to worship today with a sense of wonder and hope.

Light your candle or Advent wreath

as you celebrate the coming of the Christ-Child:

the light of the world has come among us as a baby.

This is the time for which we have been waiting and preparing:
the time when God's promises are fulfilled; in the birth of a child,
wrapped in swaddling cloth and laid in a manger:

a child who brings the promise of hope, of new beginnings -
that justice and peace will reign.

We are at the great turning point of time! **Christmas is here!**

Isaiah 9: selected verses

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them. You have given them great joy, Lord; you have made them happy. A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called,

"Wonderful Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," "Prince of Peace." His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's successor, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time.

Good News Bible



Reflect on your family traditions for Christmas.

**Are these usually the same each year?
Have they changed for this Christmas?**

Covid has changed many things for us this year, and for many of us, Christmas is not quite the same. You may have been unable to travel, or have family to stay. You may be in an area where you are asked to stay at home, unable even to gather for Christmas

worship. Many of us have been impacted on physically, financially, socially, spiritually or emotionally by the pandemic and its effects. Covid19 has changed the ways we do things.

Reflect on other events in your life that have changed things for you.

Perhaps your marriage, the birth of a child or grandchild, or when you retired. Or it could be a holiday, a book, or a chance conversation that completely turned your life upside down. Just as we can imagine that the birth of Jesus completely changed life for Mary and Joseph!



Luke 2: 1-16

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a

manger - there was no room for them to stay in the inn. There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: 2

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go

to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Good News Bible

The coming of Jesus did not only change life for Mary and Joseph... the coming of Jesus had cosmic implications for the whole world.



*The stillness of anticipation
cradles tiny Bethlehem,
silent now in preparation for the miracle of birth.
All creation, hushed, expectant, waits a baby's cry:
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

*Be silent, earth, before the mystery of the long-awaited birth.
All the hopes of human history –
longings, yearnings, dreams, desires -
gathered in a single moment, focussed in a child:
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

*A nascent star, in celebration, blazes over Bethlehem;
crucible of all creation, where the human and divine
are refined in simple beauty in a new-born child:
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

*Words Neil Quintrell © Pilgrim Publishing
Music: © Douglas Simper*

**How does the coming of Jesus Christ
make a difference to your life?**

**How does the coming of Jesus Christ
bring hope to our world?**

This Christmas we find ourselves in uncertain times, as we consider the events of the year that has been and wonder about the year that is to unfold ahead of us. It seems that the world is changing; that we might shed some of our past, and on the 3

brink of something new. Perhaps we are experiencing some of that first Christmas, when a tiny babe was born who was to change everything. Maybe this Christmas will also become a turning point of time...

Prayer

God of love, you come among us,
revealed in us as a babe at Christmas.
In you we find hope, in our difficult times.
In you we find peace, amidst a world in conflict.
In you we find joy, sneaking in
sometimes when we least expect.
In you we find love that changes us,
and has the potential to change our world.
In you we find forgiveness,
and the opportunity for a new start.
Whatever 2020 has held for us,
whatever this Christmas brings,
whatever lies ahead in the new year,
we are assured of your presence with us,
and your love to hold us.



- Think of those who could find Christmas difficult this year. This might include those whose Christmas plans have changed, who are unable to get together with family, or who have been asked to stay at home. There are many who feel isolated and alone at Christmas, even without Covid restrictions.
- Name them before God, and pray that they will know God's presence and peace.
- Phone or message someone you think might be struggling this Christmas with the following blessing:
“May the hope of Christ be with you this Christmas.”

Closing *Adapted fr Silvia Purdie <https://www.conversations.net.nz/christmas.html>*

* May the blessing of God shine in you, the life of God that is the light of the world. * May the grace and truth of Jesus Christ grow in you. * May the joy of God be within you and uplift you. * May the Spirit of God be at home in your heart. * May the glory of God surround you, this Christmas time and always. Amen. 4