

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020

4<sup>th</sup> in Advent, you are invited to have a single candle to light during the service

*All material © Heather Whyte unless stated otherwise*

God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.  
God is ever present, around us and within us,  
though separate let us worship together in God.

**Suggested Hymn**      **It came upon the midnight clear**

Watch [here](#)

### **Prayer**

Loving God, we gather to worship and praise you through our words and in our singing. We praise you for creation in all its wonder and glory, for the diversity which continues to surprise us and your grace within creation which continues to nurture us. With open hearts we offer you thanks recognising that in each new day we are offered gifts beyond measure. We thank you for our families, we may be parted at this time, but we are held together in your Spirit and through the gift of communication we can keep in touch. We thank you for those in the community who help us through the provision of care and services. We thank you for our church families, drawn together in love through the life and ministry of Jesus whose birth we celebrate at this time of year. We offer you this time and pray that through you Spirit as we recall the story and rejoice in songs you will once again inspire us to proclaim the message of your love.

Our father ....

**Advent Candle** (You are invited to light a single candle at the appropriate moment)

### **Reflect**

Matthew records that three wise men travelled to see the baby Jesus. They studied the stars and looked for signs to guide them. As we journey, we also need to look for signs to help us make decisions, sometimes the way is obvious and at other times we feel as if we are in a fog with no idea of where we are or where we should turn next. 2020 has been a year of fog but wise people have still been searching for signs.

Around the world scientists have worked throughout the year to discover a vaccine. Every year scientists research ways in which we can fight the diseases and infections that limit the fullness of life.

Around the world teachers help children to learn and make connections that will help fulfil their potential and enable some to become scientists, some philosophers, some leaders, and campaigners working for peace and justice in the world.

Sometimes the way is clear and other times the clouds hide the way, but still, they continue on their journey.

### **Prayer**

We pray for those exercising wisdom in world, for those who follow a star to discover new hope for humanity, and those who share their wisdom with the wise of the future. May their words bring life like an oasis in the desert, and may our response be love for the world and all who travel with us.

### **Light candle**

We light this candle for those who offer wisdom and seek justice, that together we may work to bring light and hope to all people.

**Sing** (*tune St Bees, listen [here](#)*)

In the darkness comes a light,  
light of hope for all to see.  
Hold the light within your heart  
pray for all humanity.

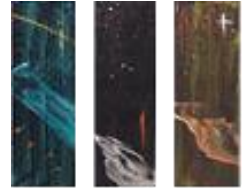
### **Reading**

Isaiah 42: 1-4

## Reflection

### Turning Night into Day

Dark greens and greys, fields and rocks;  
sheep mere shadows lurking on the edge;  
humanity huddled around the embers of the fire.  
Then the glory of the Lord shines,  
turning night into day  
and vision is restored.



Dark sky, dark land, a monochrome landscape;  
the edge of a cliff and the edge of the sea  
distinguishable only by the flicker of reflection;  
humanity following a faint light.  
Yet the glory of the Lord shines in the light,  
turning night into day  
and a path is revealed.

Dark shadows, earthy buildings,  
a town asleep, waiting for the dawn;  
in the glow of a lamp a new birth  
and humanity stirs.  
The glory of the Lord shines in the world  
turning night into day.

Heather Whyte 2010

## Carol

Listen [here](#)

## Reading

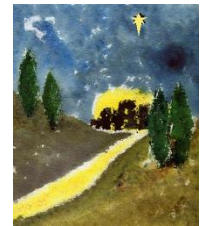
## Reflection

Micah 5:2-5a

### Bethlehem

Broken dreams, broken promises,  
Eternity is a sentence in a broken world.  
Then hope, a light shining in the sky,  
Hovering over a town, heralded by angels.  
Little town, little child and yet  
Eternity becomes a promise.  
Hope for all, a chance to start again.  
Emerging from the gloom, the light of the world;  
Manna marrying past and future in a melodious  
message of mindblowing simplicity—LOVE

*Heather Whyte 2005*



## Carol

Listen [here](#)

## Reading John 1 (a quantum interpretation)

In the moment when this particular reality came into being there was a story and the story was part of the creative energy. The story had always been part of the creative energy as all things are part of the creative energy and cannot exist otherwise.

This story gave light and hope to life in this reality. There was one who saw the light of this story and he told others. Those who see the light show this light to others, that all may see the light and know the creative energy that is the source of all being. Not everyone wants to see the light, some cannot yet see the light, but those who do know a different way of being and become their true potential as children of the source of all being.

The way we are comes from the separateness of the law but in this new story comes the oneness of grace and truth. In this story we can see the reality that is creation. We too can see beyond our senses and discern the greater reality that is the source of all being. We too can know within our souls and hear the music that is creation singing.

**Reflection**

**In the beginning**

In the beginning  
 was the word.  
 Into the darkness of eternity  
 came light,  
 and the light held the word,  
 and the word was love.  
 A tiny word with a huge impact.  
 The word is God  
 and the word is love.  
 To be  
 is to be God,  
 is to be love,  
 is to grow with the backbone of faithfulness,  
                                   legs of patience,  
                                   arms of compassion  
                                   and a mind of mercy.  
 In the beginning was the word,  
 and in the end will be the beginning  
 when we are one with love.

Heather Whyte 2011



**Carol**

Listen [here](#)

**Reading**

**Reflection**

Luke 2:1-7

**How far is it to Bethlehem**

Bethlehem beckons beneath the starlit sky;  
 the road is long, seventy miles for Mary,  
 two thousand years for you and I.  
 To meet God face to face,  
 amidst the serenity of a stable  
 takes the journey of a lifetime.  
 How far is it to Bethlehem?  
 Turn your back to the neon lights,  
 lay down the burden of yuletide strife,  
 lift your eyes to the star so bright  
 and begin the walk of eternal life.  
 Peace, hope, love and wonder!  
 The wonder of God laid in a manger;  
 The hope of the empty tomb;  
 The love that surpasses all our dreams;  
 The peace that was born in a womb.  
 How far is it to Bethlehem?  
 A step of faith that's all! Heather Whyte 07



**Carol**

Listen [here](#)

**Reading**

**Reflection**

Luke 2:8-20

**While shepherds watched**

Watching and waiting,  
 Huddled on the hillside,  
 Incandescent sky above a  
 Lullaby of sound around,  
 Even angels were possible!  
 Shining in the darkness  
 Holy huddles,



Energy glowing,  
Power showing,  
Heralding a new born King.  
Energy sapping fear  
Rested upon the shepherds,  
Deliverance the last thing on their mind,  
Salvation a million stars away.

Watching and waiting,  
Awe and wonder dawned like the morning,  
Transforming fear to action,  
Creating energy, excitement and joy;  
Heralding a new way.  
Expectant God of glorious grace,  
Disturb us with angels, and deliver us a new day.

Heather Whyte '09

**Carol**

Listen [here](#)

**Reading**

**Reflection**

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy

Matthew 2:1-12

**Gifts**

Waiting in the stillness for  
Incarnation;  
Sky searching for the  
Emerging star.  
Meanwhile, in another place,  
Enigmatic angels herald a  
Newborn King.



Behold! Glad tidings of great joy.  
Enter into the new creation,  
Amidst animals and straw.  
Royal signs are cast off and an  
Incredible child smiles for the world.  
Now the star is shining,  
Greeting a new day and a new way.

Gathering gifts, wise men set off,  
Into the night, to welcome the child.  
Frankincense, myrrh, gold and sheep,  
Today we bring our gifts,  
Simple and pure, ourselves and our hearts.

Heather Whyte 2008

**Carol**

Listen [here](#)

**Reflection**

In the bleak midwinter

**Some angels, a baby and a star**

Sparkling in the clear night atmosphere they came,  
Orators of God, and  
Music filled the air.  
'Emmanuel is coming! Emmanuel is here!'

Across the fields they scattered, except for the few  
Numb with fear, they  
Gripped their crooks till their fingers were as white as the angels.  
'Emmanuel is coming? Emmanuel is here?'  
Limbs thawed as light dawned; such splendour was of God,  
Shimmering, shining, spectres of heaven.

Angels abroad.

Bowed heads lifted as the  
Angels spoke again.  
Babies? No, a baby,  
Yonder

Apprehension became comprehension, and the  
Night became a pageant to a  
Deity revealed.

‘Alleluia. God is with us. Emmanuel.’

Small and insignificant he lay beneath the star,  
Transcending all that had gone before,  
An attendant antidote  
Revealing love. Heather Whyte 2003

**Video** The Piano Guys – Gloria

Watch [here](#)

### **Prayers**

God incarnate in the Christmas child, offering hope, love, peace and joy, make this time effervesce with your light. Take this moment and open our eyes to the wonder. Unfetter our minds, that seeing, we will remember.

Loving God, in the candlelight we are reminded of the birth of a child in the rawness of a stable, and pray for all children born into poverty, danger, or distress, may they feel your loving presence in the care of family and strangers.

**Loving God may the light of Christmas shine from our hearts into the world.**

In the story of the birth of Jesus we are reminded of the dangers people face to reach safety and we pray for refugees around the world who risk everything to follow a star to a new beginning, may we find ways of welcoming and sharing with the stranger in our midst. We lift to you the homeless within our communities and those who fear the loss of their home due to the pandemic, may your grace fill our hearts and inspire creative and generous love towards those who are struggling to find a room.

**Loving God may the light of Christmas shine from our hearts into the world.**

We recognise the fear and terror of the shepherds as they witness the strange sight in their normal lives and we pray for all who this Christmas will feel fear particularly child victims of abuse. May we support those who offer a lifeline to victims of abuse, providing safe shelter and a new hope in the midst of despair. We lift to you those who find surprises overwhelming and who shrink into the depth of their minds as they try to cope, may we recognise their needs and find ways of helping.

**Loving God may the light of Christmas shine from our hearts into the world.**

Loving God we remember the wise men and their generous gifts and as we prepare to celebrate Christmas may the gifts we have given to charities and the gifts we will give each other be a token of our response to your love, and to the message of Jesus to live generous and caring lives, loving our neighbour and the stranger as one with us in your being.

**Loving God may the light of Christmas shine from our hearts into the world.**

Offertory

As we continue to worship apart but together, we pledge our commitment to sharing in the work of our church through our continued offering and by exploring new ways of living generously, and may we know your blessing on all we do. Amen

**Carol**

Hark the Herald angels sing

Listen [here](#)

### **Blessing**

May the blessing that is the knowledge of God, source of all being, the love of God discovered through Jesus and the inspiration of the Spirit which binds us together be with us on our journey this day and every day. Amen.