



'Worship at home' Christmas Day 2024

Today we celebrate the coming of the Christ-Child: the light of the world has come among us.

**Christ HAS come
Christ IS with us
Christ WILL come again**



Opening

How do we know Christ in changing times?

***The Word became a human being
and, full of grace and truth, lived among us.
We saw his glory, the glory which
he received as the Father's only Son.***

How do we know Christ this Christmas?

***We can rejoice in the coming
of Christ Jesus,
who renews and restores us,
bringing light to the world,
and light to our lives.***

Let us worship the One who leads us on:
in the promise of the Spirit of Christ.



The Christmas story is one of hope, mystery, anticipation and preparation as we celebrate the Spirit of God breaking into our lives in ways we might least expect.

John 1: selected verses

In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. The light shines in the darkness,

and the darkness has never put it out. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.

Good News Bible



***Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive its king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing.***

Isaac Watts 1674–1748 alt. based on Psalm 98

First Coming

God did not wait 'til the world was ready,
'til...the nations were at peace.

God came when the heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

God did not wait for the perfect time.
God came when the need was deep and great.
God dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine. God did not wait...

'til hearts were pure: In joy God came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours of anguished shame God came,
and God's light would not go out.

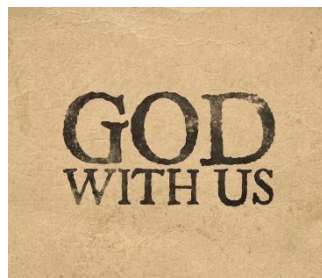
God came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait 'til the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Madeleine L'Engle

The Ordering of Love: The New and Collected Poems of Madeleine L'Engle

The coming of Jesus had been long
foretold by ancient Jewish prophets. To
a world of struggle and injustice, to a
world where people fight, leaders take
advantage and children die before their
time, God is revealed in Jesus. God will
not forsake our world, but is with us in
the struggle and injustice and suffering.



In our uncertain and changing times, what difference does the coming of Christ make? Once we have eaten the Christmas pudding, packed away the decorations, and played with our new toys...what difference will the coming of this child make to us? While sickness, death, unfairness, suffering continue, has Christ really come?

**Reflect on the difference that
Christmas makes...**

to the world?

to your life?

Emmanuel
GOD WITH US



Christ HAS come. If we truly live like we are fully loved, completely forgiven, empowered to love and forgive others, how might that change us? Our responses? Our relationships?

Christ IS with us, and continues to be present through the Holy Spirit. Christmas is not simply about recalling and celebrating the birth of Christ: Christmas is when the birth of Christ takes place *within us*.

Christ WILL come again. We look forward to a time when there will be no more struggle and injustice and suffering, and God's kingdom of love and grace will reign, once and for all. In the meantime, we choose to live out God's kingdom in our world today.

Christmas changes us, and when we change our responses, the world around us can change. THAT is how Christmas can make a difference.

***O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
their great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel.***



Phillips Brooks 1835-93 alt
Adaptation and arrangement from the English Hymnal
by permission Oxford University Press

Prayer

Today, we celebrate your coming, Jesus
into our world
into our experience
into our struggle
into our flesh
but...



we need this to be not just something that happened long ago
but that keeps happening now

So, come again, we pray
into every corridor where power struggles escalate
into every office where profit overshadows responsibility
into every room where relationships, minds and bodies
break down
into every street where need is the only constant
into every terrain where human ignorance or sin
has left a trail of decay and death.

And bring your life-giving love and your light-shedding justice
Amen

<https://sacredise.com/come-again/>

Closing

Go to tell the good news of God's love
given to the world
in Jesus Christ.

Go to live the story
to tell of the Hope
that is being born among us this Christmas
to share the Love of the season with the world
to be agents of Peace in times of trouble
to sing songs of deep and abiding Joy.

As you go, may God go with you
challenging you to respond to God's Call
in ways that are new,
unexpected and a little unsettling.

Go in peace and joy. Amen



adapted from **Worship Offerings**
<http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>