

## Christmas Day 2023

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, we worship together in God.

We have prepared, reflection and wondering, and now we are ready. Four candles show the journey to this moment and now we light the fifth candle greeting the baby whose message will change the world. A message of the closeness of God, the indwelling of God, and the power of love.

Emmanuel, **God is with us, God is in us.**

New life is celebrated this day. Jesus, a baby and yet so much more, an embodiment of the Christ, Son of God, and Saviour to the lost and lonely. A baby born in the ordinary but embracing the extraordinary and shining with the light of love.

Emmanuel, **God is with us, God is in us.**

A baby for innkeepers, shepherds and wise men, for everyone and anyone, for we are all one in God's love.

Emmanuel, **God is with us, God is in us.**

This is the story of the extraordinary transforming the ordinary, making sense of the ordinary and giving purpose and meaning to the ordinary.

Christmas God, you have led us through Advent and brought us to the dawning of this Christmas Day. In the journey we have been transformed and remade, changed, repurposed, enlightened and envisioned. We are made new in you.

May these changes continue as we journey forward in your love to share his story and our story. As we marvel at the gift of this baby may we marvel at the gift of all life, recognising your presence within all life and treasuring it by our love for all life.

We offer our thanks for this journey and the journey to come, as we grow ever closer to you and to all people in the peace that is love unlimited. **Amen.**

Reading Luke 2:1-7

Story Little Reindeer saves Christmas ([Watch here](#))

Reflection

Have you opened any Christmas presents yet?

Reflect on your best Christmas present ever. For Little Reindeer the best present he received were Santa's words of appreciation and encouragement. How often do we forget to give that simplest and yet most powerful of presents. Little Reindeer went on an amazing journey but he had to learn to believe before he could fly. How might we experience 'flying' if we believe enough in the power of God's love?

I have experienced the feeling of flying and I know others who have also experienced this, sometimes it is in that space between sleep and awake, sometimes it is a sensation we remember we had whilst dreaming and it always powerful.

The message of Jesus is about encouragement and empowerment, we are to remember that we are surrounded by God's love, there is nothing we can do which stops that, we are made of God and we have a purpose in life to be the best we can possibly be and we have the power to create whatever we want. Nelson Mandela said, 'our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate but that we are powerful beyond measure' and we fear that power because with power comes responsibility. The problem is we ascribe power to the wrong things, jobs, possessions, money, and connections when real power lies in our thoughts. Jesus said, 'as a man thinketh so he is' and the Buddha put it this way, 'we become what our thoughts make us'.

Believing involves thinking and can change reality. How we see ourselves is really important for perspective influences our thoughts and our thoughts create who we are. The greatest gift we can offer is belief in self and helping people to discover what is preventing them from understanding they are loved.

I invite you to share the gift of appreciation and encouragement with the people with whom you share any part of your life. Take a moment to consider what you value about them, and then tell them?

#### Prayer

Eternal God, source of all being, as we worship together we bring our thanksgiving for the wonder of the Christmas story. As we celebrate, remembering the birth of Jesus, we reflect on the message of love that this child would bring to the world and the challenge to live simply and generously. In thanksgiving as we reflect upon the abundance in our lives we pray that we will accept the challenge and be generous in our response.

We thank you for the gifts of creation, the diversity and beauty which surrounds us, and wonder of nature. As we look out on our gardens, we see the effects of winter, but we also see the first hints of new life, small shoots of green appearing through damp and sometimes hard soil and we remember that even though the world is often hard and many cry in sorrow there are shoots of hope, for you are always creating and your love holds us even in the darkest of times. We thank you for your presence with us.

We thank you for the gift of family and friends, good neighbours, and the unexpected help of strangers. We are all one in your love and we pray that we may celebrate that oneness through generosity in our words and actions.

At the end of another year the reason for our celebration remains the same, the birth of a child who would change the way we see the world, see ourselves and understand you. We thank you for the gift of Jesus. Amen