



CHRISTMAS 2020 IN OUR VILLAGES

Join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus - our living hope
Book online to be with us in person in the church building
Most services will also be live on YouTube or on Zoom
All details on www.venta-group.org

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; they lived in a land of deep darkness but a light has dawned on them. Isaiah 9:2

**STILL TO COME THIS CHRISTMAS IN
THE VENTA GROUP OF CHURCHES**

Christmas Eve—Thursday 24th December

3.00pm and 4.30pm, Stoke Holy Cross Church, Christmas Family Events

11.30pm, Caistor St Edmund Church, Carols, Readings & Communion

Christmas Day—Friday 25th December

10.30am, Stoke Holy Cross Church, Family Communion Service

Sunday 27th December

10am Morning Prayer on Zoom

CAISTOR ST EDMUND CHURCH Christmas Service

The people walking
in darkness have
seen a great light;
they lived in a land
of deep darkness
but a light has
dawned on them.
Isaiah 9:2



**Sunday 20th December 2020
10am**

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby,
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

For He is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us, He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles, like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gilsdness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above:
And He leads His children on,
To the place where He is gone.

Welcome Prayer:

We come before you, Christmas child, in silent amazement.
May we welcome you among us.
Child of Bethlehem, **hear our prayers**

As Mary welcomed you and rejoiced in God's holiness and mercy,
We pray we will be holy and show mercy.
Child of Bethlehem, **hear our prayers**

As shepherds welcomed you, disturbing their work and lives,
We pray for your disturbing presence in our lives.
Child of Bethlehem, **hear our prayers**

What can I give him,
poor as I am?
if I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb,
if I were a wise man
I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him,
Give my heart.

A final prayer and blessing

God sent his angels from glory
to bring to shepherds the good news of Jesus' birth.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

We have heard his story, the story of God's own Son.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

May he fill us with joy to bring this good news to others today.

Yes! We thank you Lord.

As you leave please consider contributing to our collection.

The collection for today's service and the Christmas Eve midnight service will be donated to two charities:

1. The Vidiyal Trust, led by the Rev. Pat Atkinson, providing care for the underprivileged and slum communities in India. More information can be found on their work at:
<https://www.vidiyaltrust.com/>

and

2. St. Martin's Housing Trust in Norwich, providing services to the homeless. More information about their work can be found:
<https://stmartinshousing.org.uk/>

Thank you to those who have contributed to this service in anyway, for readers, leaders of prayers, those who have decorated the church and for those joining us in church or online. May God bless you this Christmas, however, you spend it. You are welcome to join us at our other Christmas services however, please see our website for booking details.

As Joseph welcomed you, giving you a home and a name,
We pray we will give you a home and let you reign in our lives.
Child of Bethlehem, **hear our prayers**

As angels welcomed you, singing of glory and peace,
We pray we will seek healing and be beacons of hope.
Child of Bethlehem, **hear our prayers**

The love of God is in us;
The spirit of joy is with us,
Emmanuel, Jesus, now and always. **Amen**

1st Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

The Lighting of the advent candles

Heavenly Father; you have created a universe of light;
forgive us when we return to darkness.
Lord have mercy; **Lord have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world;
cleanse and heal our blinded sight.
Christ have mercy; **Christ have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you give us light in our hearts;
renew us in faith and love.
Lord have mercy; **Lord have mercy.**

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

2nd Reading: Isaiah 35

The Calypso Carol

See him lying on a bed of straw,
a draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore -
the Prince of glory is his name.

Chorus:

*O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again;
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when he came!*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the Saviour of the world!

Angels sing again the song you sang,
sing the glory of God's gracious plan;
sing that Beth'lem's little baby can
be salvation to the soul.

Mine are riches, from your poverty;
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

3rd Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

We say Mary's Song together:

**"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."**

4th Reading: Luke 2:1-12

Prayers concluding with The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
For ever and ever Amen.

5th Reading: Luke 2:13-20

Talk

In the bleak mid-winter
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow.
in the bleak mid-winter long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign;
in the bleak mid-winter
a stable-place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but only his mother
in her maiden bliss
worshipped the Beloved
with a kiss.