

## OPENING PRAYER

On this joyous day, we celebrate God becoming man in the form of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He was born into a vulnerable situation in the humble surroundings of a workaday stable, yet He brings a sure and certain hope, and eternal life to all who follow Him. Open our ears to hear Your truth brought to us in word and song.  
In Jesus precious name, Amen.

## MAIN INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Father God, thank You for all that You give us, and for all that we are. We thank You for the freedom we have to worship You in spirit and truth. We thank You for the comfort and hope You have offered us in Your precious Son, Jesus Christ.

We are truly sorry for all our sins, and we bring those things that are troubling us to You in a moment of silence.....  
We ask for Your forgiveness, for Your nature is always to have mercy.

As we celebrate the joyous birth of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, let us pray for the people of this world who are in need this day.

Child of Bethlehem, smile on those who will not enjoy Christmas this season, for whom life is a struggle for survival as a result of poverty, famine, disease, war, or the greed of others. And we think of all those struggling with disappointment and isolation through recent, necessary responses to this fast-moving virus.

The internet **can** be a double edged sword sometimes, but we can give thanks for the opportunities it gives .... to connect. Skyping over the turkey or nut roast. Virtual crackers. Showing off presents. Smiles and virtual hugs. Help us to remember those for whom separation is all too familiar, especially at this time of the year. We pray, too, for those striving to rebuild their lives after the devastation of natural disasters, conflict and bereavement. Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Child of Bethlehem, smile on businesses everywhere, especially locally - and we pray for their continued viability, and for people's livelihoods to be protected. Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Child of Bethlehem, smile on all those charged with the responsibility of government, both here in Britain and all over the world, that they might rule in peace, justice and mercy, and their people may honour one another and seek the common good. Guide the leaders in this country and Europe-wide in the

vital negotiations around the fast-approaching Brexit deadline. And guide leaders worldwide in steering their countries safely through the choppy waters of this pandemic.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Child of Bethlehem, smile on the church all over this world: Holy Spirit guide us, and grant that we may always pursue truth, unity, peace and righteousness. We pray especially for the church in Britain, tested by difficult questions and challenged by the threat of disunity, especially in these strange and divisive times. We pray for the **work** of the church here, and for our own ministries as we walk on in Your light.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Child of Bethlehem, smile on all who are troubled, anxious or sick in mind, body or spirit and for those who love and care for them. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the comfort and joy of your salvation. We think especially of Roy Cooper, Terry and Joyce Fuller and Raymond Chudley. And we remember others known to us who are in need of our prayers, and name them in a moment of silence

..... Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which **no** darkness can quench. We remember before God, in a moment of silence, those who have died.....

And we light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, eternally shining and bringing hope. He turns our darkness into light:

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. And gathering our prayers into one, let us, with confidence, say the Lord's Prayer together:

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