



Heacham Parish Church

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2021

24th December – Christingle

25th December – Holy Communion

26th December – Morning Service

2nd January – Morning Service



Heacham Parish Church

Christingle - 24th December 2021

Welcome to this Christingle service in which we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the light of the world.

We pray together:

Light of the world, shine in this place as we gather together so that we may take your light into all the world, reflecting your glory and sharing your love. **Amen.**

Light of the world

Shine in this place.

Light of the world

Shine in our hearts.

Light of the world

Shine in our lives.

Light of the world

Shine in all the world.

Jesus is the light of the world.

Jesus is our way.

With Jesus even the dark places are light

Jesus is the Truth.

In Jesus we shall live forever

Jesus is our life.

Carol: **Ding dong merrily on high**

Bible Reading - Luke 2: 8-15

Carol: **See him lying on a bed of straw**

Address – by Pip

Distribution of Christingles



Prayers – Led by Veronica

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head,
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of Jesus. Help us to receive him not just as the Christmas baby, but as Lord of our lives. Help us to shine with his light every day.

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes,
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

Heavenly Father, we pray for all those who need to know that Jesus is near them today. We pray for the staff of The Children's Society, as they seek to hear the cry of all children in trouble.

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray,
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

Heavenly Father, we pray a special blessing on those we know and love, on those who care for us, and on those with whom we share our journey of life.

May all our giving and receiving this Christmastime be a blessing to us, and to the world. **Amen.**

Carol: **Little donkey**

Blessing – by Veronica.

May Christ the light of the world, shine in our hearts and lives so that they may be filled with his joy and his peace, and the blessing of God almighty, the father, the son and the holy spirit be with you and remain with you forever. **Amen**

Go out in love and good will.

Do not fear the darkness.

Shine as lights in the world to the glory of God. **Amen**





Heacham Parish Church

Holy Communion for Christmas Day 2021



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

Carol: **Joy to the world!**

Lighting of the Final Advent Candle

Today we remember Jesus and the story of his birth;
Jesus is our King.

As a candle is lit
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.

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**

The Collect for Christmas Day

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen**

Christmas Gloria

Glory to Christ, Son of Mary;
born a child,
you are one with us.

Glory to God in the highest.

Glory to Christ, Son of David;
born to rule,
you reign in our hearts.

Glory to God in the highest.

Glory to Christ, Son of man;

born to save,
you are the light of the world.

Glory to God in the highest.

Gospel Reading - Luke 2:1-20 read by Judith

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you O Lord

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Lord

Sermon by Veronica

The nativity story is one that we know very well. Angel, Mary, Joseph, (donkey or maybe not!), innkeeper, stable, more angels, shepherds, star, Herod, kings (or magi), gold, frankincense, and myrrh!

It is familiar to us and to many, many, people... so with us knowing the story and with people knowing it how do we tell the story in this time and this place?

One way might be retelling it in words.. How about this version, that Judith will read for us?

Reading from The Street Bible: Luke 2: 1-20 Delivery Suite's

He who must be obeyed, Augustus Caesar, announces the Big Count Up. He wants accurate population stats across the Roman Empire at the time of Quirinius, governor of Syria. Everyone's expected to trek back to their family hometown for registration.

So, Joe Davidson sets off on the 129 kilometers (80 Mile) trip south from Nazareth, County Galilee, to Bethlehem (aka Davidstown), County Judah. He takes his fiancée, Mary, who is pregnant and showing. They arrive

and realise someone else is about to show! Her waters break. Crisis! 'No Vacancies' signs in every B and B window. Decision. Joe delivers the baby boy in a shed full of livestock. She wraps strips of cloth round the baby and uses the animals' food trough as a cot.

Around the same time another angel gets his work chit: 'Destination: hillside near Bethlehem. Contact: sheep security team. Message: The Liberator's arrived – he'll be in a feeding trough. Personnel: whole heavenly army squadron plus choir.' Once the guys recover from the shock of the laser-show announcement they check it out. Sure enough, they find the baby in the makeshift cot. The next days all the pubs echo with Liberator talk.

So, using words, and telling the story in a different way, some people will find very helpful and enable them to engage with the story in a new way. How are we this Christmas in 2021, when life continues to be so uncertain for us all, when for many people anxiety about money, health, employment, family are at an all-time high? How are we going to tell the story of God coming to the world, tell the story of Jesus, tell the story on Emmanuel, God with us in words and action, in this place, at this time, to the people we know, we live next door to, we work with, we spend our leisure time with?

How are we going to share the joy and peace we have through Jesus, and through knowing that Emmanuel, God is with us.

It seems to me that we, and our world, need to know now more than ever, that Emmanuel, God is with us - in the tough times as well as the good ones, in the anxious times as well as the celebratory times, that even if we don't always feel God presence, or even acknowledge that God is with us, God is with us!

So, as we celebrate Christmas today, rejoicing in the fact that Emmanuel, God is with us- let us commit to lives that celebrate and show, in what we say, how we act, how we live our lives, the joy and peace we have through knowing Emmanuel, God with us.

A prayer to finish
Loving God,

We thank you for the great truth at the heart of this season- your coming to our world in Christ, to be with us always.

We praise you that you go on coming day after day, not just to others but also to us, meeting and working through your Holy Spirit.

Come afresh now, and break through all the barriers in our lives, so that we may know you more nearly by our side and draw yet closer to you than we have ever been.

Speak your word, fill us with your love, your peace, and your joy so we may know your presence with us and share it and you with a waiting and needy world.

Amen

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, but who transformed the place by his very presence.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons with hungry hearts.

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for my selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the Son of God, born in Bethlehem, for me and for the world.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession – Led by Richard G

God sent his Son to live as a man among us: let us pray in the confidence of our new life in Him.

Rejoicing in the birth of our Lord and Saviour, we pray that the church may be continuously reborn. Let us share the humility of the manger, the

adoration of the shepherds and the love of the Holy Family, in the light of Him who is the light of the world.

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

Pity and pardon this world of conflict, deaf to the message of peace. Bring harmony where there is strife between nations and where people are divided by suspicion and bitterness. Heal those who have no peace within themselves.

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

We pray for the families and friends with whom we celebrate this happy time. Give us true love, unselfish desires, and grateful hearts. We pray especially for the children, for their unclouded joy at this time. Create in us a pattern of human love that will lead them to the love of God who sent his son as a little child.

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

We pray for those who cannot feel the joy of Christmas, through the burden of sickness, bereavement, or other distress. Comfort with your presence all who are separated at this time from those they love. Bring the light of Christ into their afflicted lives.

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

We raise before you now in a few moments of silence those known to us who specially need prayer. In illness, bereavement, worry, people who are hurting. Our prayer chain is an active example and duty for us to observe. May this be used more. May we learn to pray more and to talk to you through this prayer.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer.**

Remember, the souls of your servants no longer here on earth with us and for those who are saddened by their passing. Be with the bereaved in their loneliness and give them the faith to look beyond their present troubles to your Son Jesus Christ who died and rose again and who lives for evermore. We shall all be reunited in heaven.

(Short Silence)

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

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

Through Christ who is the hope of the nations and the joy of all people we make our prayers to God who is most wonderfully with us.

Merciful Father **accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be called Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you

Carol: In the bleak midwinter

The Eucharistic Prayer

For the birth of Jesus your Son, our Saviour cradled in the manger at Bethlehem;

We thank you heavenly Father.

For the love and gentle care of Mary, his mother;

We thank you heavenly Father.

For shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, who came with haste to worship Christ, the new born King.

We thank you heavenly Father.

For wise men from the East, who followed the star and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh;

We thank you heavenly Father.

For the light and love of this Christmas season, in our hearts and in our homes, bringing joy and gladness

We thank you heavenly Father.

And so, we join the angels to celebrate and say:

Holy, holy, holy Lord

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Father, on the night before he died, Jesus shared a meal with his friends. He took the bread and thanked you. He broke it, and gave it to them, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.

After the meal, Jesus took the cup of wine. He thanked you, and gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, the new promise of God's unfailing love.
Do this to remember me.

Jesus Christ has died.
Jesus Christ is risen.
Jesus Christ will come again.

Father, as we bring this bread and wine, and remember his death and resurrection, send your Holy Spirit, that we who share these gifts may be fed by Christ's body and his blood.

Pour your Spirit on us that we may love one another, work for the healing of the earth, and share the good news of Jesus, as we wait for his coming in glory.

For honour and praise belong to you, Father, with Jesus your Son, and the Holy Spirit: one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in God's presence here among us, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many we are one body because we all share in one bread.

Giving of Communion

God's holy gifts for God's holy people

Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

Prayer after Communion

God our Father, whose word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem; may the light of our faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord. Amen

Carol: **The 1st Nowell**

Blessing

God sent his angels from glory to bring shepherds good news of Jesus's birth

Amen. We thank you, Lord

You have heard his story, the story of God's own son.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

May he fill you with joy to bring this good news to others today.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

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

Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God. Amen





Heacham Parish Church

Sunday Service 26th December 2021 – Christmas 1

This is Heacham Parish Church on-line. You join us for our Service of Worship for the 1st Sunday of Christmas. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

Welcome in the name of Christ.
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you
and also with you.

God in Christ has revealed his glory.
Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.
O praise the name of the Lord!

We meet to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.
The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us
and we beheld his glory.

Loving God, we have come to worship you.
Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to listen to your word with eagerness;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Hymn 683: **Thou didst leave thy throne**

Thou didst leave thy throne
and thy kingly crown
when thou camest to earth for me,
but in Bethlehem's home
was there found no room
for thy holy nativity.

Heaven's arches rang
when the angels sang
and proclaimed thee of royal degree,
but in lowliest birth
didst thou come to earth
and in deepest humility.

Though the fox found rest,
and the bird its nest
in the shade of the cedar tree,
yet the world found no bed
for the Saviour's head
in the desert of Galilee.

Though thou cam'st, Lord,
with the living word
that should set all thy people free,
yet with treachery,
scorn and a crown of thorn
did they bear thee to Calvary.

When the heav'ns shall ring
and the angels sing
at thy coming to victory,
let thy voice call me home,
saying 'Heav'n' has room,
there is room at my side for thee.'

Prayers of penitence

As we kneel with the shepherds before the new-born Christ child,
we open our hearts in penitence and faith.
Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.

We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us to himself, and cleanse us from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible reading Luke 2: 41 – 52 Read by Sue T

A Reflection – by Penny

Our reading is suddenly out of chronological order. Yes, the baby has been born. Angels and shepherds have played their parts, but the wise men are yet to arrive, and I don't think they are running late! Suddenly

we jump forward to adolescent Jesus, age 12. All three lectionary years take us to readings beyond Epiphany. Why?

This is the only glimpse we have into the childhood and youth of Jesus which was for him a time of preparation. Here we see Mary and Joseph as pious Jews travelling to Jerusalem each year for the Passover. We see their care for him in their anxiety, searching for him when he was not to be found among the pilgrims and how Mary 'treasured these things in her heart'. This is one of Mary's distinctive qualities in Luke's gospel. The ability to mull over the extraordinary events that are occurring within and around her. A reflection that is vital to understand the wider picture. This ability to hold things in mind means that later connections and clarifications are made possible.

Jesus is the centre of our story which fits into the gap between his birth and his baptism. He was clearly raised as a pious, traditionalist Jew and, despite not getting on the bus back to Nazareth, is depicted here as obedient, primarily to God but also to his earthly parents. This was a time of preparation when he grew 'in wisdom, stature and favour with God and men'. Jesus is 12 years old, in this time and this culture the beginning of adulthood. Here we see him acting in a way which foreshadows both his ministry and his relationship with God the Father. Luke has already made it clear in chapter 1 that Jesus is the Son of God and now Jesus claims that relationship and purpose himself. This story is part of the context of the Gospel rather than being the 'Good news' itself. Luke has followed a theme of Jesus in the Temple. Already as an infant he has been brought to meet Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna, now Jesus takes the initiative and meets with the Teachers of the Law. He is asserting his independence and yet he obediently returns and lives in Nazareth.

Luke uses a device in v 49 which is unfortunately lost to us in translation. The Greek word 'Dei' is given various English forms of which 'must' is perhaps the most understandable but here is translated 'had to be'. He uses this throughout his gospel to indicate the necessity of Jesus doing something to fulfil scripture and his Messianic task. In this verse we have the first reported words of Jesus introduced by 'Dei' as Jesus explains 'I had to be in my Father's house'. His answer to Mary's question shows

that even in adolescence, Jesus had accepted his Messianic mission. This would be the aspect Mary and Joseph could not understand.

Another place Luke uses this device is the post-resurrection story of two disciples travelling along the road to Emmaus. It is the third day since the crucifixion. The body has disappeared, and like many, these two are searching for Jesus. It is Jesus who joins them and explains, again introduced by 'Dei' here translated as 'have to', that these events were necessary to fulfil his Messianic role. So, we have a parallel with Mary and Joseph. In each story it is the third day after an event when they set out to look for Jesus. In each case it is Jesus who explains the necessity of events to fulfil God's purposes.

Many of you are parents and grandparents and can, I am sure, identify with the anxiety over a missing child. Yes, perhaps Mary and Joseph had taken Jesus's presence for granted but once his absence had been discovered they were compelled to go and look for him. In our very different context, do we take Christ's presence for granted? When we realise his absence are we prepared to search for him? We need to search for him in prayer, scripture, and sacrament until we find him again for we are assured that:- 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' Jer 29 v 13

Hymn 740: **When our God came to earth**

When our God came to earth,
not for him noble birth:
he affirmed human worth
from a humble manger,
just another stranger.

*Let the poor rejoice!
Let the mute give voice!
Love is shown,
God is known,
Christ is born of Mary.*

Not for the Kings was the word
which the poor shepherds heard:
hope renewed, grace conferred,
and the hillside ringing
with the angels' singing.

Bethlehem, humble town
where the babe wears the crown,
turns the world upside down:
God so unexpected,
homeless and rejected.

Let us sing Mary's song,
bringing hope, righting wrong,
heard with fear by the strong,
poor and humble raising,
God of justice praising.

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession – Led by Jennifer

We come to bring our intercessory, our asking prayers to God. Prayer is both a mystery and our spirit's lifeblood. God already knows all our needs, but Jesus emphasised that His followers should pray and keep on praying. It is such a relief to "bring it to the Lord in prayer". God answers and we, the ones who pray, are changed too. So let us forget the busyness of life and come to talk to the Father in heaven Who loves us all so much.

1. Almighty God we come to pray for the world – the places of violence, conflict, suffering, and greed. Be near to those in authority and encourage them to have integrity, honesty, and wisdom as they lead their people. Show them the benefits of mercy and generosity to their own people and how to communicate honestly and helpfully with the leaders of other countries. Bless and protect those who strive for peace from within organisations or independently. Please guide us, as a nation and individually, as to how we can play a part in making Your love and peace known.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

2. We pray for our country, for our government, members of Parliament, and advisors that they might increasingly see the need for Your wisdom and guidance. They have to deal with so many huge problems. At present one of the most serious is the Covid pandemic and how to manage it here. We pray for the advisors, for the exhausted staff in the NHS and for the vaccination teams that You would strengthen them and keep them safe. Help us all to respect the expert advice given and to take care for ourselves and others by being sensible.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

3. Lord we remember before You our village – its surgery, the pharmacy, its businesses, the caravan parks, and other holiday places. We thank you that we live in such a lovely, well provided place. We pray for the residential homes, for Fridhem, Rebecca Court, Summerville, and Millbridge. We remember the staff and the people who live there. Please help them with the loneliness when family and friends are not able to visit because of Covid.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

4. We pray for our church. Lord we thank You that it has been possible to worship on Sundays during lockdowns in different ways. Thank You for the technology and the hard work of many so that the elements of services

could be recorded and seen on YouTube. Please bless our new venture when we hope to be able to stream the services live now that we can meet in church again. It will be lovely for housebound people to be able to watch and worship with us.

Lord give us opportunities and grace to be helpful in our village and to recognise and respond to need, quietly and with love.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

5. We know of many very sick people in the village, and we ask that they may know Your presence and comfort. For those who are nearing the end of this earthly life we ask that You would take them gently to be with You. We pray for those who have been bereaved recently or are facing anniversaries of loss. Lord comfort them and use families and friends to give support. We pray for the bereavement group that it may provide help, encouragement, and hope to those who mourn.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

6. We come to pray for ourselves, wherever we are worshipping today. Lord guide us to seek, find and obey Your will each day. Give us the courage to speak about You when You give us the opportunity to do so. Help us to grow close to You and to love and serve each other better.

Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

Accept these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen

The Collect

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn (750): **Who would think**

Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army,
proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
monarchs scorn and angels sing;
such a place as none would reckon
hosts a holy helpless thing;
stable beasts and by-passed strangers
watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas day.

Centuries of skill and science
span the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether,
with such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas day.

Closing Prayers

The glory of the Lord has been revealed
and all flesh shall see it together.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
a light no darkness can quench.
The shepherds kept watch by night
and your glory shone around them.
The darkness is not dark to you,
the night is as bright as the day.

Let your light scatter the darkness
and fill your Church with your glory.

God our Father,
your Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord.

God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds
the good news of Jesus' birth.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

You have heard his story, the story of God's own Son.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

May he fill you with joy to bring this good news to others.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen





Heacham Parish Church

Sunday Service 2nd January 2022

This is Heacham Parish Church on-line. You join us for our Service of Worship for the 2nd Sunday of Christmas. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Let us rejoice and shout for joy, giving God the glory.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.

Amen

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting

the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

Today we remember Jesus and the story of his birth;

Jesus is our King.

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.

**Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Hymn: What child is this (HON 729)

What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
come, greet the infant Lord,
the babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
come rich and poor, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the Virgin sings her lullaby:
joy, joy for Christ is born,
the babe the Son of Mary!

Prayers of penitence

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:
'You shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.'
Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God
through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

We have wilfully misused your gifts of creation;
Lord, be merciful: forgive us our sin.

We have seen the ill-treatment of others
and have not gone to their aid;
Lord, be merciful: forgive us our sin.

We have condoned evil and dishonesty
and failed to strive for justice;
Lord, be merciful: forgive us our sin.

We have heard the good news of Christ,
but have failed to share it with others;
Lord, be merciful: forgive us our sin.

We have not loved you with all our heart,
nor our neighbours as ourselves;
Lord, be merciful: forgive us our sin.

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his 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.

Bible reading John 1: 1 – 18 Read by Lois

A Reflection – by Pip

The day I prepared this sermon I read that astronomers were surprised to find a galaxy that was missing an essential element, it had no dark matter. It reminded me of all the fuss several years ago when the hadron collider was built in CERN. The great experiment, we were reliably

informed by the BBC was to discover details of the earth's origins, to find the God particle. As far as I know this has not happened. Not that it would make much difference to me because I am truly wedded to the belief that God created the universe. How He did it, how long it took, or how many God particles crashed together does not keep me awake at night. I am content with the mystery of it all.

I am, however, convinced that the origins of the universe did not begin with particles crashing together. That may have happened in the process, but the origin, I believe began with God, a triune God. I can't explain that either, but as someone said, God didn't send an explanation, He sent Jesus.

The reading today, the first Sunday of 2022, begins with the completely mind-blowing opening to John's gospel. To say that we will only skim the surface is obvious. Not only is the prose sublime, but the content is also utterly transforming. The statements made, concerning the divine nature of Jesus are matchless. None of the other gospels can touch John in this area.

In a few short sentences we learn enough to fill a myriad of theological books. We learn firstly that Jesus Christ is eternal. Before the world began, before any particles were fired, fused, or brought into being, Jesus was in existence. Being in existence is essential in order to make anything happen. It was all way before Descartes came up with his pithy saying "I think therefore I am". Christ was fully formed, fully creative, fully God before matter was created. So, surprise surprise I don't believe the creative process began with some form of heavenly collider firing off random particles. It's far too clinical, God is not clinical, He is relational.

So, it is no surprise to learn in John that the word, the logos, Jesus was in relationship with the father "He was with God". Their glory equal, their majesty co-eternal, and yet one Godhead. It is all a great mystery. To quote a favourite verse from bible study with Kika (Deut 29:29), "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever".

So, we hold in tension the equality of a triune God and move along to the equal mystery of creation. "Through him all things were made".

Colossians verifies this saying, "For by him all things were created". Creation was and is initiated by the word of God and is a continuous process.

V4 "In him was life, and that life was the light of men". Jesus is the source of all spiritual life and light. All spiritual light flows from him. His light shines in the darkness, and here we get the inevitable but, "but the darkness has not understood it". Our natural inclination is not to come into the light. None of us wants to be exposed. Our world today reflects very much peoples' desire to stay in the darkness, the place where motives, actions, and directions are shaded from scrutiny. The start of any new year is traditionally a time of changes. A good time to ask the Lord to show us what's in our hearts, what dark areas need the light of Christ shining on them.

The first five verses give us much to reflect on, but we have to move on. "There came a man", another part of the plan unfolds as we learn of John the Baptist's role to be "a witness to testify concerning the light". The gospel writer takes great pains to point out the humanity of John v8 "He, himself was not the light". His job was to be a signpost to the triune light who was about to make his entrance on to the world's stage.

Now we hit the really bad news. The created did not recognise the creator. Actually, it was worse than that, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not recognise him". However, we are encouraged by the following words "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will but born of God". Don't you just love the Lord's graciousness. The creator did not go off in a cosmic huff because he wasn't universally well received. He looked for those who would receive him and gave them and us the right to kinship.

"The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us". There is no time to dwell on the incarnation but let's again just note the mercy of the lord. Isn't it completely amazing that He stoops to draw the likes of you and I into relationship? Even though he knows what is in a man, he is willing to be in relationship with mankind and actually seems to be pleased about it.

What about us this morning, early in 2022, how pleased are we to be in relationship with Jesus, the son of God, the author of our faith? As we begin a new year does The Lord have supremacy in our lives? Maybe we could take time to shine a little light on the supremacy of Christ in our own lives.

Having supremacy means there is no higher authority, no other place to go. To be supreme is to have the first place and importance. Now maybe this is the point where we are tempted to think, now steady on, we are here in church or engaging with this service, what more do you want? If that's where we are at then we need to ask ourselves about it.

Is our first thought each day about our God, or does he only feature on a Sunday or at a push a bible study? He is okay as long as he keeps his distance, we invite him in on high days and holidays. We certainly don't want him turning up in our living room or worse still nosing around in our bank accounts. Also, while we think about it he could see what we are doing, and a little more recognition wouldn't go amiss. Is he okay, just as long as he rubber stamps what we like doing and knows we need a lot of holidays?

All a little tongue in cheek, but none of it sounds like an acceptance of Christ's supremacy. In truth, in our humanity and fallen nature, we are unlikely to ever reach the point where Christ is totally supreme in our lives. However, that is no excuse to back slide, give up and make minimal effort. If we call ourselves followers of Christ then we are called to love the lord with all our strength, heart, and mind. That means we are on a journey to accepting His supremacy in our lives. With the help of the Holy Spirit as Paul says we "press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus".

So as 2022 begins, let's make space to evaluate where we are in Christ. Do we need to re-engage, re-enthuse, re-ignite our relationship with Christ? Do we need to restore a languishing relationship? Do we need to remind ourselves of our first love?

Or if we are in a good place, is it time to seek new challenges, to grow even more in Christ. Wherever we are at, if we make space to engage

the God who created then He will create something new in us, and who knows, apart from the Lord, where 2022 will take us. Amen.

Hymn: **Infant holy, infant lowly (HON 321)**

Infant holy, infant lowly,
For his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
nowells ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new;
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow,
Christ the babe was born for you,
Christ the babe was born for you.

Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?
We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?
We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?
We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession – Led by Lynda

***"Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, Love divine, Love
was born at Christmas star and angels gave the sign."***

Thank you, Lord, that you came to show us a new way, the way of love.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever
believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."*

We thank you that as we begin this New Year with its uncertainties and challenges, we know that You are with us, and your love is in us. We know that we have the power of that love in our lives. So, help us to live in love as you have called us. Let the power of your love flow out through us into the world around us. Help us to love the unlovely, to let your love strengthen us to serve you. Let us be a people marked out by our loving generosity as we commit ourselves to follow you this year ahead.

Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

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

Thank you, Lord, that just as the angels rejoiced at your coming, we too are filled with joy that Christ the saviour has come. Fill us afresh with your joy, a joy that is sustaining and stands firm in the midst of struggles and fears.

Let us be the bringers of joy to others. Our families and friends, our neighbours and those in our village and community. Help us to be willing and able to share the joy of the good news with our world so in need of good news right now.

We think of those who are unwell, those unable to get out, those who perhaps are mourning and feel grief and sadness at this time, or those

whose worries and fears have become overwhelming and those who feel pressured and stressed. Let us bring them before you in a moment of silence.

Lord, touch those people we have named silently before you this morning; bring healing and restoration, bring refreshing and renewal. Bring your new life of joy to all who need you today.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

*'Fear not', said he, (for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind)
'glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind'*

O Lord we confess that we are often of troubled mind, and we lift into your hands the worries, fears, and concerns of this year ahead; in our families and relationships, in our work and leisure time, in our wellbeing and spiritual journey. Lord give us peace we pray.

We pray for peace in world that is restless and ever changing. A world that is impacted by natural disaster, climate change, famine, disease, and war.

We ask you to bring wisdom to all those in authority, as they seek to navigate us through the continued difficulties of Covid-19, both local and nationally, in government and Church.

Give wisdom to all those dealing with the issues of those fleeing countries and taking such awful risks to travel to find a better life. May those settling in our country find a welcome and peace as they seek to make their new life here.

Oh Lord, help us to be the peacemakers in our families and community, may we share the peace that we find in you with others around us wherever you place us.

Lord in your mercy - hear our prayer

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 the great glad tidings tell: O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emanuel.

Oh, Father God hear our cry this morning, help us to hold on to the hope you have given us, hope that there will be better times ahead, hope that we can know freedom in Christ Jesus, hope that we will receive His healing and forgiveness. Hope that calls us away from despair and fear and turns us to the glorious light of Christ. Hope that brings us the love, joy, and peace of Christmas for now and for always. Hope that reminds us that Christ is ever with us, ever indwelling, ever strengthening, ever leading.

Help us Lord to be willing to share the reason for the hope we have, and that as a hope filled people of God we can be your hands and feet in our world to serve you afresh in this year ahead.

Thank you that you are with us always, our Lord Emanuel.

Lord in your mercy accept these prayers for the sake of your son our saviour Jesus Christ

Amen

The Collect

God our Father,
in love you sent your Son
that the world may have life:
lead us to seek him among the outcast
and to find him in those in need,
for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Of the Father's love begotten (HON 486)

Of the Father's love begotten,
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, and have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

At his word they were created;
he commanded; it was done:
heav'n and earth and depths of ocean
in their threefold order one;
all that grows beneath the shining
of the light of moon and sun,
evermore and evermore.

O that birth for ever blessed,
when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Saviour of our race,
and the babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heav'n adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before him,
and extol our God and King:
let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev'ry voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers and sages
sang of old with one accord;
whom the writings of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let our songs declare his worth,
evermore and evermore.

Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving,
and unwearied praises be;
honour, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore.

Closing Prayers

'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the Lord.

Now the Word is made flesh and laid in a narrow manger.

From eternity to eternity you are God,

and now we see you as a new-born child.

Blessed are you, God of all glory,
through your Son Jesus Christ.

We worship and adore you.

He is the heavenly King, born of Mary.

We worship and adore you.

He is the Word of the Father, crying as a baby.

We worship and adore you.

He is robed in glory, wrapped in infant clothes.

We worship and adore you.

He is Lord of heaven and earth, laid in a manger.

We worship and adore you.

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

Amen.

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Notices:

Church Office Closed

As a result of the new guidelines the office will be closed to visitors until further notice. Please contact Julie via email or leave a message on the answerphone and she will get back to you. **Please note** that Julie will also be on leave over Christmas from 24th December until 4th January 2022.

December/January Services

Every Sunday in Church at 10am – 26th Dec, 2nd Jan, 16th Jan, and 30th Jan Morning Service. 9th Jan and 23rd Jan Holy Communion. Online services will continue. For the YouTube link click [here](#) or use our URL which can be copied into your browser.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCefWbBrE77u7MPpdjWtwzow>

Live Streaming

We are hoping to begin live streaming services from Christmas Day at 10am on Heacham Parish Church Youtube channel. If not the recorded services will be on our youtube channel a little later.

The link for this is: <https://youtu.be/azbvfyEG9EY>

Christmas Services

Friday 24th 4pm – Christingle

Saturday 25th 10am – Christmas Day Holy Communion

Midnight Communion - We are sorry we are not able to offer a midnight Communion this year, but there is one at St Mary's Snettisham at 11.30pm or St Edmunds Hunstanton at 11pm.

Readings for the next few services

21st December – Christmas Story

24th December – Christmas Story

25th December – Luke 2:1-20

26th December – Luke 2:41-52

2nd January – John 1:1-18

Morning Prayer Monday to Friday, at 9am via Zoom

If you would like to join please email Richard Chipps –

chipps@hyford123.plus.com – who will invite you.

The Church Building is open daily from 10am – 4pm

Feel free to visit, pause to enjoy the tranquillity, light a candle.

Live Streaming Consent Forms

Consent forms for all those who lead any part of worship are available in church and there is a box for your completed forms.

Stamps for The Leprosy Mission

Don't forget to save ALL the stamps from your Christmas cards. There is a tub for them beside the Missions pillar or you can give them to me. Thank you, Veronica Welham

Opening Church

If you live near the church and would be able to pop over and unlock it before 10am one or more morning during the week could you please get in touch with Liz or Julie in the Church Office.

Recycling - real Christmas Trees

Would you like someone to collect and recycle your real Christmas tree? The Norfolk Hospice Tapping House are offering to do this in this area and in return would welcome a donation. To arrange a collection please book in at: www.charityxmastreecollection.com Registration closes 23.59pm on 4th January 2022.

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

