

Christchurch Christmas Day Zoom Service

Order of Service

- ✚ Welcome and Lighting of Advent Candles
- ✚ Hymn – “Joy to the World” – www.christianbsl.com
- ✚ Prayers of Adoration and Thanksgiving
- ✚ Talk – The Gift of Love
- ✚ ‘Talk to the Hand’ – “Born to Save’ (presenting the Bible Reading!)
- ✚ Breakout Rooms – “How can we, in the current lockdown, show others that God’s love is real and alive?”
PowerPoint
- ✚ Prayers for the World and The Lord’s Prayer
- ✚ Song – “Angels in White” – Paul and Briony.

Welcome and Lighting of Advent Candles

Merry Christmas!

It’s so lovely to see you all this morning and I want to wish you the most blessed of days. For most of us that will be much quieter than we thought even a few days ago, but the reality is that God is with us – in every place, in every moment and in every circumstance. That is the joy we are offered as we celebrate God’s love shown to us in the birth of his Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Just some housekeeping items before we start, though.

Please keep your microphone on mute apart from when in the Breakout rooms.

Please do not record this service or take screenshots – permission has not been granted for this.

Please do make use of the chat box as you wish.

We do have people keeping an eye behind the scenes to ensure no-one is admitted who shouldn’t be – thank you to them.

And so let’s celebrate that love by the lighting of our Advent Candles. Thank you to Tony and Cath for organising this for us.

Lighting of Advent Candles

And now let us share in that gift of joy with our first hymn. Last week we saw Louise and her team signing a hymn using Makaton. This hymn comes from the christianbsl website where we see Mary-Jayne Russell de Clifford signing using British Sign Language (and singing with her whole body) “Joy to the World”.

Hymn – ‘Joy to the Word’ - www.christianbsl.com

Opening Prayers of Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving

Oh God of Christmas joy,
We gather together, yet apart,
To celebrate the gift of your son,
Born as a baby in the manger
Yet given to be our Saviour and our Lord.
So we offer up to you our praise
For the love you have poured out for us all.

But, we must also say sorry,
Because we have not always accepted that love
Or shared it with others as we should.
Please forgive us and accept our heartfelt confession
And bring us back close into your loving arms.

And so we offer you our grateful thanks.
Thank you for Jesus, whose birth we celebrate today.
Thank you for your Holy Spirit who guides and empower us
And thank you for each other
As we seek to care for, support and encourage those around us.
We are still your Church, we are still your disciples
And we are still your witnesses, sharing your love and joy, peace and grace
This Christmas time.
Amen.

Talk – The Gift of Love

I have a gift here, sent to me by a long-standing friend, Sarah. We started our nurse training together at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London in September 1984 and, 36 years on, we are still good friends. Sarah lives in North Wales, so we don't meet up that often, but when we do it's like we've never been apart. And we always share Christmas presents. I have hers here and so I'm going to open it now...

And I have been sent You know, Sarah always sends me a gift that reflects me in some way and I know they have been thought about and sent with love. I hope that she feels the same way about the gifts I send her.

But that's nothing compared to the gift God gave us some 2,000 years ago; the gift we are celebrating today. For God gave us his own son, Jesus, to be with us always, to offer us the hope of new life in all its fullness and to bring us back into the wonderful, amazing, glorious relationship with him that he always intended for us.

Luke tells us of the story of Jesus' birth in his Gospel. Yesterday at the Nativity Service 'Talk to the Hand' shared a song which we are going to hear again because it tells that story so well – and it's fun too!

Talk to the Hand – 'Born to Save'

Breakout Rooms

God showed his love for us by coming as a vulnerable baby, born into an occupied land to young and humble parents. He entered into all the trouble and messiness of human existence then, just as he still does now. God is with us even in the middle of the trauma, chaos and uncertainty of a worldwide pandemic.

PowerPoint

So we're going to put you all into breakout rooms, just for 5 minutes so you can briefly ask each other this question – "How can we, in the current lockdown, show others that God's love is real and alive?"

To Breakout Rooms.

Prayers for Others

Christmas God,
Your love and joy are so needed in the world right now.
Show us how to share that love with your creation and with all of humankind.

Christmas God,
Be with all who are in positions of power.
Show them how to use that power for the good of all.

Christmas God,
Bless your Church throughout the world
Show us how to be your disciples and your witnesses to those in need of your love and grace.

Christmas God,
Bless our communities of family, work, school, neighbourhood.
Show us how to share the gift of joy we find in you.

Christmas God,
Bless those known to us who are in need at this time.
Be with Val, our minister, as she recovers at home
And may she know that our love and prayers are with her.

Christmas God,
Be with each and every one of us in the days ahead
Bless us, strengthen us, and show us how to share your greatest gift
Your Son, Jesus Christ, with all we meet.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

It has become our tradition to say together the Lord's Prayer in whatever version you prefer. Please feel free to unmute yourselves if you wish to as we join our voices in saying...

Our Father who art 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
And forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours
Now and for ever
Amen.

As we come to the end of our time together, I am delighted that another Christchurch Christmas tradition is continuing with the song 'Angels in White' sung for us by Paul and Briony.

Song – "Angels in White"

Blessing

As we leave our service to celebrate the rest of our day,
May we know the gift of love and joy,
Of hope and peace that is found in Jesus Christ
And may we share that gift widely, wisely and generously
Knowing we do so in the power of God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.