

Worship - Sunday 20th December 2020

A service of readings and carols



Opening music: Once in Royal David's City sung by the Chapel Choir, St.Edmund's School, Hindhead.

Welcome: Karen

Good morning everyone, and welcome to today's worship with the churches of Fleet URC and Beacon Hill URC. I am joined in leading this service of readings and carols by Tom Dean, a member of Beacon Hill URC.

We gather together today to hear with joy the message brought by angels. We shall continue our journey in heart and mind to Bethlehem, there to reflect on the nativity of our Saviour.

We shall do this through song, and through listening to the word of God; and as we lift up our hearts in praise, we shall also pray: for peace on earth, for fellowship among those created in the image of God, for care for the poor and needy, for the unity of the Church, and for ourselves.

Advent Candle Lighting meditation Tom & The Chevalier family

Call to worship Split Tom & Karen

We gather -
people of faith and no faith,
people of hope and no hope,
people of peace and no peace.

we gather with the longing
to be made whole again
if just for this time, here and now

we gather with a prayer,
however vague and tenuous,
that in spite of the absence
of virgins and angels, wise men and shepherds,
we might still be a witness to the birth of all love.

we gather as ready as we'll ever be
for this story of faith to unfold.

— written by Cheryl Lawrie, and posted on her website **[hold this space]**. <http://holdthisspace.org.au/>

Carol: O Come All ye Faithful Sam & Sara Hargreaves with brass played by Dan Warwick

Opening Prayer: Karen

The stars above us follow a course, flickering and dancing.
Our breath hangs in chilled air and our thoughts fragment and drift
around us like a flurry of snow.
Have I bought the right presents?
Are there enough beds?
How many Wise Men were there?
What is it actually like in Bethlehem tonight?

Accept our tumbling thoughts Lord
as you accept us, as you accepted shepherds,
as you have welcomed generations of ill-assorted seekers.

There are so many answers we don't know but we want to enjoy the wonder with you. Amen.

Reading: **Isaiah 9: 2 – 7** **Moira Bamfield Fleet URC**

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His 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.

Carol: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly David Doty

Reading: **Matthew 1:18-25** **Hugh Le Fanu BHURC**

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^{*} took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²²All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;^{*} and he named him Jesus.

Meditation: based on Silent Night **Karen & Tom**

**1. Silent night, holy night All is calm, all is bright Round
yon virgin mother and Child Holy Infant, so tender and
mild Sleep in heavenly peace Sleep in heavenly peace**

Lord, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we pray for a true and lasting peace for our world. Not the peace of the hills or the night sky, not the peace of a mother with her new born, wonderful as that may be, but true peace across the earth. We pray for the peace that brings wars to an end, that calms the most troubled mind.

**2. Silent night, holy night Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar Heavenly hosts sing
Alleluia Christ the Saviour is born Christ the Saviour is
born**

Lord, we pray that we might recognise you as the one who can save us from all that we don't want to be. We pray we might live a life fully human, a reflection of your own. We pray against the fears that might stop us reaching our full potential

**3. Silent night, holy night Son of God, Love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face With the dawn of
redeeming grace Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth Jesus, Lord,
at Thy birth**

Lord, we thank you that you cared for us so much that you came to draw us back to yourself. We pray that we may lay aside our selfishness and allow you to be Lord, leading us into lives of generosity. We pray that your love might shine through us, lighting up the dark places of this world.

4. Silent night, holy night God's great love giving life Let the world together rejoice Sing forever with one voice Heaven's hope is here Heaven's hope is here

Lord, we thank you for that holy night which changed the world for ever. We pray that we may live as one, singing together your songs of peace, sharing Heaven's hope with all.

Silent night, holy night God's great love giving life Let the world together rejoice Sing forever with one voice Heaven's hope is here Heaven's hope is here.

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Carol: Star carol sung by the Chapel Choir, St. Edmund's School. Hindhead

Reading: **Luke 2: 8 -20 Alan Tyler Fleet URC**

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Carol: While Shepherds watched their flocks by night
(worship cloud)

Reading: **John 1: 1 -14 Kathy Le Fanu**

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Carol: In the bleak midwinter Keith & Krystyn Getty

Prayers: Tom

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ, born into our world. As we look forward to giving and receiving gifts, we thank you for all the good things we enjoy.

God of love **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people who are not looking forward to Christmas, because they are cold or hungry, or are on their own. May they receive the things they need and find friendship and care.

God of love **hear our prayer.**

As we celebrate the wonderful birth of Jesus our Saviour, which shows us your great love, we thank you for the joy of human birth.

Protect and strengthen all babies and those who care for them.

God of love **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our families and friends: for those travelling to celebrate Christmas, and for all our loved ones. May we share with each other in happiness and peace.

God of love **hear our prayer. Amen**

Blessing Karen

God our Father, you loved the world so much

you gave your only Son to free us

from the ancient power of sin and death.

Help us who wait for his coming and lead us to true liberty.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever. Amen

(Liturgy of the Hours)

Closing Music: The Little Road to Bethlehem sung by the Chapel Choir, St.Edmund's School, Hindhead

Carols sung by the Chapel Choir & Senior Choir of St.Edmund's School, Hindhead by permission - a special word of thanks to the children of the choirs, the accompanists Matthew Cooke & Clive Osgood and the Director of Music Danielle Green for granting permission to play their recordings

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