



Heacham Parish Church



Please note: There is a Morning Worship service in church today at 9.30am. For details of restrictions see the Notices section of this service-sheet.

Sunday Service 20th December 2020

Thank you to Hilary and Lesley for that introductory medley of Christmas music played on two recorders.

Welcome in the name of Christ.

God's grace, mercy, and peace be with you;

and also with you.

As we gather here in church, and others in their homes, we meet in the presence of God; the God who is the same, today, yesterday, and tomorrow; the God who is with us today, during this pandemic, this Advent and always; the God who loves us.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ.

More and more candles, more and more light,
as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Psalm 136:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

His love endures forever."

We light the candles of hope and peace and joy and love.

Advent Song: **Longing for light, we wait in darkness**

played & sung by Hilary, Richard G, Sue, Richard C, Lynda
Terry, Karen, Colin, and Rosie.

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your Holy people, light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Christ, be our light!

God shows His love for us in that, while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for Him by confessing our sins in
penitence and faith.

Prayer of Confession:

We say together – **My God, for love of you
I desire to hate and forsake all sins
by which I have ever displeased you;
and I resolve, by the help of your grace,
to commit them no more;
and to avoid all opportunities of sin.
Help me to do this,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

Song: **The Angel Gabriel**

played & sung by Hilary, Lesley, Richard C, Karen, Terry
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!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy Son shall be Emanuel, by seers foretold;
Most highly favoured lady". Gloria!

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!

Of her, Emanuel, 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!

Bible Reading: **Luke 1: 26-38** read by Lynn Shannon

***A Reflection,* from Veronica**

As I read this well-known Bible reading this week - one that I have always loved and, as I have been reflecting on 2020 as it draws to its end; and, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, I have been encouraged by how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things with love.

Our world, country, and village community this year has seen many, many ordinary people doing extraordinary things; it has been wonderful to see in the midst of such sadness and panic.

Nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and others have worked their socks off to care for those who are ill - ordinary people 'just doing their job' yet doing extraordinary things showing love for others.

Supermarket shelf-fillers and workers, delivery drivers, toilet roll manufacturers, and others have worked to ensure that we have what we need - ordinary people doing their job, in extraordinary ways, with love.

Carers, cleaners, refuse collectors, mechanics, wi-fi and phone engineers have worked to ensure that we are kept safe and cared for - again ordinary people doing their job, in extraordinary ways with love.

Here in Heacham we have seen many of us ordinary people caring for our neighbours and village community with love – and making an extraordinary difference.

I believe that in our church and community God has called a bunch of ordinary people (you and me) to be here in this place at this time, to do what he called us to do with love, to do extraordinary things. Look at the gifts and talents that have emerged during this year - not least to enable our worship to continue online; over 70 people have contributed to our online worship.

Ordinary people, used by God, to do extraordinary things at this time when all our lives were interrupted by Covid-19.

Mary was an ordinary teenage girl whose life was interrupted when an angel told her that God had something extraordinary for her to do: "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus". Through Mary's "yes" the world was changed forever. She did not know what the future held when she responded to God's call: "I am the Lord's servant; may your word be fulfilled".

An ordinary girl, through love, responded to God's call and did something quite extraordinary.

We are in such a time of uncertainty at the moment, none of us know what the future holds, we cannot be sure that our plans for tomorrow will happen, let alone 2021. But we can be sure that God will call us, ordinary people, to respond with love to His call and just maybe He will use us to do extraordinary things for Him.

Can we be like the teenage Mary and say to God, when He calls: "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled"?

Song: **Let there be love shared among us**
sung & played by Rosie and Colin

Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love in our eyes,
May now Your love sweep this nation.
Cause us, oh Lord, to arise,
Give us a fresh understanding
Of brotherly love that is real.
Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love.

Prayers of Intercession: led by Jennifer Aickin

The psalmist said: "Your ways, O God, are holy. What God is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles." (Psalm 77).

So, we can come with our asking prayers, confident that God will hear us, will answer; assured that He has the power to change people & circumstances as He knows best for us.

God of the universe we dare to approach You because You invite us, because You love us and because we need You in our lives. Help us as we pray to be genuine in wanting Your will to be done, not ours.

We pray for the leaders of the nations that they will dedicate themselves to the benefit of their people. Give them wisdom, strength, and courage to oppose evil and harm. At this time, we remember especially those countries who are in conflict - many of whose people are fleeing their homes and country; and becoming refugees. Please give people in the richer countries compassion, generosity, & understanding for their distressed brothers and sisters.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to You the problem of the Covid-19 pandemic asking that good sense will prevail over the Christmas break to prevent another huge surge of cases. We thank You for the scientists all over the world who have worked so hard to develop effective, safe vaccines and we pray for the enormous task of vaccinating millions of people. Thank You for our NHS – for all the staff who have worked so hard and long to care for the sick. We ask for Your comfort and presence with those who have lost family members and friends to the illness. Please be with the staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at our local surgeries, and the pharmacy as they work so hard to do things safely. We pray for protection for them and for carers in residential homes, and those who look after people living in their own homes. Thank You for the helpfulness of people in our village – for the spirit of togetherness which has grown as we cope with the pandemic. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have suffered bereavement recently and for people who are ill, depressed, lonely, or in financial difficulties. In a moment of silence we name before You those known to us. (A silence is held)
Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, we pray for the children and young people of our village; for their parents, carers, and teachers. Keep them safe. The children's education has been different and disrupted during the lockdowns and we pray that they will be able to catch-up on what has been missed.
Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Christmas is very near. We cannot have the same Christmas as in preceding years; and we pray that the arrangements to have the Village Carol Service online will enable even more of us to worship & celebrate the birth of Christ than could have fitted into the church building.

We close with a Celtic prayer for Christmas preparation -
Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness,
Send Your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.
We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear Your
voice each day.
We who are anxious over many things look forward to Your
coming among us.

Accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son our Saviour.
Amen.

We pray together the Lord's Prayer,
led by Lesley Tomlinson

Closing Prayer

In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust Your love,
to serve Your purpose,
and to praise Your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

To a troubled world **peace from Christ.**
To a searching world **love from Christ.**
To a waiting world **hope from Christ.**

You are called and loved by God the Father
and kept safe by Jesus Christ.
Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance,
from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We close with a Christmas medley from Hilary and Lesley

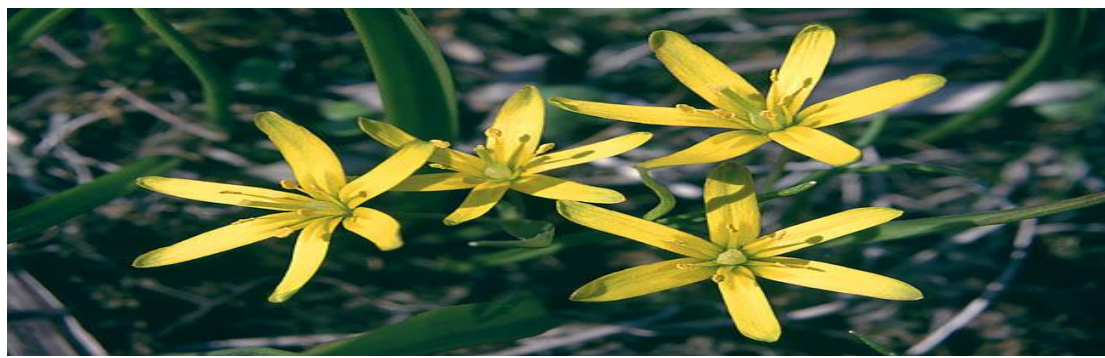
Church Contact:

Rev. Veronica Wilson tel. 01485 570697

or email: heacham.vicar@gmail.com

Church Office tel. 01485 572539 (answerphone)

or email: heacham.church@gmail.com



Notices

In church services – Covid-19 restrictions

Two-metre distancing, hand-sanitising on entry and exit, one-way system, face coverings, contact details for track and trace. Also, as we are in Tier2, worshippers should not mix with anyone not in their own household or 'support bubble'. This is hard because, as a church family, we like to chat and help each other. To minimise the risk of spreading the virus we can only do this outside; socially distanced and applying the 'rule of six'.

Thank you to Terry Shailes who, after several years of quiet, faithful service as the Church Verger, has decided to retire. May he, in God's grace, enjoy many years of happy retirement.

Come and join Veronica for **virtual Church, Coffee and Chat - on Sunday at 11am** - this is the Zoom link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09> Meeting ID: 996 093

6343 Passcode: 150936

Contact Veronica at heacham.vicar@gmail.com to invite you.

Heacham Village Carol Service *premiers at 4pm today.*

Why not sit with a cuppa, or glass of mulled wine, and a mince pie – we can all watch together, yet apart. There are many familiar faces and places from around the village; with carols and Christmas readings.. and plenty of stars (of various sorts!).

Morning Prayer Monday-Thursday this week at 9am via Zoom. Hosted, this week, by Veronica every day.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09>

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Podcast 'Sunday Hope'

The Diocese of Norwich has a weekly audio podcast called 'Sunday Hope'.

It is available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Overcast](#), and more.

The podcast can also be listened to from any landline telephone: call **01603 537577** (local rate) to hear the latest edition.

Daily Hope offers music, prayers, and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England; at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set-up particularly to help those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS **2020**



LIGHT UP HEACHAM WITH STARS

(extract from the Village News)

"After last year's great angel festival, we would like to encourage everyone to make and/or display stars in your windows, on your fences, in your trees, in your garden, wherever you can – for all to see. **Lighting up Heacham with stars** to bring some joy and light in this dark time, so we can walk around the village spotting stars from mid-December onwards. In the Christmas story it was the star that the wise men followed to find Jesus ...maybe you could follow the stars around the village and see where you can find Jesus?"

The church is steadily being decorated with stars (including those from the two village schools). If you want to make/lend a star for church do let Liz know (tel.571662). Do put stars in your windows, etc. and, if space, a nativity scene. Ring the Office (tel.572539) if you would like a silhouette scene or one to colour.

Prayer and Remembering

The church building is open on **Wednesdays from 10-12 and Saturdays from 2-4** for private prayer and reflection. You can light a candle, sit and pray in the quiet, and enjoy the peace of the church building. There is a Christmas tree in church on which you can hang a Star with a prayer, or the name of someone you wish to remember.

There is also, in the church porch, a festive display and prayer board; so even when the church is not open, you can come into the porch to write a prayer or remember someone.

Churchyard

The churchyard is always open for you to walk in. A nativity scene is on display...and **WOW!** a star on the top of the tower!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES – Reminder –
Carol Service – see page 9 above for details.

Christmas Eve - Christingle service - online only; available on the Church youtube channel.

Christmas Eve - Midnight Holy Communion – in church only, **11.30pm**. You need to book a place if you want to come; contact the Church Office tel.01485 572539 (answerphone) or email heacham.church@gmail.com. We need to know how many places, names, and contact telephone numbers.

Christmas Day - Holy Communion – in church, **at 10am**; and also online. You need to book a place if you want to come to church; contact the Church Office tel.01485 572539 (answerphone) or email heacham.church@gmail.com. We need to know how many places, names, and contact telephone numbers.

Advent and Christmas ideas & resources from the Diocese - Reflections for Advent and Christmas, by Susanna Gunner, available at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/resource/advent-reflections/>

If you would like paper copies of these please leave a message on our Church Office answerphone: 01485 572539.

Digital Advent Calendar - Twenty-six varied contributors from across our Diocese are offering us something to ponder each day, plus an image, a poem or music. Each door reveals something rich to turn over prayerfully throughout the day. Sign up to have each day's offering sent to your email inbox <http://eepurl.com/hiEuQv> You can also access the calendar via all the Diocesan social media channels.

Do sign up - No chocolates, of course, but each day is well worth opening - very unusual people and scenes.

As we ponder what a strange year this has been
and concern ourselves with celebrating the birth of our Saviour
in a safe way.....

let us consider the beautiful, and aptly named flower,

Star of Bethlehem

