

# Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet, 27<sup>th</sup> December

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for  
you by Mr Terry Jobling.

Let us celebrate that God has come to be amongst us,  
Jesus born of Mary.

## Hymn: Let earth and heaven combine

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Let earth and heaven combine,  
angels and men agree,  
to praise in songs divine  
the incarnate Deity,  
our God contracted to a span,  
incomprehensibly made man.
- 2 He laid his glory by,  
he wrapped him in our clay;  
unmarked by human eye,  
the latent Godhead lay;  
infant of days he here became,  
and bore the mild Immanuel's name.
- 3 Unsearchable the love  
that has the Saviour brought;  
the grace is far above  
both men or angels' thought:  
suffice for us that God, we know,  
our God, is manifest below.
- 4 He deigns in flesh to appear,  
widest extremes to join;  
to bring our vileness near,  
and make us all divine:  
and we the life of God shall know,  
for God is manifest below.

5      Made perfect first in love,  
and sanctified by grace,  
we shall from earth remove,  
and see his glorious face:  
his love shall then be fully showed,  
and that shall all be lost in God.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

### The Good News Song

We have been clothed with good news,  
embraced by eternal hope,  
and gifted seeds of righteousness ...

**God is with us now and forever**

We cannot keep silent;  
in us and through us  
God will do new things ...

**God is with us now and forever**

We will shout above the clamour,  
we will whisper to the vulnerable,  
we will sing with all creation ...

**God is with us now and forever**

Rachel Poolman

### Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness

Thank you God for this precious gift. But why come to us?

We confess that we are not good people. Too often our love does not burn to you and to one another, as it should. Yet we experience this astonishing miracle, that we are precious in your sight.

Lord, forgive us for our failure to love.

Yet, Lord, we dare believe that you do offer forgiveness, you do offer us new life.

Here, at Christmas, you come among us to offer forgiveness, new life.

How the shepherds heard it over Bethlehem “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.”

God is with us, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3**

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

**I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.**

**For as the soil makes the young plant come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.**

**For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.**

**The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.**

## **Hymn: Silent night, holy night**

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

**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.**

**2        Silent night, holy night!  
          Shepherds first saw the sight!  
          Glories stream from heaven afar;  
          Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!  
          Christ the Saviour is born!  
          Christ the Saviour is born!**

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.

Joseph Mohr (1792–1848)  
translated by Stopford Augustus Brooke (1832–1916)

### Luke 2:21-40

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord'), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: 'a pair of doves or two young pigeons'.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.'

The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: 'This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

### **Reflection**

Jerusalem - recently our daughter gave us as a present a classic history of the city, prepared by Simon Sebag Montefiore. We call it the Holy City, yet its history reveals some of the worst aspects of humanity. Violence, intrigue, subjugation and exile and, today, a focal point of tension.

The events, recorded by Luke, speak of a community under foreign occupation with all the anger and frustration this would generate. Yet we read here of a new hope, a new birth of Israel's life.

What can this say to our own journey of faith in present, turbulent age?

The family found that their spiritual life was powerfully strengthened by their religious tradition, with all its hopes and memories.

St. Luke was not a Jew, yet he is so keen to point out how Joseph and Mary observed all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

I believe that our own journey is enriched as we remember our own background of devotion and prayer. But experienced in a living community in which new ways are found to express our faith.

**This last year many of our worship practices have been stopped; yet new awareness of witness have emerged. We have shared in the 'home worship' services and have been kept together by 'In Touch'.**

**In St. Luke's account we see the faith of two old people, there would surely have been others like them. In spite of the uncertain times in which they lived, they had persevered. To put in plain language, they had 'stuck at it', they had 'kept going'. Let their witness speak to us as we face the many pressures on our faith.**

**Yet St. Luke shows that in this event there is more than human discipline and faith. The whole event is permeated with the living energy of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

**Thus we read of Simeon: "It has been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit". The initiative of God creating the new, as he is doing, continually.**

**I began referring to the Montefiory's book about Jerusalem. A story of repeated failures, apparent death of faith yet, miraculously, new birth. This is our experience today.**

**A final look at the two folk, Simeon and Anna. Most of their lives were over. Yet, full of spirit and lives full of purpose.**

**As I was preparing this theme an example came through the post, a Christmas greeting from friends, Rev John and Shirley Davies of Gobowen. A most creative old couple. John has written several devotional books and a new one is due to appear in the new year. He is in his 94<sup>th</sup> year! John Bell is writing the preface and any money coming to the author will go to 'Medical Aid for Palestinians'.**

**I never cease to be impressed by some of our own older people, whose thinking continues to be creative and spirit filled. Each generation brings its own gifts of the spirit to bring renewal to the community.**

### **Prayers of intercession**

**Let us turn our thoughts to our brothers and sisters in other lands. Our concern for our national interests in regard to Covid 19 and its side effects can make us forget what is happening elsewhere.**

**The suffering of the people of Syria, Iraq and Yemen are continuing. Please may the people of these lands receive peace and a decent future.**

May the folk in these lands who are working for good, often in danger, be empowered by your Spirit.

We think too of the people of Iran, experiencing terrible Covid deaths and their efforts to cope being hampered by foreign sanctions.

For your love for us, **we thank you.**

Let us pray for a better understanding between people of different faiths. We think of countries where there is intolerance and sometimes persecution of minority groups. It is our hope that there will be respect and kindness.

And in our own country we pray for good relations between different faith groups. Empower us to encounter God in the face of our neighbours.

For your love for us, **we thank you.**

Let us think of our own communities. For any folk in distress . . .

For the ill, be it in body or mind, may there be healing.

For the lonely, especially at this time of social isolation, may folk receive contact with other in any permissible way.

For any folk who are anxious or depressed, people who have lost their sense of purpose. May they be uplifted.

For any who are grieving for a loved one. Bless them

For your love for us, **we thank you.**

Let us remember those who have died and are part of your kingdom, folk we have known who have helped us and loved us in our earlier year. We remember them thankfully and we rejoice that they, with us, are part of the communion of believers.

For your love for us, **we thank you.**

**Amen.**

### **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.

### Hymn: Love came down at Christmas

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
star and angels gave the sign.
- 2 Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus:  
but wherewith for sacred sign?
- 3 Love shall be our token,  
love be yours and love be mine,  
love to God and all men,  
love for plea and gift and sign

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–1894)

### The Blessing:

Take the Christ child in your arms.  
Look into his newborn eyes.  
bear his scanty weight;  
know him for who he is  
and praise God.

When it comes, remember and cherish this moment of holding in  
your arms the one who holds the whole world in his.

And praise God.

Maggie Hindley