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ADVENT 3B

17th December 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Opening hymn:

180 STF – O come, O come Immanuel

You might like to listen along to this piece by The Piano Guys (please note, Twelvebaskets does not own the rights to this version or the video, please seek permission from the rights owners before using in public worship or online):

[YouTube](#)

Opening Prayer

[You may wish to light a candle, get out a nativity set, or look up a picture of the nativity scene as you say these prayers.]

God of the manger,
God of the shepherds,
God of the angels - I worship you this day.

I worship a God who came to a young woman in Nazareth, in unknowable ways, and who made the impossible possible and who made the incomprehensible happen, a God who became a tiny baby boy, who contracted infinite power and strength into a fragile, feeble and dependent human life.

I worship a Christmas God.
I stand with the angels.
I stand in the presence of God.

The Christmas God who came, you are also the God who comes - today, now, into my life.
I, like John the Baptist, look for ways I can prepare the way for you to come. I seek to know you more, and to do your will in the world around us.

I have failed, I have fallen short, but I know something of the peace, the acceptance, the warmth of the Advent God.

This day, I look to your coming Lord,
I stand with the angels.
I stand in the presence of an ordinary, extraordinary God.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

How might it feel to stand in the presence of God?

If you did, would it change the way you think about yourself, your choices, your hopes, your energy-levels, your plans and the way you live your life?

Are you able to notice what God is doing in your life, and what the divine plan for you might be?

Watch this short video clip from the BBC's adaptation of the nativity, which shows angel Gabriel's visit to Mary to explain that she is going to bear and give birth to God's son: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q1E06v5oBo>

After watching, think again about the questions above. Do you have a story of angelic encounter in your own life, or in the life of someone you know?

What would it look like for you to fulfil God's dream for your life this Christmas season and beyond?

Responding in Prayer

God of this Advent season, as we move towards the final few days before Christmas, I invite you to come into a world crying out for a Prince of Peace, an Everlasting Father, a Mighty God, a Wonderful Counsellor. Amongst the darkness, shine your great light.

God of this Advent season, as the waiting time draws to a close, I commit to you my own life, my family and friends, my loved ones and neighbours – all who I will encounter over the Christmas period. Move amongst those times, that the conversations I am a part of will be rich and spirit-filled, that my actions will show peace and love, that my revolution of hope can begin again, for the sake of your kingdom.

I pause now to pray for all those we will encounter this Christmas season...

[Quiet – you might like to make a list of who you expect to see, if that helps you focus your prayers on each one of them].

Amen.

Responding in music:

You may wish to listen to and/or sing along to some or all of these hymns as you reflect on today's readings, the questions posed above, and your prayers to God.

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour live in me from day to day - [YouTube](#)

471 STF – Lord I come to you – [YouTube](#)

176 STF – Like a candle flame – [YouTube](#)

664 STF – Lord you call us to your service, each in our own way - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

May the Christmas God open your eyes to see the presence of the divine amongst you.
Open your ears to hear the voice of the Spirit, whispering,
Open your hearts to the eternal love, that is yours,
and may the blessing of God the Creator, the Christ and the Holy Spirit, be among
you, and remain with you always.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week Ahead

Monday 18th December

- Take a look at these Christingle resources from All We Can: <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/resources/christingle>
- Even if you have already been at a Christingle service this year, you might like to say the words at home, perhaps making an effort to share them with someone in your family or neighbourhood.
- You could even make your own Christingle and set it in the windowsill for the next few days, helping you to think about the world, the injustices and unfairness of the world and God's desire for every person's potential to be fulfilled.

Tuesday 19th December

- God of all grace,
God of the Christmas season,
Show me how to share the hope of the Christmas story with those around me this year, in conversation, in the giving and receiving of gifts, in the way I live my life.
Help me to be a guardian and an evangelist for your good news this year.
Amen.

Wednesday 20th December

- Light a candle. As you watch the flame flicker, think about the parts of your life, your community, our world, that need to know something of the light of the world. You might like to pray this prayer:

Lord of Light, shine into the darkness in me, the darkness in this community, the darkness in our world. In the midst of all that is frightening and cold and uncertain, come Prince of Peace. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
Amen.

Thursday 21st December

- Today, let us pray for all who will be working over the Christmas period – all those key workers who keep our society going.
- If that's you, take a moment for yourself today.
- If it's someone you know, maybe drop them a text or give them a call to thank them and let them know you will be praying for them.

Friday 22nd December

- Pray for all who feel excluded, sad or lonely this Christmas season. As you pray, listen for a prompting about something you might be invited to do to reach out to someone in need.

Saturday 23rd December

- As we get closer to Christmas, it's likely that some of the 'usual' rhythms are coming to an end for a few days as the world moves into 'holiday mode'. Perhaps you are travelling, or seeing friends, or finishing work for a few days.
- Why not make use of this Christmas mantra today – repeat it as often as you can: in the car, at the sink, when you have a moment to yourself on the sofa. As you repeat the mantra, listen to the words but also to how they change you, how they are a prayer:
- Christmas God, be born in my heart this year. Amen.