

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
Home Service – Sunday 31st December 2023

Prepared by Revd Howard Mellor

If you have a candle, light it and use these
opening prayers.

Jesus who came to find us.
Jesus you are here.

We share in God's love

Jesus who came and walked alongside us
to demonstrate God's love.

Jesus you are here.

We never have to walk alone.

Jesus who showed us
how to love all your children.

Jesus you are here.

**We rejoice to welcome all people
as God welcomes us.**

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

Carol, Hark! The herald angels sing (STF 202)

[Hark the Herald Angels Sing \(StF 202\) - YouTube](#)

Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the new-born king,
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim:
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

*Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel:

*Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth:

*Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the new-born king.*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

In a dark and disfigured world
we have not held out the light of life:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

In a hungry and despairing world
we have failed to share our bread:
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In a cold and loveless world
we have kept the love of God to ourselves:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Bible reflections:

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This passage reminds us that God came in Jesus 'when the time had fully come' (AV), implying that in that window of relative peace, safe travel and a shared language the good news of Jesus could travel far and wide.

Think how God has led you in your lives, how God's grace has been seen among your family and friends. Give thanks to God for coming in Jesus, and being with us now.

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

Carol, Like a candle flame (STF 176)

https://youtu.be/cZGVQKjn_V8?si=0ohLcacfQwW099x

Like a candle flame,
flickering small in our darkness.
Uncreated light
shines through infant eyes.

God Is with us, alleluia.

God Is with us, alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia!

Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark
set a world on fire?

God Is with us, alleluia.

God Is with Us, Alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia!

Yet his light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame
of his holy fire.

God Is with us, alleluia.

God Is with us, alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia.

Come to save us, alleluia!

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Luke 2:25-40

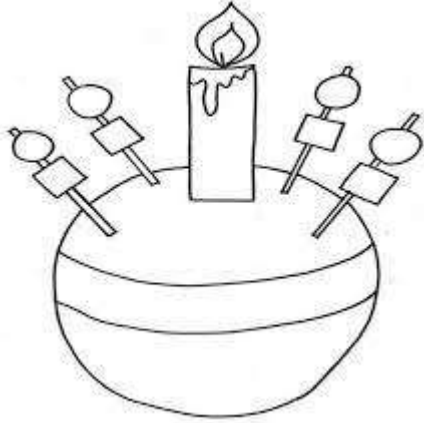
This passage is the presentation of Jesus at the temple according to the Jewish rites at the birth of a boy. Mary and Joseph have resources only for the simplest offering.

But they are met by Simeon and Anna who have waited long for the coming of the Lord's Messiah. Simeon is guided by the Holy Spirit and Anna through prayer recognise the holy family.

Simeon's song includes the phrase:
'for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all
peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

- *Reflect on the way the light of Christ is present with you now.*
- *Do you recognise this light in other people?*
- *Make a Christingle and pray that all people will know the light of Christ.*
 - *We recall Mary and Joseph were displaced people and in a borrowed stable Jesus was born.*
 - *We pray for all or all those who live in the darkness of violence and war.*
 - *We pray the light of justice and peace may guide the leaders of the nations.*
 - *We pray for all who seek to bring aid and shelter to vulnerable people.*
- *You may wish to make the Christingle with family, friends or guests.*

Christingle – The Light of Christ for all



You will need an orange, four soft sweets, four cocktail sticks, a red ribbon to go round the orange and a candle. Make your Christingle as you read the sections below and give thanks to God and pray for others as you do it.

The idea of Christingles came from a Moravian Church in Germany in 1747. The minister, John de Watteville, gave children a lighted candle with a red ribbon around it. This represented Jesus being the light of the world and the final prayer of that first service was 'Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become'.

The Christingle simply expresses the way God came in Jesus to be with us, and by his death and resurrection, to offer us a transformed life.

God created the world and he loved it, especially the children he made in his own image to live in it.

Take an orange.

God filled the earth with good things for all people to enjoy and share in every part of the world.

Take four soft sweets on four cocktail sticks and place them facing four ways.

But people were (are) selfish and do not share with each other and didn't love God the way God loved them. They pollute the planet, abuse its resources, seek to exert power over others rather than serve them.

That is when the person who changed everything stepped in. God came in Jesus, the light of the world, to show the way of love.

Place your unlit candle in the top of the orange.

He lived his life in a totally different way that shone brightly. And then, he gave it away, dying for us so we would all know his love fully, and receive his strength to love God and each other.

Wrap a red ribbon round the orange at the 'equator'.

Light the candle and give thanks for all God in Christ has done for all.

Use this prayer:

Let us receive the light of Christ in our lives,
give thanks for all the good things we have;
rejoice in God's love and grace for all;
cheerfully pray, speak out and give
so that many more people can share
in God's goodness and his love. **Amen**

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

Carol, Let earth and heaven combine (STF 208)

[Let earth and heaven combine \(Wesley\)](#)

[\(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com)

- 1 Let earth and heaven combine,
angels and men agree,
to praise in songs divine
the incarnate Deity,
our God contracted to a span,
incomprehensibly made man.

- 2 He laid his glory by,
he wrapped him in our clay;
unmarked by human eye,
the latent Godhead lay;
infant of days he here became,
and bore the mild Immanuel's name.

- 3 Unsearchable the love
that hath the Saviour brought;
the grace is far above
both earth and angels' thought:
suffice for us that God, we know,
our God, is manifest below.

- 4 He deigns in flesh to appear,
widest extremes to join;
to bring our vileness near,
and make us all divine:
and we the life of God shall know,
for God is manifest below.

- 5 Made perfect first in love,
and sanctified by grace,
we shall from earth remove,
and see his glorious face:
his love shall then be fully showed,
and we shall all be lost in God.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Blessing:

Jesus, Light of the World, shine in this place.

Jesus, Light of the World, shine in our hearts.

Jesus, Light of the World, shine in our lives.

Jesus, Light of the World, shine in all the earth.

Amen.

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