

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT



ORDER of SERVICE

**WELCOME** - Songs and Lessons, some Carols will be shortened for empathy to those in church, in their homes also to ensure we finish on time - **Muriel**



**CALL TO WORSHIP - Muriel**

Leader: Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

**All:** Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

Leader: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

**All:** Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. *Psalm 105:1-4.*



**HYMN / SONG - O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL**

**PRAYER & LORDS PRAYER TOM**

Heavenly Father, the whole meaning of Christmas can be explained in one little four-letter word...LOVE. You sent your gift of pure love to us that first Christmas. Love descended from heaven to be born of a virgin. Love lay in the scratchy hay of a manger in a barn in Bethlehem. All of your love, God, was robed in the delicate skin of a baby and wrapped in swaddling clothes. This final week of Advent helps us to reflect on the magnitude of love that was made manifest in Jesus.

The greatest gift of all came that first Christmas. It wasn't wrapped in a beautiful package and set under a decorated tree. The greatest gift came wrapped in the flesh of baby Jesus and laid in the rough wood of a manger. Our perfect gift would later be rewrapped in the scars of our sin and nailed to the rugged wood of a cross on Calvary, all because of LOVE.

Father, please fill our hearts and minds with the significance of that truth. Thank you, Lord, for loving us enough to send Jesus. In His precious name we pray, Our Father... Amen



was Jesus born in such unusual surroundings?

Some people think that Bethlehem could also have been Joseph's actual home town and he'd traveled to Nazareth to collect Mary once they were betrothed/married to take to his home town to initially live..

The journey of about 70 miles would have taken about three days and they might well have arrived in the evening, because if they had arrived earlier in the day, it is more likely that they would have found somewhere to stay.

**HYMN / SONG - STILL THE NIGHT**

**FINAL BLESSING - ALL** Blessed are you, O God: quietly holding each of us in your hand. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, abide unceasingly. Love us while we bear the troubles of the world and give us the **hope** and compassion to support our front line, health & care workers with the infinite mercy and healing of the coming Christ. Amen

**READING - Luke 1:26-38**

**An Angel Visits Mary - ANN**

The Christmas Story starts with Mary being told, in a special way, that she will give birth to a very special baby indeed! The Son of God was the son of a teenage Mother, with Joseph slightly older, around 30.

Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. Having come in, the angel said to her, "Greetings, favoured one. The Lord is with you."

**HYMN / SONG - GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN**

**READING - Matthew 1:18-25 An Angel Visits Joseph- JOHN**

Having found out that his fiancé, Mary, was having a baby (and not with him) Joseph wonders what to do. But God has plans for them both.

In a dream, an angel appeared to Joseph and told him to trust Mary. The angel also told Joseph that the child should be called Jesus. Having a vision in a dream from God was a sign of God's approval, so this would have made Joseph pay attention and do what the angel had said!

**HYMN / SONG - JOSEPH'S SONG**

**READING - Luke 2:8-20 The Shepherds and Angels - GERRY**

The History behind the Shepherds and Angels in the Christmas Story

Why were the Shepherds the first people to find out about the birth of Jesus? And what an amazing way they found out about it!

At that time, shepherds were generally seen as having low or little value by other people. The shepherds were quietly getting on with their own business when suddenly an angel appeared to them. I'm not surprised they were afraid

**HYMN / SONG - THE FIRST NOEL**

**READING - Luke 2:1-7 The Birth of Jesus - RHONA**

The main part of the Christmas Story, the birth of Jesus! But why

**PRAYER FOR OTHERS - TOM**

Father, we thank You and praise You today for the miracle of Your Son's birth.

Thank You for giving us the assurance that because You came to us in the form of a human, we who believe in Jesus can know with absolute certainty that we'll spend eternity with You.

We thank You, Lord, for the many reasons we have been given a merry Christmas and we rejoice for each blessing. New life. New love. A home. A job. New opportunities. Second chances.

Lord, we also know December 25th can be not-so-merry for a whole host of reasons. We pray for those who are experiencing loss during Advent: relational, financial, spiritual and physical. We pray for those dealing with unemployment and addictions and chronic sickness... and unending pain and frustrations of all kinds.

Thank You, Lord, that You are The Wonderful Counsellor and Prince of Peace, even in the midst of our not-so-merry circumstances.

Finally, Lord, we ask You to grant us PEACE, in our homes, in our churches in our hearts, when the world all around us spins out-of-control.

Thank You for loving the whole world enough to send the greatest gift of all, **Your Son**, so that we might truly have a very merry Christmas. In Jesus' Name, Amen.