

Service at Home

Sunday 21st December 2025

Call to Worship:-

Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving and
receiving
Holy God, as Advent draws to a close, your
gospel shines all the more brightly
with messages of hope and promise, of
love and care,
of gifts already given and gifts for the
present and for the future.

Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving and
receiving
Holy God, remind us afresh of the Angel's
appearances,
of the sparkle and shine that their words
and their messages add to our everyday
lives.

May we be able to offer their messages
and gifts with love, compassion and care.

Amen

Hymn: The Angel Gabriel from heaven came (STF 187)

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 187

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he to meek and lowly Mary,
"most highly favoured maiden." Gloria!

2 "I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's
decree:
a blessed virgin mother you shall be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers
foretold,
most highly favoured maiden." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy
name."

Most highly favoured maiden, Gloria!
4 Of her, Immanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will
ever say,
"Most highly favoured maiden." Gloria!

Reading: Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,
shine forth ² before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.
Awaken your might;
come and save us.
³ Restore us, O God;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.
⁴ How long, Lord God Almighty,
will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?
⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.
⁶ You have made us an object of derision to our neighbours,
and our enemies mock us.
⁷ Restore us, God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

Amen – thanks be to God for His Word

Prayers:

God, our eternal King, We rejoice in your coming and your Glory We adore You as the Creator who spoke promise into the darkness, the God of hope who sends light into the world. We praise You for Your faithfulness in sending Your Son, Jesus, the fulfilment of all prophecies, to bring salvation and peace.

Lord, we confess our distracted hearts. Forgive us for busyness, for ignoring Your presence, and for failing to see You in the needs of others or the beauty of creation. We confess our doubt, our selfishness, and our longing for worldly comforts over Your eternal promises. Cleanse us, O God, and prepare us to truly welcome Your Son.

We thank You, Father, for the immense gift of Jesus, for His humility in coming as a baby, and for His sacrifice that brings us forgiveness and a new life. Thank You for the hope He brings, for His enduring love, and for the promise of His return. Thank You for the grace that sustains us daily, for the love we share, and for guiding us through this season of waiting.

Strengthen us, O God, to live this Advent with open eyes and expectant hearts, so that we may truly find You in our midst and join Your work of love. May we reflect Your glory in our lives as we await the coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.
²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived

in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^c because he will save his people from their sins.”
²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^d (which means “God with us”).
²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Amen – thanks be to God for His Word

Hymn: Tell out my soul (STF 186)

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

Based on the *Magnificat*

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Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word –
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has
done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same –
his holy name: the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to
flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure:
tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Talk:

We heard in our reading from Psalm 146 how the Psalmist appealed to God for forgiveness and restoration – having the faith that his prayers would be answered. He had trust that God would act and they would be saved. In our second reading we heard how the Angel of the Lord visited Joseph in a dream and told him to marry Mary. That again must have taken faith from Joseph that Mary had been faithful to him and it was God's will for Mary to carry his Son. A gift to the World like no other – Messiah – saviour of us all. What a gift at this special time of year.

And we do have to think a lot about gifts at this time of year, what to give, what do we need when people ask us and, lets be honest, most of the time we cannot think of a physical gift we need. We can end up with perfumes we do not use, socks to join lots of others in the drawer and many others things that are put away and not used. As for gifts for young ones, very difficult! With the changing fashions it is difficult to keep up with the 'latest' – not to mention the expense!

But if we look at the real gifts that can be given and received. Company – how lovely it is to receive a visit from family and friends! A letter or a phone call from someone far away to let us know that we are thought of. A smile and a loving word which means so much. These gifts do not have a great monetary value but mean so much to each one of us.

Most importantly the gift of Jesus brings us so much – a loving guiding hand that reaches out to us in all situations – we know that he is there for each one of us in all things. An example to follow – Jesus shows us the way. A gift for a lifetime and beyond – that constant friend who is always there for each one of us. I know that I turn to prayer so very often, in happy times, in sad times, when perplexed or unsure of what to do or say. One of my favourite hymns is 'What a friend we

have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!' Written by Joseph M. Scriven an Irish-born Canadian poet, in 1855, it is a relevant today as then.

Amen

Prayers of intercession:

Father God, we bring our prayers to you for the World. We think of the different situations which need your love and power to come and heal

We pray

For Peace: O God of all hope and peace, our hearts break with the images of lives lost and torn apart by violence in conflict zones. We pray for an end to warfare and for peace to be restored, so the challenging work of rebuilding may begin

For the Vulnerable: Heavenly Father, we lift up all those caught in the middle of war and aggression, who feel helpless and hopeless. Protect the vulnerable, strengthen the fearful, and comfort the grieving..

For Political Leaders: Almighty Father, govern the hearts and minds of those in authority. Grant them the wisdom, compassion, and restraint needed to pursue peace and justice, and lead them in the paths of reconciliation.

For Strength and Shelter: God of compassion, we pray for all who are affected by floods, fires, or earthquakes today. Strengthen them in their hour of need, grant them perseverance and courage, and be to them a firm foundation and shelter when their homes are gone.

For Aid Workers: We pray for rescue workers and relief agencies making heroic efforts in dangerous situations. Bless their work and provide the practical aid—food, water, and medicine—that people desperately need.

For the Sick and Grieving: Loving Lord, we lift to you those who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit, whether from illness or grief. Surround them with your strong compassion and bring them your comfort and healing.

For Justice and Equality: Living God, deliver us from a world without justice. Help us to see your image in all people and to work for a society where everyone may live in safety and dignity, free from discrimination and oppression.

God of justice and mercy, hear our prayers, and help us to be instruments of your peace in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us join in **the Lord's prayer**

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 yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and for ever. Amen

Hymn: Light of the world (STF 175)

Tim Hughes

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Light of the world,
You stepped down into darkness,
Opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore You,
Hope of a life spent with You.

Chorus
So, here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You're my God
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me!

Chorus

So, here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You're my God!
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy,
Altogether wonderful to me!

I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross!
I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross!

King of all days,
Oh so highly exalted,
Glorious in Heaven above,
Humbly You came to the earth You created,
All for love's sake became poor.

Chorus
So, here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You're my God
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

And now the blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and evermore Amen.