



# **‘Worship at home’ Sunday December 29<sup>th</sup> 2024**



After the celebration of Christ’s birth at Christmas, we remember that Christ’s presence remains with us in our world, and we await his coming again, in the fullness of time, to make all things new.

## **Opening**

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

The celebration of Christmas is over. Is your house full of dirty dishes and discarded packaging? Does your fridge overflow with leftover turkey and pudding? It is time for Christmas decorations to be packed away, and boxing day sales to begin. Although, after the flurry of Christmas, many of us take time to sit quietly and relax.

However, the story of Christmas is not over. The baby in the manger marks not the end of the story, but the promise of something new. That baby grows to a boy, and then a man. He matures in faith, walking in God’s path. He is affirmed as God’s beloved son, baptised in the power of the Holy Spirit. He teaches and heals and lives God’s love, offering grace and a new way of being. Following God’s ways, even to death, in his resurrection he is revealed as the Messiah, bringing freedom and salvation to us, and the whole of creation.

Christmas is not over, it is just beginning! Soon we will move into the season of Epiphany, a time when we celebrate how God is revealed to us, sometimes in new and surprising ways.



## Where did you see glimpses of God revealed in your Christmas celebration this year?

God of stable, stars and surprises,  
of light and hope and new life:  
open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;  
forgive our obsession with property and possessions;  
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.  
Open us to your grace,  
that we might hear again the song of the angels,  
and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.

~ from Christmas Carol Service, <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Chaplaincy/Events/2008-10/CarolService2009/OrderOfService2009.pdf>

We can imagine Mary, cradling her infant son, wondering how his life will unfold. The celebration of Christmas reminds us of the reality of God revealed as human, while yet anticipating the fullness of Christ's divinity.

The gospel of Luke tells the only story of Jesus as a child. We are given a glimpse into the childhood of Jesus – already growing in faith and seeking to learn of God's ways.

### **Luke 2:41-52**

*Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; they thought that he was with the group, so they travelled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to*

*Jerusalem looking for him. On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers.*

*His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you." He answered them, "Why did you have to look for*

*me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand his answer. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was*

*obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people.*

*Good News Bible*

We hear that Jesus grew in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people. A life of faith is one of continual exploration and growth, a process of revelation as we learn more of God, ourselves, and our world. Like Jesus, we grow as we seek opportunities to ask questions and explore our faith, and we learn from the wisdom of those around us.



**How do you learn and grow in your faith?**

**Do you intentionally seek opportunities to do so?**

**How might you make time to listen to God  
and to be open to the glimpses of God in your life?**

Going into the new year, Paul's letter to the Colossians gives insight into how we are called to live, as we seek to grow in faith and become more like Christ.

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

*You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you*

*has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the*

*decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.*

*Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct one another with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and*

*sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.*

*Good News Bible*

## **Prayer**

Holy and gracious God, we are your people, and we live in your love.

Clothe us with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Give us tolerance, that we might show graciousness and forgiveness to others.

Teach us to love as Christ loved, as we seek to live following his way of love.

Guide us in your way of peace, that we might bring peace to those around us.

Grow us in faith, that everything we do and say might be in the name of Christ. Amen



## **Closing**

Go now, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;

clothe yourselves with love; forgive one another,

and do everything you do

in the name of Christ, giving thanks to God.

And may God bless you and keep you in love;

May Christ Jesus send his peace to rule in your hearts;

and may the Holy Spirit raise you to maturity

in wisdom, in compassion and in love.

