

Connected

19th December 2021 to 07 January 2022

Verse For Christmas

But Mary treasured all these words
and pondered them in her heart.

(Luke 2: 19)

Sermon Snippets

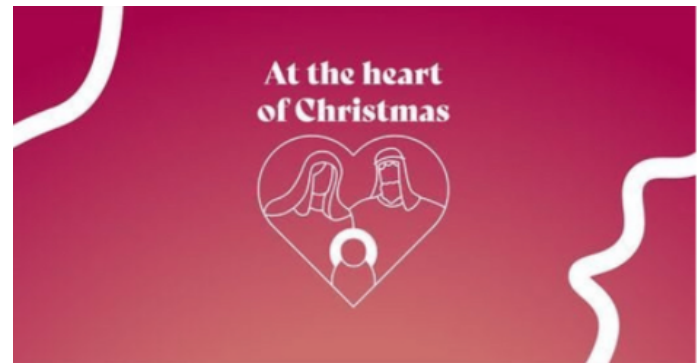
(Micah 5: 2-5a, 1 Samuel 15 & 16)

The people of Israel wanted a King like the other countries around them. God granted them a king, Saul, a man head and shoulders taller than others. The prophet Samuel was called to anoint him with oil and he was made King. Unfortunately, the new King allowed his pride to blind him, and he disobeyed God's commands. 1 Samuel 15: 11 says that the Lord grieved that he had made Saul King over Israel. In the next chapter the Lord says to Samuel 'I have rejected Saul as King. Fill your horn with oil and be on your way to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be King'.

Samuel went as commanded. His power was such that when he arrived in Bethlehem the elders of the town trembled when they met him and asked, 'Do you come in peace?' Samuel replied, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' At the sacrifice Samuel saw Jesse with his eldest son, Eliab, and thought surely this is the one. God said to Samuel 'Do not consider appearance or height, the Lord looks on the heart'. Jesse called each of his sons to pass in front of Samuel. None was given the nod until Samuel asked, 'are these all the sons you have?'

Jesse replied, 'There is the youngest tending the sheep'. They were waiting to sit to eat the banquet set before the great man. Samuel said we will not sit until he comes. The Lord said to Samuel when the youngest, David, arrives, 'Rise and anoint him with oil; he is the one.' The Lord had chosen David and Bethlehem.

Tom's Christmas Message



We're nearing Christmas and I'm delighted to be celebrating such a wonderful event once again. And whilst travel and meetings may be restricted – let's not miss out on what is at the "heart of Christmas". So, much as I'm one for tinsel and mince pies, the real joy is expressed in this picture above . . .

Here we see a special child but born into a situation which was quite ordinary – a poor Mum and Dad in a neighbourhood which was unfamiliar to them. God had chosen to enter our confused and confusing world himself and to be vulnerable enough to face all the knocks and bruises this world had to offer. In the person of Jesus we have not a God protecting himself, rather opening himself to the reality of our world.

After the visit of the excited shepherds to see the infant Jesus, the gospel writer Luke records "But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." It was a huge amount for Mary to take in, but she was no doubt starting to absorb this truth. I pray that not only will you have a joyful and safe Christmas but also that you will (re)discover the wonder of a God who comes down to earth to be with us and help us.

God bless you and Happy Christmas.

Tom

Prayer Pointers

As this edition of Connected covers three weeks, the suggestion is to use these prayers each week praying for a different situation each time.

Monday:

On the Monday of each week, as far as is humanly possible, picture God in His glory. Consider with wonder the immense yet intimate God, the terrifying yet tender God, the awesome yet approachable God. And be moved to worship.

Tuesday:

On the Tuesday of each week, look at the world news either in a newspaper or online. Ask God to fill you with compassion for one particular part of the world, or one particular issue. Pray for justice, equality and cooperation between nations.

Wednesday:

On the Wednesday of each week, remember before God one person or family who lives near you. Picture God sharing with them in their joy, their anxiety or their sorrow. Ask God for courage to speak to them, perhaps even to share something of yourself with them.

Thursday:

On the Thursday of each week, pray for an aspect of the environmental issues which affect our planet. This is God's creation and we have been entrusted with its care, yet we don't seem to be doing a very good job of it. Ask God if there is more that we can do individually and collectively.

Friday:

On the Friday of each week, think of one charity you know of. Take some time to reflect on that charity's work. If you have the opportunity to do so, read something of their work and focus on their specific prayer requests.

Saturday:

On the Saturday of each week, reflect on what the week has been like. Give thanks to God for all that we have, and for the times when we have done his will. Ask for forgiveness when we haven't quite got it right, and praise Him for the encouragement he offers as we get back up on our feet to try again.

Sunday:

On the Sunday of each week, think of one person involved in the running of one (or both) of our churches. Picture them as they work. Ask God to pour His Spirit of encouragement, strength and wisdom on them.

Notices

also see 'What's On Over Christmas' on page 4)

Church Office Opening

The Church Office will be open 08.30-12.30 Monday 20 Dec to Thursday 23 Dec, and 0900-11.00 Friday 24th. It will then be closed until Tuesday 04 January 2022. The answerphone and emails will be checked for any urgent messages between Christmas and New Year.

Reserving Seats for Christmas

There are still some seats available for the Nativity Service and the Christ Church Carols by Candlelight Service. Please phone or email the Church Office to reserve your place.

Bible Notes

If you have ordered Bible Notes, these will be available for collection in church this Sunday.

Used Stamps

Please save used Christmas stamps (leaving a one centimetre border) for The Bible Society. British Special Issue and Foreign ones are also acceptable. Please place them in the Stamp Box on the table in the Christ Church foyer.



Covid Update

Following recent developments with Covid, and following Government guidelines, we are now asking everyone to wear a mask at all times in church. This applies to both congregations. We also regret that we will be unable to offer refreshments after the services. Further updates will be given when we receive more information.

Watch the Christmas Services

at www.ccwsm.org.uk

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.

Christmas Messages from The Church Wardens

Mostly we want to say THANK YOU! We so much appreciate all that Christ Church people do to help make this a safe and welcoming place to come to, and a supportive community to belong to.

Thank you for stepping up when all the rotas were reinstated, rejigged and revised.

Thank you for going above and beyond when extra help was needed to move chairs, fix broken bits, paint and scrub. For making the garden look great and beautifying the church with flowers, for building scaffold towers, delivering Connected, and much, much, more - THANK YOU.

Thank you that despite all the lockdowns, masks, one-way systems, singing or not singing and a hundred other changing rules and regulations, you have been understanding, helpful, co-operative and best of all cheerful.

And last but not least - thank you for praying for us. We needed it and it makes the world of difference.

Angie & Bev

Keith, Mary and Pat would like to say 'Thank You' to all the people who have supported them during this last year.

There are so many to thank – the people who clean; the people who garden; the people in the background who just get on with so many jobs that keep our church and gardens looking lovely.

Thank you too to all who make everyone so welcome.

A big Thank You to you all, and a very blessed Christmas to everyone.

Keith, Mary & Pat

Boxing Day

In view of the increasing uncertainty regarding the new Covid variant, the Diocese have given all churches the dispensation not to hold a service on Boxing Day.

Given many of us will be attending possibly a number of services over the Christmas season this seems sensible not to add one further service of mixing together. The leadership at Emmanuel have therefore decided not to hold a the Boxing Day United service (which was to be for both churches).

A reflection video for parishes to share on Boxing Day featuring Bishop Ruth will be available to download from the Diocesan Vimeo channel next week. [Click on this link](#) to access the channel.

Tom



Tom's pre-Carol Service tutorial, was always appreciated!

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Connected Dates

This will be the last edition of Connected for 2021. The next edition will be out on Friday 07 January.

My heartfelt thanks go to Dina, Felicity, Jane and Sandra & Dave who deliver printed copies each week to those who do not have computers. I would also like to thank the many people who have contributed articles over the year. Please keep them coming in 2022!

Phil

Not There

He was not there
When Samuel came with orders to anoint
The king that God had chosen in Saul's place.
As Samuel came that day to Bethlehem
He saw before him seven of Jesse's sons,
Since God had said it would be one of them.
And yet it seemed that they were not the ones.
Where was the special one he should appoint?
Samuel asked Jesse "Have I met them all?"
Then Jesse felt a little ill at ease.
"There is the youngest, but he tends the sheep."
"I'll not sit down", said Samuel "till he comes."
So he was called for, and with some surprise
He came to meet the prophet standing there.
Yes, David came – a lad with handsome face,
A sturdy, lithe physique and lovely eyes,
The one God sent his prophet out to seek:
A shepherd boy – yet God's elected one;
A lonely boy who'd learned to fight and sing;
A shepherd boy – yet God's anointed king.

He was not there:
The Son of God, great David's greater Son,
Inheritor of all the world,
The righteous judge, defender of the weak,
Whom kings of Tarshish and of distant shores,
Of Sheba and of Seba bringing gifts would seek,
The warrior-king of whom the prophets spoke,
The priest for ever, God' anointed One,
Before whom enemies would lick the dust,
Deliverer from the mighty foreign yoke –
Messiah for Israel – surely one who must
Be born a prince in great Jerusalem!

When wise men travelled from the East
To worship him inside the palace walls,
He was not there –
But in the stable of an inn,
Cradled within a cattle trough,
A bed of straw,
At Bethlehem.

What's On Over Christmas

17 Dec at 7pm at Emmanuel Church -

Carols by Candlelight

19 Dec at 6pm at Christ Church -

Carols by Candlelight (booking required)

21 Dec at 12noon at Emmanuel Church -

The Beacon

24 Dec at 4pm at Christ Church -

Nativity Service (booking required)

24 Dec at 11pm at Christ Church -

Midnight Communion

25 Dec at 10.30 at both Churches -

Christmas Day Communion services

26 December

There are no services today at either church

Interserve Message

A thanks from Interserve which both our churches have supported:

Thank you for your kind and compassionate spirit, your heart to help. Thank you for accepting to be part of God's provision to the BLISS Project this season.

"Interserve's support at difficult points has been an answer to prayer, and without their help throughout 2020/2021, this key missional support business would not be here today."

Louise, Interserve Partner

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