

Worship @ Home

All-age worship

Sunday 13th Dec 2020

Worship Leaders: Revd Val Reid and Louise Selby

Music: Steve, Briony and Cath

Technician: Tony Edmonds



Call to worship (Val)

Gathered here today,
from many places,
in many places,
we are apart yet together on this joyful third Sunday of Advent.
We celebrate the light that we light,
to mark that hope is always present among us,
even when we do not see it.
Let us find hope and strength in this online company of friends,
joining together in a great song of praise
to the one who is always with us.

Amen.

Three Advent candles are lit (Louise)

Welcome and introduction (Val)

A warm welcome to all of you who are joining us for worship this morning.
This is the third Sunday of Advent!
You may have wondered why we have three purple candles and one pink candle on our Advent ring.
The third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday.
Gaudete means 'Rejoice' in Latin.
Traditionally, Advent, like Lent, was a time of fasting and penitence.
It was a time to focus on repenting of our sins, in preparation for Christ's coming.
But on this third Sunday we were allowed a day off.
Instead of feeling guilty and sorry, we should be glad.
Christ is coming.
God loves us – whoever we are.
Whatever we have done.

So today in Anglican churches, priests wear rose vestments instead of purple.
And Louise and I are doing the same!
And we light the rose-coloured candle.
Life is not all doom and gloom.

God is with us!

And despite being in tier two, we can still gather together online to worship this morning, and know we are not alone.

Wherever you are, you are all welcome.

Song: It was on a starry night (StF 206)

It was on a starry night
When the hills were bright
Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still
Then in a cattle shed
In a manger bed
A boy was born, King of all the world

Soon the shepherds came that way
Where the baby lay
And were kneeling, kneeling by His side
And their hearts believed once more
For the peace of all
For a boy was born, King of all the world

*And all the angels sang for Him
The bells of heaven rang for Him
For a boy was born, King of all the world*

And all the angels sang for Him...

Joy Webb

Opening Prayer (Val)

Let us pray.

I invite you to think of the Christmas stories.

This morning we are thinking especially about the wise men.

They travelled from far off.

But they weren't the only people to travel.

Close your eyes.

Imagine you are Mary or Joseph.

Travelling to Bethlehem because of a bureaucratic nightmare.

How are you feeling?

Excited? Anxious? Tired?

Imagine you are one of the shepherds.

Told to leave your work up on the hillside and travel into the town to see a baby.

How are you feeling?

Irritated? Curious? Enthusiastic?

Imagine you are one of the wise men.

Following a star for miles, expecting to find a royal baby in a palace.

How are you feeling?

Disappointed? Embarrassed? Amazed?

Think about the journeys you have made this year.

Physical journeys.

And journeys of discovery.

What have you learned about yourself? About your friends and family?
About your church? About your community?

How are you feeling?

When have you felt excited? Anxious? Tired? Irritated? Curious? Enthusiastic? Disappointed?
Embarrassed? Amazed?

Do you feel close to any of the people in the Christmas stories?

In our journeying we find you,
God of the unexpected places.
We find you there – in our doubts
As well as our certainties,
In our fears as well as our courage,
In our questions as well as our wonder.
Forgive us when we forget you are with us.
When we try to travel as though we were on our own.
Help us to journey on,
Looking expectantly to find you. Amen.

Photo puzzles (Louise) – slides

Matthew 2: 1-12 – pre-recorded story told by Katherine. Introduction by Louise.

Reflection – treasure in unexpected places (Val)

When we saw the star in the sky we were gobsmacked.
We'd never seen anything like this before.
After a lifetime of poring over books and reading other people's research, suddenly it was happening to us.
We didn't know exactly what it meant.
We knew it said royalty.
In that obscure little country way over in the west.
But nothing more.
But we knew it was exciting.
And that just for once, instead of studying the mystery of the heavens in dusty libraries, we were actually going to experience it.
And so we set out.
Excited.
And a bit anxious.
It was a long way.
And we didn't know what to expect...

Pause for a moment.

Shut your eyes.

When was the last time you set out on a journey, full of excitement?

It might be quite a long time ago – we've all been a bit stuck at home this year.

Or it might be something quite recent – perhaps not a long way away, but something unusual or different or a bit scary.

‡

Remember how it was as you were about to set off?

What could you see?

What could you smell?

Was anyone with you?

Or were you on your own?

Was there anything special you wanted to take with you?

‡

How did you feel?

So we headed to Jerusalem.

The big city.

The bright lights.

That was where anyone who was anyone lived.

That was where you got culture.

That was where deals were done.

Money was made.

Politics discussed over dinner.

That was where the temple gleamed gold in the late afternoon sunshine.

If you were looking for royalty, you'd find it in Jerusalem.

In the palace.

So we greeted King Herod.

And we asked after the new King.

And we saw his face change.

We knew we'd made a mistake.

There was no new King here.

Only privilege.

And fear.

A man who didn't want to let go of power.

Who wouldn't be moving out of the palace anytime soon.

Who wasn't going to concede to a new ruler.

His advisers checked their books.

We watched in sympathy.

Been there.

Done that.

They sent us on our way.

To Bethlehem.

An obscure little town on the edge of empire.

Surely not!

Not there.

Never even heard of it.
Was it even worth setting out?

Pause for a moment.

Shut your eyes.

When was the last time you expected one thing, and got another?

When did you make a whole load of assumptions about something important?

And it turned out differently...

‡

How did you feel when you discovered how wrong you were?

Were you disappointed?

Angry?

Embarrassed?

‡

How long did it take you to come to terms with the new reality?

Well, we made it to Bethlehem eventually.
We might have given up, but the star was there.
Every night.
Shining in the sky over that little town.
Something kept us going.
Something I couldn't quite put a name to.
I suppose I couldn't bear not to know the end of the story.
Had we been right about a King?
But wrong about the place?
Or had we made a colossal mistake about everything?

It was a perfectly ordinary house.
The bloke who gave us directions told us some bonkers story about a stable.
A baby born in amongst the animals because all the inns were so full.
But they weren't full now.
The place was half empty.
There was nobody about.
The sun was going down.
There was not much light.
Second-hand furniture.
An old bloke with worn hands.
A rather tired looking girl.
And the baby.

That was the moment that I knew.
I looked into those eyes and I knew that I had been wrong about pretty much everything.
This wasn't royalty.
Not the sort of royalty that lived in a palace and had a servant to squeeze his toothpaste for him.

Not the sort of royalty that was afraid someone else would steal his crown and seize his power.
This was the thing itself.
All the love of the universe in one toothless smile.
I hadn't wasted my money after all.
Gold was the least I could give him.

Pause for a moment.

Shut your eyes.

When was the last time you found something really precious in the most unexpected place?

✝

What had you thought you would find?

Where had you thought you would find it?

Why there?

✝

What did you find?

In your imagination look around you.

Where are you standing?

Or sitting?

Are you indoors or outside?

Who is with you?

Is anyone speaking, or is it very quiet?

✝

What are you feeling?

What new thing have you learned about yourself?

What new thing have you learned about God?

The Angels' Song (Nick and Becky Drake) with Makaton signing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5flkKjaxYcg>

Interactive prayers of intercession – the Robin (Louise)

In today's prayers we will be focusing on the robin. We're going to be a bit more active than usual and there is an action for each part of the prayer. Sometimes we expect prayers to be quiet, with our eyes closed and hands together. In fact, prayer can take place anywhere and anyhow, whether you are still and quiet or active and noisy. Like the treasure that is sometimes hidden, our connection with God can take place in the most unusual of ways and places. So get ready to move around, if you like, as I pray.

Thinking first of the robin's eyes, go to a window in the room you are in, or somewhere nearby. Or if you prefer, just look around the room. What do you see? What is there but hidden? As you look, ask God to help you see things the way he sees them. Ask God to show you who you can help today. Think about a place or some people you would like God to help and ask him.

Next we'll think of the robin's legs. As we pray, I invite you to jump up and down, walk or run around the room, or while staying seated kick your legs back and forth, or just softly touch them. Lord God, help us to move in your spirit, to go where you lead and to use our strength and energy for you. We pray for those who

have gone to far away places to help others; Ben, Emma, Amira, Asher and Mirian, Stephen, Jon, Lisa; Joseph, Lucia, Daniel, there are others too; please give them your strength, energy and love.

Now we'll think of the robin's beak. Robins sing a beautiful tune.

(Robin's song is played here).

Lord please help us to speak kindly and with love to everyone we meet. Please help our leaders and those who speak on our behalf.

Moving on the feathers. Touch the clothes you are wearing or your skin, like this. Rub up and down. Sometimes people rustle our feathers, they make us feel cross or frustrated. Lord, please help us to see other people's point of view and say sorry when we need to. Please help others in the world who are in conflict.

Now to the robin's wings. Pretend you are flying as you pray. Flying wings can remind us of our wishes and dreams. Think of something you are dreaming or wishing for and tell God about it as you fly.

Now for the robin's red breast. Put your hand on your chest and feel it rise up and down as you breathe. We are reminded of our feelings; maybe today you are happy, sad, angry, lonely, joyful, enthusiastic, weary. Ask God to meet you now, whatever you feel. Lord we pray for those who feel sad, lonely or angry. Please help them to find your peace.

We give our prayers to God in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Lord's prayer (Val)

This week we will either say or sign the Lord's prayer.

Please feel to join in with whichever words you are familiar with, or to mirror the Makaton signs.

Whatever age we are, although we are apart, we join together in praying the prayer that Jesus gave us.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= a7mYX_9UIU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7mYX_9UIU)

Blessing (Val)

Whatever we do

We are always in your care.

Wherever we go

We are always in your care.

Every moment of our days

We are always in your care.

In our living and our dying

We are always in your care.

Go in peace,

And know that whatever you find,

Expected or unexpected,

God is with you. Amen

Song – See him lying on a bed of straw (StF 216)

See him lying on a bed of straw:
draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore
the prince of glory is his name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the prince of glory when he came.*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the saviour of the world!

O now carry me...

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the story of God's gracious plan;
Sing that Beth'lem's little baby can
be the saviour of us all.

O now carry me...

Mine are riches, from your poverty,
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

O now carry me...

Michael Perry

