

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill
Christmas Eve Service
24th December 2020 from 11:30pm

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

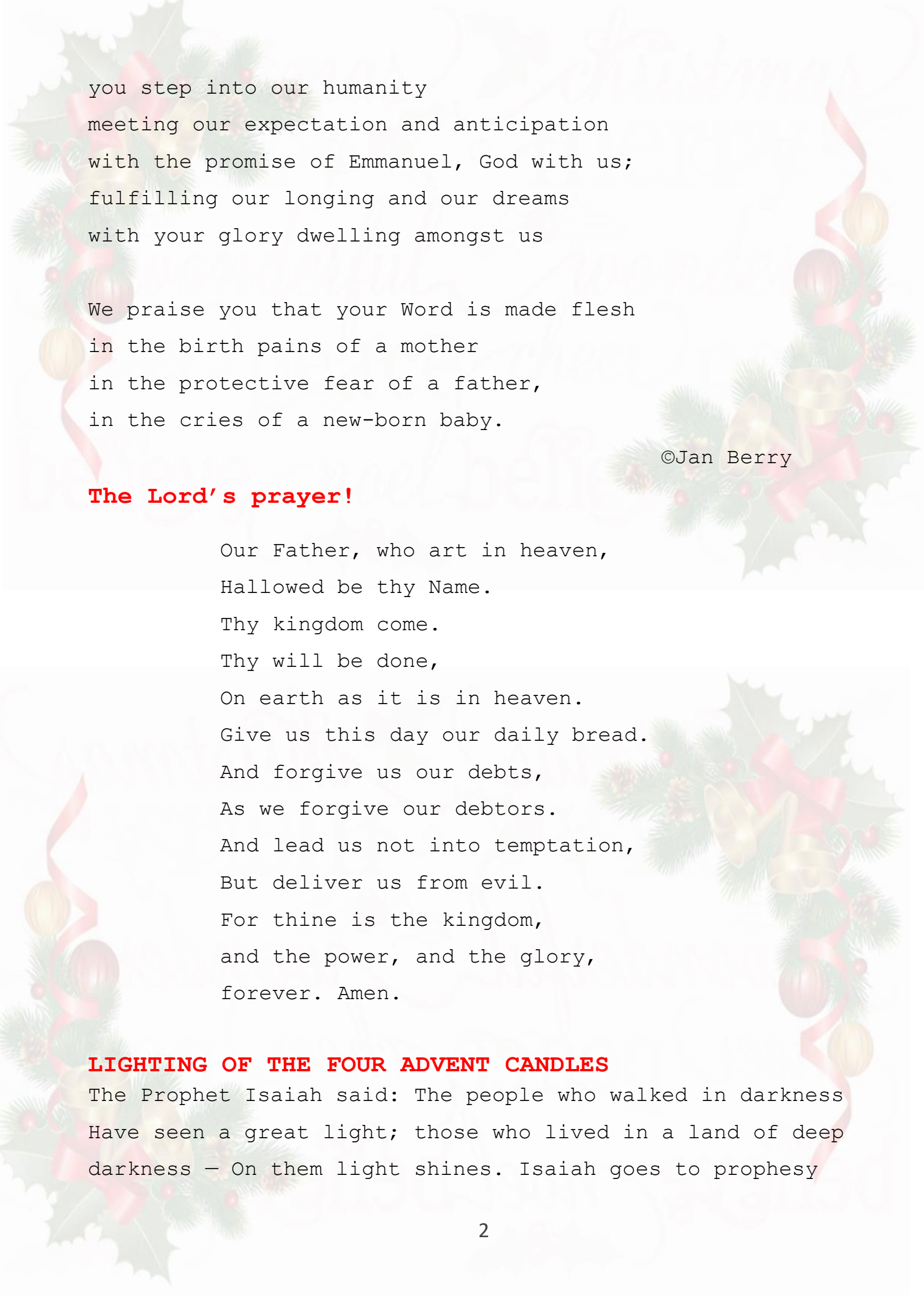
A warm welcome to all of you this Christmas eve service. Friends, let it be our delight to prepare ourselves this time to hear again the message of the angels: and to go in our hearts and minds to Bethlehem to see for ourselves this thing that is coming to pass, a child king, a babe lying in the manger. Lets begin with a first Carol:

CAROL: O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

We praise you, God of wonder and mystery.
We praise you in the excitement of anticipation,
in the heartache of our longing,
and the fulfilment of our dreams.

We praise you that in this moment



you step into our humanity
meeting our expectation and anticipation
with the promise of Emmanuel, God with us;
fulfilling our longing and our dreams
with your glory dwelling amongst us

We praise you that your Word is made flesh
in the birth pains of a mother
in the protective fear of a father,
in the cries of a new-born baby.

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The Lord's prayer!

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 debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE FOUR ADVENT CANDLES

The Prophet Isaiah said: The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep
darkness – On them light shines. Isaiah goes to prophesy

(foretell) **Isaiah 9:6-7**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

APOSTLE JOHN'S REFLECTION ON CHRIST'S COMING

The one that came to our world was the Word - life itself, this life is the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. God is with u. God came into our lives in a new way. The birth of the Christ-child is the renewal of hope, a reminder that Christ will come again.

So as we keep watch for the light; we are reminded that the one that comes amongst us is not a good idea, or a religious figure, or simply revolutionary who turned the world upside down (although that is important) - The one we wait for is the king of kings, the lord of all, the healer, the master the friend - and one day he left all glory in heaven, came down to earth, took on a form of man and lived amongst us. He is alive even here today, he is here with us. **He is not just a good idea - He is a God idea.** So as we watch - **we remember and celebrate His first coming.**

CAROL: ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

GOOD NEWS FOR TWO WOMEN, MARY'S HYMN OF PRAISE

Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!"

Mary replied using the words we now refer to as Mary's hymn of praise: My heart praises the Lord; My soul is glad because of God my Saviour, for he has remembered me, his lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy;

CAROL: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

JOSEPH'S DREAM (Mt 1:19-20).

Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to

him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus – because he will save his people from their sins."

A PRAYER OF ANTICIPATION: STRANGE WAY

Strange, the ways that God has chosen,
strange the people of God's choice.
Quietly we rehearse the memory,
midnight turns and we rejoice.
Light is coming to the stable.
Joy is coming to the earth.
Joseph watches, thinking quietly.
Mary moving, giving birth.
God is being born among us,
not remote but very near.
All the heavens join in chorus,
love has come to cast out fear.

(five or so minutes to midnight)

CAROL: SILENT NIGHT – HOLY NIGHT

----- **MIDNIGHT** -----

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE
AND SINGING JOY TO THE WORLD**

THE ANGELS AND THE SHEPHERDS

Following Jesus' birth, Luke tells the story of the shepherds. We all know and love this story. There seem to be more Christmas carols singing about the shepherds than any other part of the Christmas story. There was no media, Facebook, or Twitter, and the Holy Spirit chose plain old common shepherds to tell the story of the birth.

The Holy Spirit continues to rely on us common folks and only occasionally uses the powerful, beginning perhaps with the Roman Emperor

Constantine in the early 300's AD. As was the case with Zechariah and then Mary, the angels played a starring role in their appearance to the shepherds.

REFLECTION: ARE YOU THE ONE?

Are You the One? John the Baptist asked,
'Are you the One?
Are you the One who was to come?
Or should we be looking for someone else?'
I thought I knew; When he came to me to be baptised,
I was so sure.

The heavens opened
And a voice came from heaven,
(I'm sure it was from heaven)
And said, "This is my beloved Son" -
And I was so sure.

I was sure -
But I've been in this dungeon for nearly a year now,

And nothing seems to have happened;
Nothing seems to have changed;
The Romans are still in charge.
I thought he would - somehow - have overturned them;
And set me free.

But here I am, still in the dungeon.
So, is he the One who was to come?
Go and ask him - I need to know;
I need to know that I was right -
That he is the One -
The One whose sandals I'm not even fit to tie;
The One about whom I spoke when I said,
"Prepare the Way!

Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is very near!"
And "There goes the Lamb of God"
What's that you say?
You saw him? Spoke to him?
What did he say?
"Tell John that the blind can see,
The lame can walk,
Those with leprosy are cured,
The deaf can hear,
The dead have been raised;
And the Good News is being preached to the poor."
It's just as it was prophesied by Isaiah.

Now I see - My ways are not His.
He is not a formidable warrior coming with armies to
make war.
He is a loving Shepherd, Who would gently lead His
people into the ways of the LORD.
He loves people into changing their ways,
Turning back to God - that's His way - LOVE.

Now I see, He is the One.
Praise God, I have seen the Messiah
Who has come to save the world.

PRAYER - 'CHRISTMAS IS FAMILY TIME'

CAROL: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

BENEDICTION AND WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost, to heal the broken
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoner
To rebuild the nations
To bring peace among the people
To make music in the heart

The peace of God
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty -
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -
remain with you always, Amen

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

We wish you a merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year

Glad tidings we bring
To you and your kin
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year

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