**Morning Praise @ Home 29th December 2024**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading John 3: 16 – 21

### Reflection from Ruth

﻿Today we are celebrating carols from around the world and our reading fits in very well with that.  
God loved the *world* so much that he sent his son to save it.  
And that means the whole world - when we read the news at the moment it seems that a lot of the world lives in darkness - the darkness of evil, of war, of suffering.   
It is always difficult when faced with the nature of evil to explain or even to understand it, and how does Jesus coming to earth 2000 years ago help what’s happening in the world today?

John Lennox was an Oxford professor and theologian and has written extensively on this issue saying -  
What is God doing on a cross? The answer is:- if that is so, God has not remained distant from our human suffering but has become part of it. So He shares in the suffering of all people who suffer, in this country and all over the world.  
However, if that was all there was to it, we would be stuck.  
But of course it’s not all there is to it.  
In our reading we read that ‘the son of man will be lifted up’ and that is where God’s love for the world reveals itself: in taking on all the evil in the world and overcoming it by rising from the dead.  
And all those people who have suffered in Palestine, and Ukraine, and Auschwitz and everywhere there is human suffering will get justice - the justice of God’s kingdom.  
And it’s about what He took on for us.   
For *me.*

﻿He took on the harsh words that I reserve for those I love most. He took every one of the petty excuses that I use to defend myself. He took my pride and my vanity: my self-importance and my self-reliance. He took every wrong decision I have ever made. He took those moments where I have stared down the right path, seen what it would cost me, and chosen the easy road instead, the hundreds of times I never said thank you, and the thousands of times I was so self-obsessed that I was blinded to the good that I could do.  
And accepting the truth of that sacrifice allows all of us to step out of the darkness into the light.

We have spent Advent preparing to celebrate the incarnation - when God came to live among us - but what does the incarnation look like when played out in real life?

Recently I watched the ‘Call the Midwife’ first ever Christmas special - which centred round the story of a woman who was dirty, unkempt, covered in lice. As the story unfolded we learned that she had been in the workhouse where all her children had died, they were taken from her and she never saw them again.  
There is a scene where the nuns are singing ‘O Come, O Come Emmanuel’- the scene changes to two nuns, carefully and lovingly bathing this woman - restoring her humanity - ‘whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.’  
At the end we see one of the midwives finding where the common graves were for the workhouse, and working out where the children were buried. So this woman could stand on the ground above where her children were buried - through this nurse her broken heart was bound up.  
This is just a story though, isn’t it? Except it’s not, it’s played out in countless places where there is suffering all over the world, by people who offer love and compassion and try to alleviate the suffering - and that is when we see Emmanuel - God among us. **Amen**

### Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Ron**

Heavenly Father empower by your spirit all Christian people and the work of your church in every land and as 2024 draws to a close and a New Year begins and with it the next chapter of our lives, help us to grow in faith and wisdom and to recognise your presence with us in all we do and say.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, creator and preserver of all mankind, we pray for people of every race, and in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among nations.  We pray that the coming year will see an end to War and Terrorism, and we pray for all who are striving to find a peaceful solution to war-torn parts of our world.

Father, in these troubled times we especially pray for migrants and refugees; that they may find places of welcome and safety.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we thank you for sending the angels to sing at the birth of your son in Bethlehem, we pray that you give that song of the kingdom to all who weep; to the sick and the lonely; the aged and the dying.

We pray also that you give the song of joy to all who are now on the road to recovery and recuperation and the song of thanks to all who helped them on that road.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, for members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall. Help us to experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit within us, and the fellowship of the church family around us until we are reunited once more in your heavenly kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, we give thanks for all that you do in our lives. As the year ends, we commend to you all those for whom we have prayed throughout the year and ask that you continue to use us and our prayers to make a difference in their lives.

As we look forward to the coming year, we know that you will continue to supply all that we need for our daily lives.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**