



## Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

**Christmas Day 2020 Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon.**

This written worship is for you to use as we gather in separate places (some at home, some in the building) but truly united by the power of the Holy Spirit in love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas Day is such a very special day in our Christian year. In Jesus we have the birth of hope, and this year, perhaps more than any, the hope and love of Jesus is so important to share with our families and friends and all who are lonely, bereaved or anxious.



### **Opening words:**

Behold I bring you news of great joy! The Word became flesh; He lives among us and we see His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

### **Lighting the Advent Candle:**

We light again the first candle in anticipation and feel hope rising up within us. We name it HOPE.

We light again the second candle as we choose to be a peaceful presence in the midst of our anxious world and call it PEACE.

We light again the third candle remembering that God has replaced our mourning with the oil of gladness, we name it JOY.

We light again our fourth candle reminding us of God's transforming love. God's greatest promise fulfilled; we name it LOVE.

We now light our central candle, white, to signify the purity of Jesus.

Joy to the world – the Lord has come!  
Jesus is the light of the world – a light no darkness can ever put out.

**Hymn: Light a candle in a darkened place**  
**StF 174** Sing/read/pray/proclaim.

Light a candle in a darkened place,  
in its flame see hope on every face,  
Christ our Saviour will be born,  
heralding a brand new dawn,  
so let it burn.

In the darkness, see the coming light,  
Word of God speaks through the darkest night,  
keep a watch, the time is near,  
time for hope and not for fear,  
so let it burn

Stepping through each page of history,  
prophets contemplate this mystery,

celebrate the coming King,  
words of joy and hope they bring,  
so let it burn.

In the desert now the waiting's done,  
make things ready for your King, says  
John, see his glory is revealed  
and the hope for all is sealed,  
so let it burn.

Mary found true favour with the Lord,  
yet she trembled at his strange reward,  
knew this was the special One,  
hope for many through God's Son,  
so let it burn.

Do not fear, today I bring good cheer,  
Jesus Christ, the Saviour now is here, God  
has lit his flame of love,  
through His Son from heaven above,  
So let it burn. Clare Stainsbury (b 1959)

**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. **Amen.** Collect for Christmas Day MWB

**Scripture Readings:** Isaiah 9:2-7, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-20.

**Reflection:** The birth of Jesus is foretold in the prophesy of Isaiah, recounted as the actual event by Luke and the purpose of the birth explained by Paul in his letter to Titus. Verse 11 of Titus is surely our clarion call of the day: "for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all". The offer of salvation is indeed for all but sadly not all will receive it.

In the same way as the angel of the Lord (Luke 2:10) says "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people". When the shepherds share the news of what has taken place "all who heard it were amazed" (verse 18).

The birth of Jesus is for all people, family friends and the whole world. Let us play our part, strengthened by God's Holy Spirit to bring this incredible message of joy to all.

**Song Joy to the world StF 330:** Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.

Joy to the World , the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Saviour reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love. Isaac Watts (1674-1748).

**Closing Prayer:** Let us proclaim with joy that we have seen the glory of God. That the light shines brightly and the darkness will not overcome it. And may the love of the Creator The joy of the Spirit And the peace of the Christ-child Be with you this Christmas morn and evermore. **Amen**