

Sunday 18th December 4th in Advent

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Reading Isaiah 9:2-7

In God is all meaning and all life,
In God is hope.
God's love is unconditional,
accepting and empowering,
in God there is no fear for God is love,
with our whole being let us praise God
and seek his wisdom for our lives.

Advent ring 4 JOY

You are with us, Emmanuel,
our hearts beat within your presence,
until, in the fullness of our humanity, our hearts beat as one.

Here in this place we wait,
an advent people,
visual signs all around,
eternity effervescing in each moment, each heartbeat, and each star.

Come we cry, yet you are here.
Open our eyes we cry, yet we fail to see.
Messengers come and messengers go and still we wait,
engaged with the world we miss the creator.

Stop and think – When have you experienced joy this week?

Light the candle and say,

'We light this candle for the joy we feel because of Jesus and as a prayer for those people who feel no joy in their lives.'

Eternal God may your joy fill the world.

The weaving of life

Weaving the fronds of faith and fantasy
the storyteller settles to work, his audience eager to listen.
A child, a stable, a census, angels and shepherds,
a long spoken prophecy of rescue and release.
All this wrapped in a tale of love and hope.

His listeners are spellbound,
soaking up the story as it fires their own faith.
A faith founded on other stories of a man before his time,
a man beyond his time,
a man with a message.

Hope flares, life can be different, there is a way –
a way as old as time and before,
a way that spans all humanity,
past, present and future.
It is the way of love,
the way of oneness,
a caring that goes beyond knowledge and certainty,



a caring that comes from deep within,
from the very heart of god, the source of all being.

Hear the story and share the love.

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Thought

Stories bind us together. God is everywhere and in every story, an intimate part of every life whether acknowledged or not. Every story can be told from a different perspective, and different point of view reflecting different experiences. This adds to the depth of the story and reminds us of the humanity in each story.

Within the Christmas story there are many opportunities to reflect on different perspectives – the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, the innkeeper, the donkey, the oxen, and even a mouse have all told the story in various children’s books, and of course there is the star.

Stars are everywhere and can be seen from everywhere, although sometimes in a different pattern. If you have ever been in an area with dark sky you may have seen the Milky Way, a reminder of our place in a much bigger universe. The Christmas Story tells of a very bright star, a new star which arose to guide people to Bethlehem and there are carols that mention the star.

We often refer to people as stars, sometimes it is a throwaway remark but at others times it is recognition of a special quality. We are all called to be stars, each in our own way guiding others to discover a relationship with God the source of all being, each of us shining the light of love into a world which feels oppressed and threatened by the darkness of fear, each of us shining in our own way. How do you shine? What makes you sparkle for those around you?

This year I bought a cute sparkly star, a reminder of the glory of stars and the importance of being a star for the world.

Hymn Little Star – Suggested Tune Chartres

Little star up in the night sky,
shining brightly over earth,
when we see you we remember
stories of a special birth.
Of a child born with a message
that would challenge status quo,
and reveal God’s presence with us
as we live and as we grow.

Gazing upwards to the dark sky
wonder opens up our mind,
recognising a connection,
sensing lives are intertwined.
We are one with all creation,
we are one and not apart,
born in love and with a purpose
to recall God in our heart.

Jesus brought this special message,
he revealed the special love
that is part of all creation,
God within us not above.
With this message life can flourish,
and with hope the earth be healed,
so, we thank the God of all things
for the love the star reveals.

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