



Heacham Parish Church



Christmas Day - 25th December 2020

*Alison plays 'Christians Awake'
(tune Yorkshire by John Wainwright) arr. by Malcolm Archer*

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God on this Christmas Day.

For unto us a child is born;
Unto us a Son is given

This is the day that the Lord has made;
Let us be glad and rejoice

LIGHTING OF THE FINAL ADVENT CANDLE
Christmas Day: Light

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.

Today we remember that Jesus, the Light of the World, has come. John 8:12 Jesus said: "I am the light of the world".

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

Jesus Christ is the light of the world;

Jesus is our Way.

With Jesus even dark places are light;

Jesus is the Truth.

In Jesus we shall live for ever;

Jesus is our Life.

Advent Song: Longing for light, we wait in darkness

played and sung by Hilary, Richard G, Sue, Lynda,
Richard C, 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! ...

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.
Christ, be our light! ...

Prayers of Confession:

As we kneel, with the shepherds, before the new-born
Christ-Child we open our hearts in penitence and faith.

God our Father, You sent Your son full of grace and truth;
forgive our failure to receive Him.
Lord, have mercy; **Lord, have mercy**

Jesus, our Saviour, You were born in poverty and laid in a
manger; forgive our greed and rejection of Your ways.
Christ, have mercy; **Christ, have mercy**

Spirit of love, Your servant Mary responded to Your call;
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy; **Lord, have mercy**

May God, who loved the world so much that he sent His only
Son to be our Saviour, forgive us our sins and make us holy to
serve Him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**



Carol: **O come, all ye faithful**

sung & played by Adrian, June, Val, Sue, Judith & Christina

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him

Born the King of Angels.

O come, let us adore Him (x3)

Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light

Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb

Very God

Begotten, not created

O come, let us adore Him (x3)

Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God;

All glory in the highest

O come, let us adore Him (x3)

Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning

Jesus, to Thee be glory given

Word of the Father

Now in flesh appearing

O come, let us adore Him (x3)

Christ the Lord

Bible Reading: **John 1: 1-14** read by Jenny Ives

A Refection, by Penny Sutton

The Gift of Christmas

John does not mention angels nor shepherds. Stars and Magi, or stables, do not figure in this gospel, so why are we using this reading on Christmas Day? Because it neatly encapsulates the meaning of the Christmas story without getting side-tracked into the details of the birth of Jesus. John begins by repeating the opening line of the entire body of scripture because, like the author of Genesis, John is talking about creation. Not this time the creation of the world, but God's new creation in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh. How is Jesus the Word of God? In the sense that as our words tell others how we are feeling or thinking so Jesus the Word reveals to humanity the feelings and thoughts of God. Here John has written a witness statement to the Light and Life of the living Word of God.

What does this say?

John tells how the eternal Word existed before the creation of the world. 'The beginning' refers to the beginning of creation because, with God, there is no beginning nor ending, He is eternal.

How the Word was with God, and was God. The world was created through Jesus the Word who is not a created being. That creation is complete.

How, in His time, God sent His eternal Word to earth to take on human flesh and begin a new creation. Jesus fully displayed human emotions and physical needs. He was not an abstract philosophical concept; He was a real person. Here was a new revelation of God's glory by His person, words, and works.

Ancient Israel had known God's glory as the shining presence which inhabited the temple. That had departed but the glory of the new covenant in Jesus Christ was an increasing glory.

Why did God do this?

Because the world has fallen into darkness and needs light. Light is one of four essentials for human life to exist. The first creation began "Let there be light". The new creation begins with Jesus 'Light of the World' bringing light to the hearts of believers.

John uses the future perfect tense to underline how that light of Christ shines on in the darkness of today; by which it has not been overcome. Thus, the coming of Jesus Christ was the dawning of a new day for sinful humanity.

Who does this affect?

All humanity. A new creation is a new possibility for all regardless of age, colour, or nationality. All who recognise and receive Jesus are invited to become God's own children. Set free from the limitations of inheritance, of desire, and subservience to others; we are restored to God's intention at the first creation, that we might become His children.

Where and when will this happen?

God comes to earth, not only in a manger long ago, but here today. As an apostle tasked with preaching the gospel, John is infinitely more interested in our birth as 'children of God' than in the details of the historic birth of Jesus. Thus, Christmas is the day we celebrate our birth as 'children of God'. Yes, made possible by that baby in the manger but look beyond - to the promises God has kept and the beginning of the restoration of all creation. Because Jesus took on human flesh, we are granted the chance to know God.

This is the gift of Christmas – a new opportunity through God, in Christ. Today we have an opportunity to contemplate that

profound mystery of the incarnation, which is the doctrine at the heart of Christmas; to which John gives witness.

Above all else today, know that Jesus Christ came to this earth for you and for all humanity; that we might have life, and have it abundantly. **Amen**

The Creed:

Let us declare our faith in God:

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with His love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

**We believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession: led by Sue Spencer

Lord of All as we come to you this morning, to worship and praise you, we ask that you will help us to remember what is the true meaning of Christmas. Forgive us if we have lost sight of what Christmas truly means. Forgive us if we have become over familiar with its simple, yet wonderful, message. Forgive us if we have failed to make room for Christ in our Christmas celebrations. Help us to remember that we have come to

celebrate the birth of your Son; who you sent to us so that we might be forgiven of our sins.

Remember that we have come to worship him as joyfully and reverently as the shepherds and wise men of long ago; to welcome and follow Him as faithfully as those who left everything to be His disciples.

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

Lord of all we pray for families around the world, for families in our community, for our own families, and for families who are separated this Christmas morning due to Covid-19. We thank you for the technology that we have, which has enabled us to keep in touch with family and friends.

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

Lord, we bring to you now the sick and suffering of our world, all those wrestling with illness in body, mind, or spirit.

Especially, at this time of Covid-19, we pray for the many people who have contracted the virus in this country and around the world. Bring comfort and peace to those who are worried, fearful, and uncertain as the virus spreads.

We give thanks for all medical staff who work to bring healing to the sick; and we ask that you give them your support and strength. We thank you for the scientists who have worked tirelessly to find a vaccine. We remember those who have died, be it recently or sometime ago; we ask that you will bring comfort to the bereaved at this time of Christmas.

Let us keep silence for a few moments while we remember them.

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

Lord, once more we have the opportunity to meet with you round your table. Lord, we know that your son Jesus Christ is here with us, welcoming us as His people, greeting us as His friends as we come together this Christmas Morning; offering us lasting nourishment, not just for our bodies but for our souls as well. We are reminded of how much You love us and of the sacrifice that Your Son made so that we could worship You freely. We thank You for all you have done and all You have given us; so help us in return to give our all to You, in the name of Christ.

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

Lord of All, we ask that you will come again to your world this Christmas time through your word, your spirit, your people, and the living presence of your Son, so that your will be done. We ask that you will accept our praise, receive our thanksgiving, bless our hearts, and may the wonder of the Gospel come alive in our hearts this day and always.

Merciful Father accept our prayers; for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

We pray together the Lord's Prayer, led by Bernard Birch



Carol: **Once in royal David's city**

played and sung by Hilary, Lesley, Sue, Richard C, Judith,
and Lynda

Once in Royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all His wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms He lay.
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For he is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above,

And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you, and those you love, now and always. **Amen**

Dismissal:

Go in peace.
Proclaim the Word made flesh.
Glory, thanks, and praise to God. Amen

Alison plays In Dulci Jubilo'
(chorale tune by J S Bach) arranged by Friedrich Zachau

