



Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2019  
Carols by Candlelight Service  
Chislehurst Methodist Church

[www.chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk)

CCLI95928

Prayer for the week

God, your love - gentle, immense, unconditional - arcs a rainbow of grace to shelter us all and creates a space of belonging and healing.

Your love - grounded in reality, accustomed to suffering - welcomes the excluded, tends hidden bruises, binds wounds and remakes lives and community.



God, may the astonishing truth of your love, your wide span of hope, dawn afresh in our hearts and turn us inside out as we act on your call to share your compassion.

Renew our faith and courage that we may live as people transformed by the gospel and inspired by the limitless horizons of your Spirit. Amen.

*Louise Gough, Presbyter, Bramhall and Wythenshawe Circuit*

**Minister: Rev'd Duncan MacBean** (Day off - Friday)  
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Please note that the church office is now closed for Christmas, reopening again on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 4pm  
Preacher: Rev'd Duncan MacBean

Please take this notice  
sheet home with you

**FIRST CAROL:**                    *330 Joy to the world*  
(verses 1 & 2 Choir only, verse 3 all stand and sing)

**WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER**

**LIGHTING OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> ADVENT CANDLE**

**LONGING FOR LIGHT – Verse 3 (STF 706 – remain seated to sing)**

**FIRST READING:**                **Genesis 3: 8-15, 17-19**

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**SECOND CAROL:**                *O little town of Bethlehem*

**SECOND READING:**        **The Promise**

The damage spreads quickly. As the sun of his presence slips away, dark fingers spread their dismal grasp into every corner of our lives. Still we call to one another like children, lost upon a midnight moor, piping up at any distant glimmer that might be lights, or torches, expecting at last the footsteps of our father, come to find and bring us home.

**THIRD CAROL:**                *The angel Gabriel from heaven came*

**THIRD READING:            Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**CHOIR:                        Torches**

**CHOIR:                        The angel and the shepherds**

**FOURTH READING:        Micah 5: 2-4**

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give birth to them until the time when she who is in labour has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

**FOURTH CAROL:            *Hark! The herald angels sing***

**FIFTH READING:         Come, Immanuel**

Come, Immanuel, God with us to be. Come down from paradise and occupy this dirty stable of humanity. Come and live rough, as we do: come and die. Come and be lonely as an orphaned child. Come to where grief is harvested and stored. Come to where empty aged minds run wild. Come to the hospice and the cancer ward. Come, flee from tyrants as a refugee. Come, be betrayed by those you counted friends. Come and be tortured with no amnesty. Come as the means to justify all ends. Come and be broken like a Christmas toy. Come, be completely human—then we'll know your sorrow may bring hope of lasting joy and God above is God with us below.

**CHOIR:                        The nativity carol**

**CHILDREN'S CAROL:     *Away in a manger (children only)***

**SIXTH READING:         The skeptical shepherd**

No, you go down and see what's what— I'll stay and watch the flock. They need some pastoral concern, they've had a nasty shock. Off they go, feet before brain, just like a herd of sheep. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread in something deep. Don't they see that it's fake news, this bulletin tonight? Why should God suddenly whip up so much angel delight? A baby lying in a manger, destined to be king? I've seen what happens to Messiahs: it's not encouraging. Peace on earth? Goodwill to men? Just one more trick to knife us. Why don't they sing that serenade to Pilate and to Caiaphas? They need some scapegoat, I expect, to make the right impression, so they've set up some poor innocent to teach us all a lesson. No, don't disturb the status quo, that's not prudent behaviour. There's priests and Romans everywhere: none of them wants a Saviour. I don't believe this "heavenly host", the story's just a scam. They'll string him up like mutton and butcher him like lamb.

**SIXTH CAROL:**                    *While Shepherds watch*

**SEVENTH READING:**    **The magi at the empty manger**

Now that we've found that the manger is empty and the child that was born moves on with our limbs, we bring the world's riches — like gold, brightly shining — what will you do with them, baby of Bethlehem? Will we hoard them all selfishly in our own heaven, squander them rashly while pleasures remain, or spend them all lovingly for friend and stranger, trading our talents for everyone's gain?

Now that we've found that the manger is empty and the child that was born thinks on through our minds, we bring the world's prayers— like incense, slow rising— what will you do with them, baby of Bethlehem? Will we answer them selfishly, taking our profit, using them ruthlessly, priming our power, or hear them all lovingly, each need embracing, listening patiently hour after hour?

Now that we've found that the manger is empty and the child that was born lives on till our deaths, we bring the world's hopes— like myrrh, all embalming— what will you do with them, baby of Bethlehem? Will we crush them all selfishly, scornful in judgment, scatter them recklessly on winds of strife, or sow them all lovingly ground in endurance, seeds of your suffering, growing to life?

**PRAYERS & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**EIGHTH READING:**                    **John 1: 1-14 (The Message)**

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out. There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light. The Life-Light was the real thing: Every person entering Life he brings into Light. He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice. He came to his own people, but they didn't want him. But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves. These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten, not sex-begotten. The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

**FINAL CAROL:**                    *O come all ye faithful (verses 1-5)*

**BENEDICTION**

Next Service: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, Rev'd Duncan MacBean

**MONDAY FOCUS:** There is no Monday Focus this week (23<sup>rd</sup> December). Details of the programme for Jan-April will follow soon. For more information contact Rosemary on: 07791 603 668.

**NATIVITY SCENES:** If you lent a nativity scene for us to use at the Christmas Tree Festival, thank you! These can now be collected from the tables in the welcome area.

**THE COFFEE ROTA for 2020** is now available for you to sign up please. Any more information from Dorothy Kelly: 020 8249 8452. Thank you!

**NOT CAROL SINGING FOR ACTION FOR CHILDREN:** It was so disappointing for us to not be able to sing carols and raise funds for Action for Children this year. We were one of eight charities to be cancelled at very short notice by The Glades due to double booking. It's a great shame that Action for Children should lose out because of that. Many thanks to those who have kindly given me donations. If you would like to make a donation, please let me know and I will send combined donations to Action for Children early in the New Year. Many thanks. Christine Pott (cpott7@gmail.com).



**DOG SITTER NEEDED:** Our church handyman, Dave, needs someone to 'dog sit' for a couple of hours a day during the week of 20<sup>th</sup> Jan (exact days/times to be confirmed) He has two small, friendly dogs and is in the Green Lane area. If you can help, please let Sarah (church office) know. Thank you!

**THE PRAYER AND GREETINGS CHRISTMAS TREE** is in the Courtyard. Anyone using the Church premises may write a prayer or send a greeting on one of the cards and hang it on the tree. We hope Church members will use this as an opportunity to write Christmas Greetings to other members instead of sending individual cards, and to give a donation to The Bible Society in lieu of the cost of buying cards and postage. Bible Society envelopes are next to the cards. Please hand in any donations to a steward or the office. *Thank you from the Dawe Housegroup*

**CHRISTMAS DONATIONS:** At the Carol Service today and on Christmas Day the open collection is going to the **Latch Project – Bromley**. They house single homeless persons aged 18+ in the spare rooms of local homeowners within the borough of Bromley. Bromley Churches' Housing Action (BCHA) is a registered charity set up in 1989 to work for the relief of poverty and homelessness in Bromley and to provide, in particular, short-term accommodation.

**CHURCH AND COMMUNITY STORIES FOR FARRINGTON'S SCHOOL:** Recently some students from Farringtons School joined our Thursday service, they are now hoping to collect stories about the church to be included in the school newsletter. If you have anything you would like to share, please write them down and email to Lily Buttery: 14buttl@farringtons.kent.sch.uk, if you need any help emailing, please contact Sarah in the church office. Lily would also like to say a big thank you for welcoming the school into the church community, she would like to pass on their thanks to everyone they met at the Thursday service, they enjoyed it very much.

**ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2020:** Next year's World

Day of Prayer service for the Chislehurst and Bickley churches is to be held here at our church on the morning of Friday 6th March. The local WDP committee will lead the worship but we shall need a team of people here to ensure that everything runs smoothly. If you are willing to be involved in any way please let me know and put the date in your diary. Elaine Battarbee.

**THURSDAY SERVICES:** There will be no service on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January, so the first Thursday service after Christmas will be on 16<sup>th</sup> January. As usual, after the service we gather for a sandwich lunch (£5).

**THE FIJIAN METHODIST FELLOWSHIP'S:** Regular worship is held here two Sundays a month the next dates are, 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> January.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, 11am - Christmas Day Service  
Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30am - Circuit Service to be held at CMC  
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March - Knitted Bible Exhibition  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March - World Day of Prayer

### **WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS**

Those of our church community who are unwell or who have need for our prayers: Jane and the Cowie family, Kath Carpenter, Pam Wallace, Monica Faux, Pam Giles, Myrtle and Neill Truman.

Jacqui Hicks' mother, who passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> December in Sheffield. She was 93 years old. We remember her and her family at this sad time.

All our friends who are in care homes, particularly Arthur Hayes, Les Giles and Joan Clements.

All those who have birthdays this month: Elodie, Wilhelmina, Deyan, William, Jessica, Phoebe, Edward & Kaleb.

When visiting those who can't get to church, please do take them a Notice Sheet. They are always welcome.

As part of the fellowship of Churches Together in Chislehurst and Bickley; this week we pray for St Patrick's Church.

