

The Journey To Bethlehem

Hope Is Born – Jesus Has Arrived
24th December 2021



Welcome

Welcome to **Church Together**.

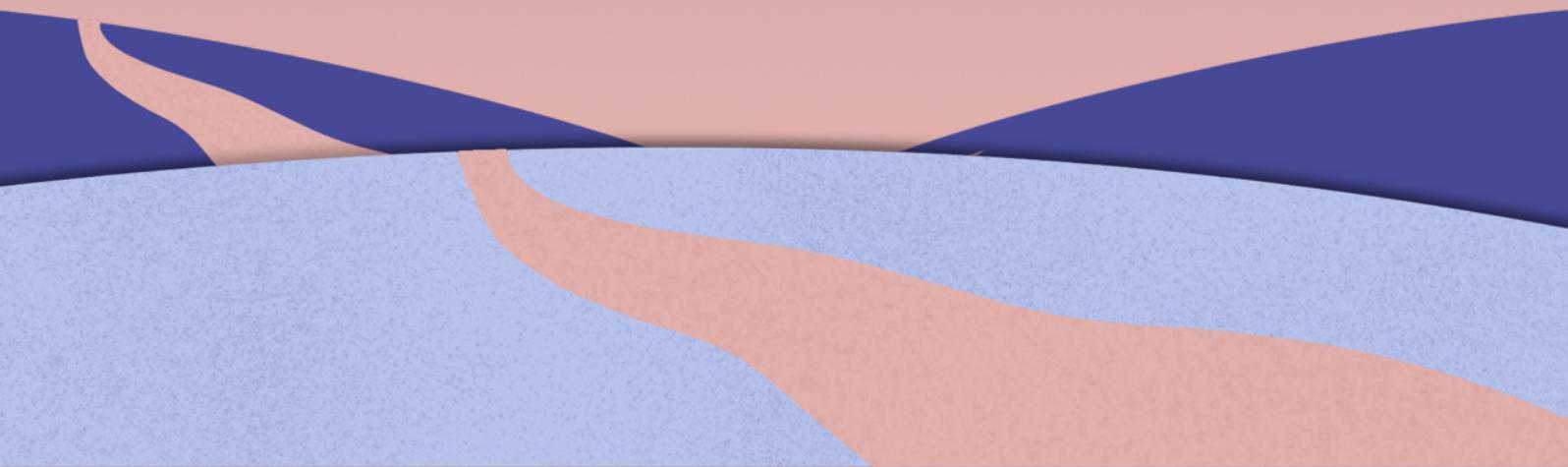
No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together.

Our flexible Sunday worship patterns blend together on - line services, home deliveries and E - mailed copies of Church Together.

Tonight's Carol Service will be looking at a variety of Bible passages.

The theme for tonight's service is:

Journey To Bethlehem - Hope Is Born - Jesus Has Arrived!





Tonight's service that is set out in this edition of **Church Together** is Our Annual Carols By Candlelight Service. A very warm welcome is also given to our guest Organist **Mr. Granville Brook**. We hope that you will be able to engage with what has been produced for our **Special Carols By Candlelight Service** and that you would indeed **Know That Hope Has Been Born – Jesus Has Arrived!**

Call To Worship

Isaiah 12 v. 1 - 6 NLT

In that day you will sing:

'Praise the Lord!

He was angry with me, but now he
comforts me.

See, God has come to save me.

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

The Lord God is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation'.

With joy you will drink deeply from the
fountain of salvation! In that wonderful
day you will sing:

'Thank the Lord!

Praise his name!

Tell the world what he has done.

Oh, how mighty he is!

Sing to the Lord, for he has done
wonderful things.

Make known his praise around the world.

Let all the people of Jerusalem shout his
praise with joy!

For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives
among you'.



Opening Prayer Of Invitation

We greet your coming, Lord, with wonder:

Come appear among us, you who are indescribable in glory,
Come be close to us, you who are incandescent in holiness,
Come make your home among us, you who reign in splendour.

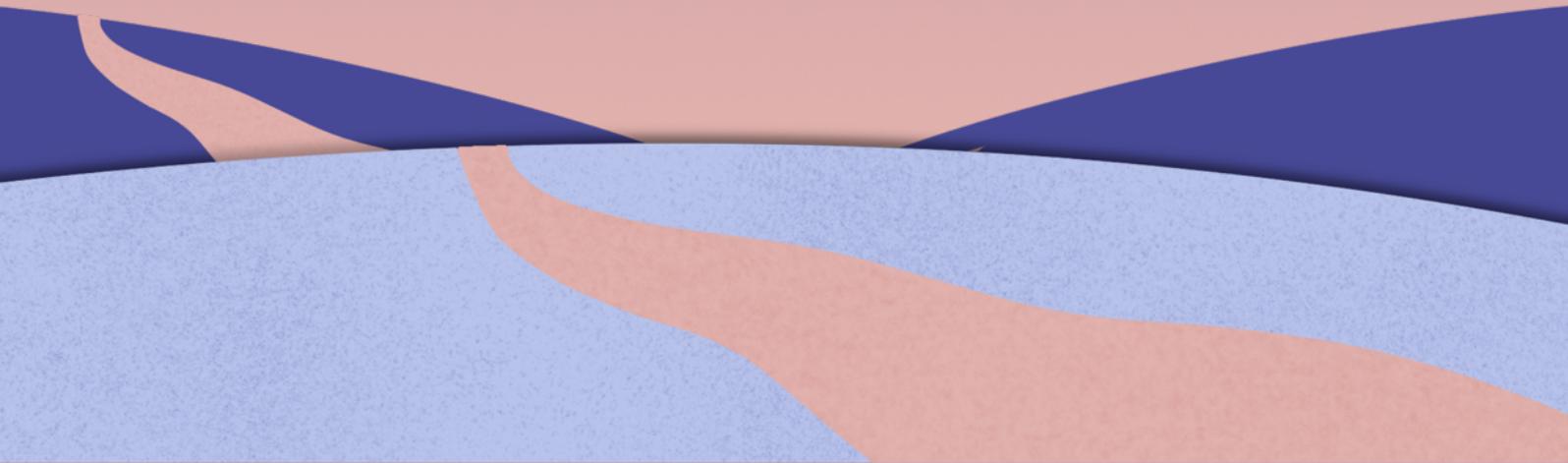
We greet your coming, Lord, with repentance:

Come wash away our pride, you who were born in humility,
Come wash away selfishness, you who were born helpless,
Come wash away our failure, you who were born sinless.

We greet your coming, Lord, with joy:

Come reveal yourself to us in Jesus,
Come show us true dignity in his humanity,
Come show us our destiny in his eternal life.
Yes Lord, we greet you – now as a baby, then as a King.

Amen.





A Different Kind Of Christmas

Sometimes Christmas is just overwhelming, it seems,
As we rush around buying up stuff.

We spend without end, and we rack up those bills,
But it feels like it's never enough.

So this Christmas, let's all take a different approach:

Let's try to be more in accord

With God's Christmas gift, the best one of all--

Our sweet Jesus, our Saviour, our Lord.

We'll be gentle and patient, and loving and kind,

And we'll keep our priorities straight;

The gifts of the Spirit, the gifts of the heart

Are the ones that we'll all celebrate.

And our stress will decrease, and we'll feel more at peace,

As we decorate, package, and trim;

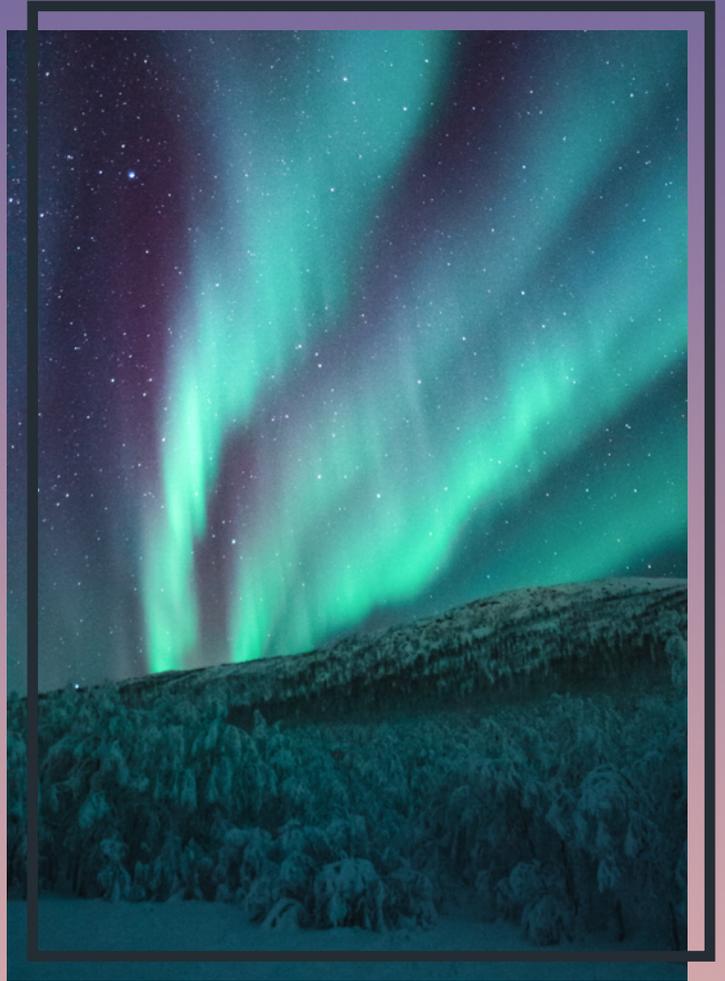
Our new Christmas will be a pure joy and delight,

As we try to be much more like Him.

By Joanna Fuchs

Song Suggestion

Ding Dong, Merrily On High



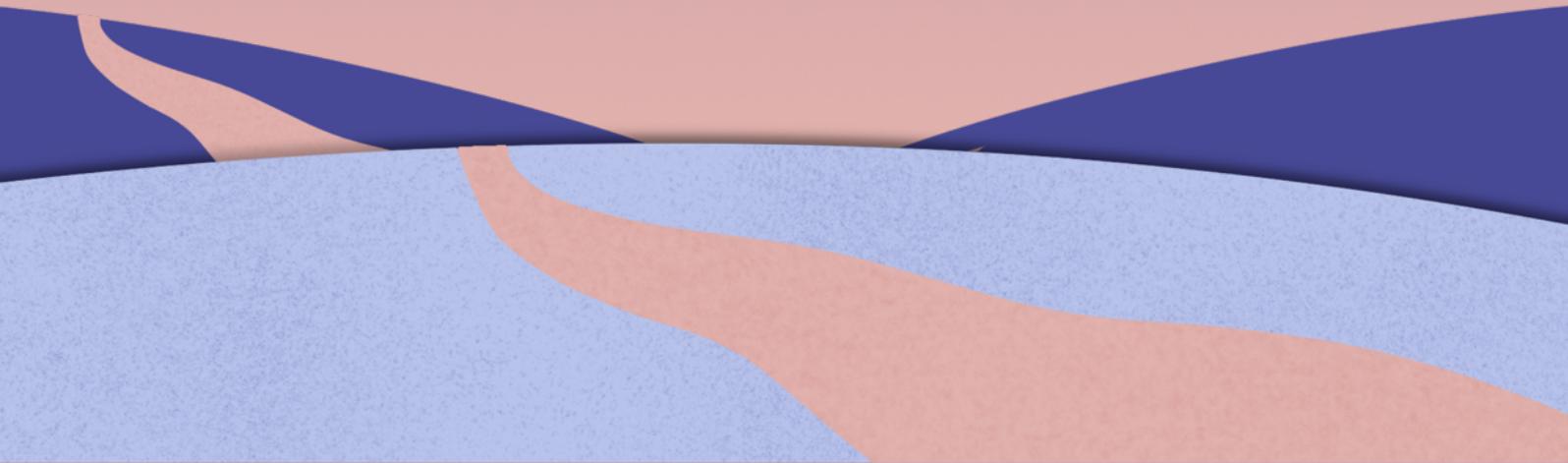
Bible

Reading

1 John 1 v. 1 – 4 NIV

The incarnation of the Word of life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.





Song Suggestion

The First Nowell The Angel Did
Say



Bible

Reading

Isaiah 9 v. 1 – 7 NIV

9 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan –

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

3 You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,

the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

5 Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

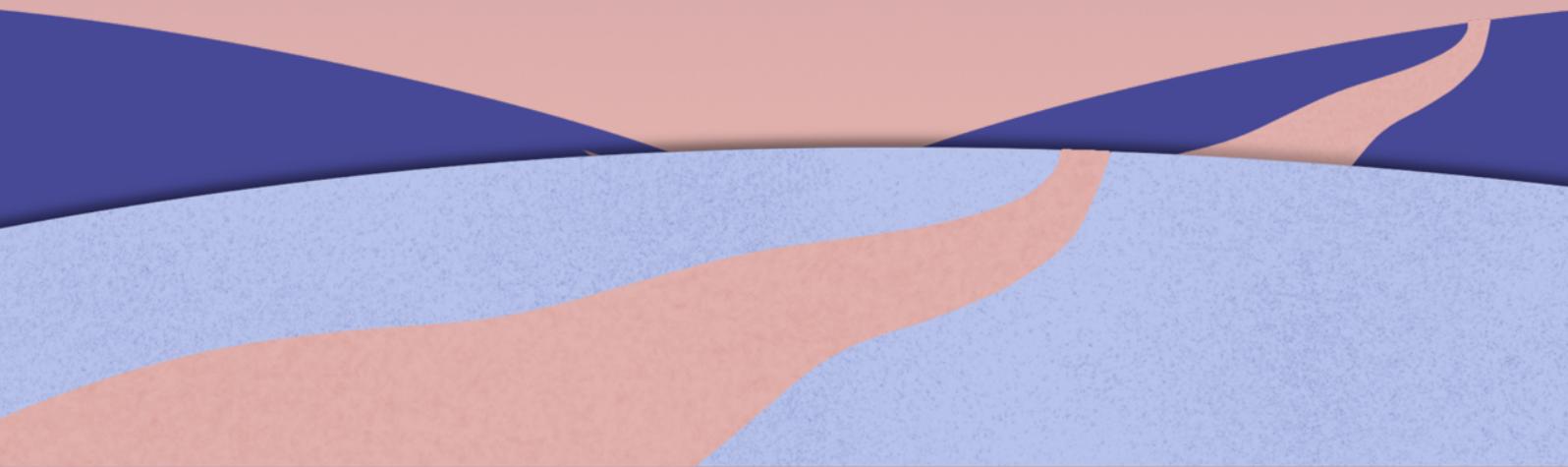
6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

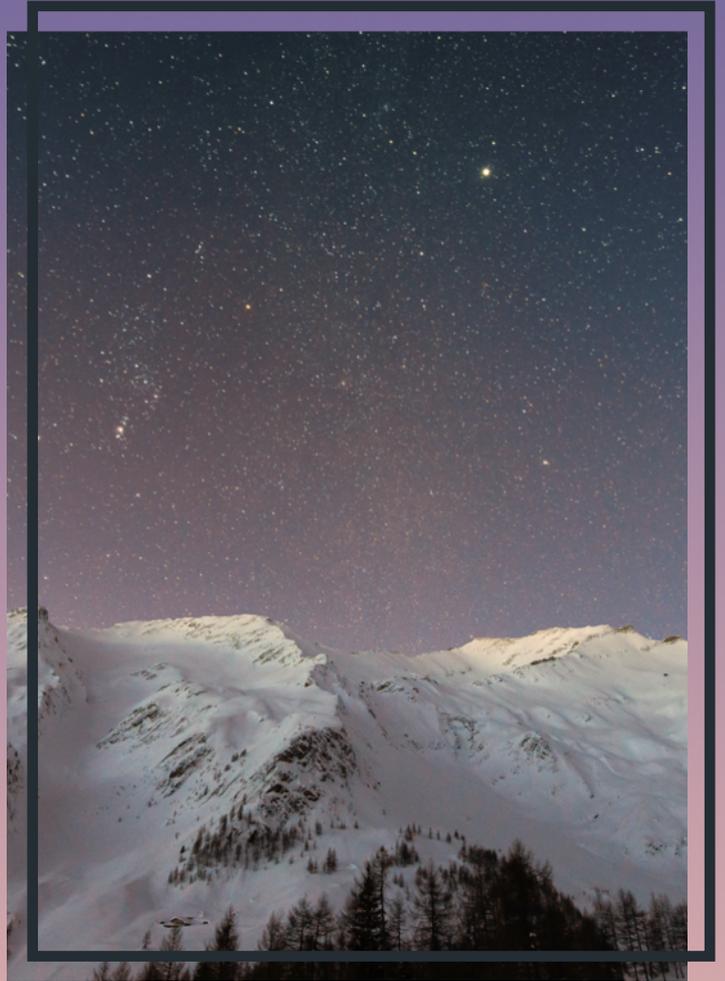
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and for ever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.



Song Suggestion

In The Bleak Midwinter, Frosty
Wind Made Moan



Bible

Reading

Luke 1 v. 67 – 80 NIV

Zechariah's song

67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

68 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,

because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David

70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

71 salvation from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us –

72 to show mercy to our ancestors

and to remember his holy covenant,

73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,

and to enable us to serve him without fear

75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

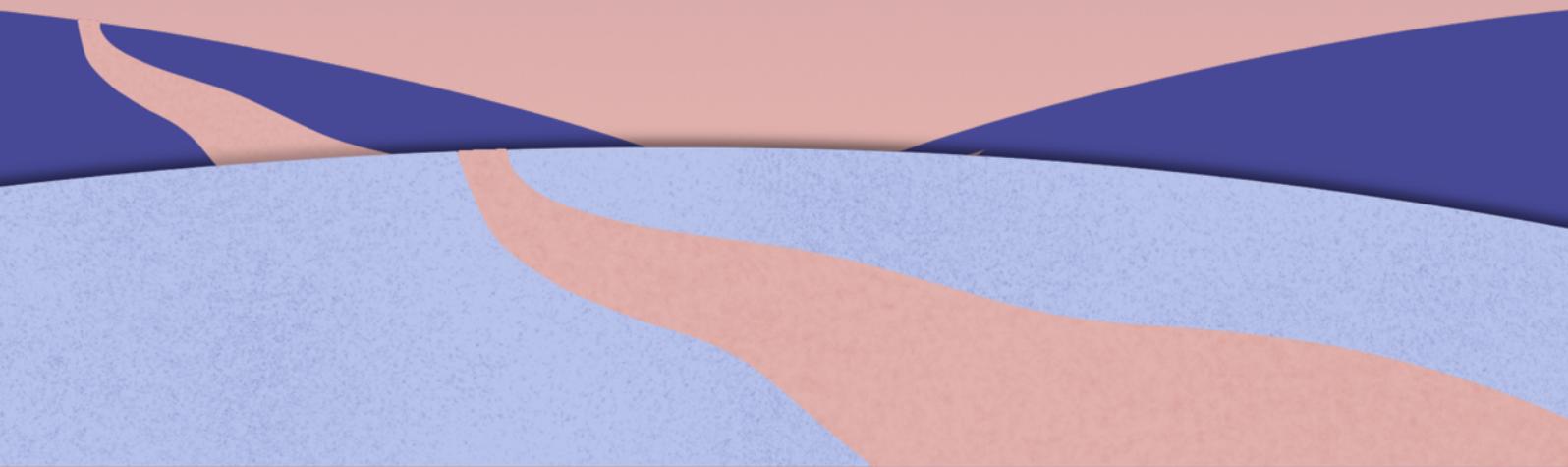
77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,

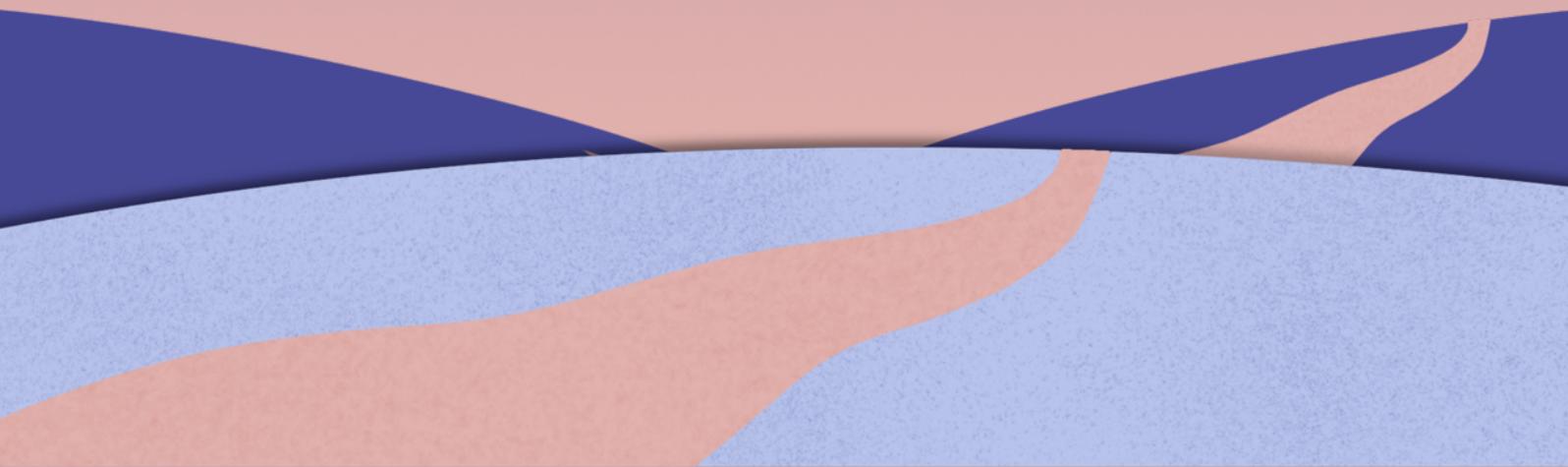
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

79 to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.'

80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the
wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.





Song Suggestion

O Little Town Of Bethlehem



Bible

Reading

Matthew 1 v. 18 – 25 NIV

Joseph accepts Jesus as his son

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

A Prayer For Christmas Eve

Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

May the forgiving spirit of Him to whom we dedicate this season prevail again on earth.

May people live in freedom, worshipping as they see fit, gently loving each others.

May the sanctity of the home be ever preserved.

May peace, joy, hope and love, reign supreme.

Loving God, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
that we may share in the gladness of the shepherds,
and that we may share in worship like that of the wise men.

Close the door of hate

and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

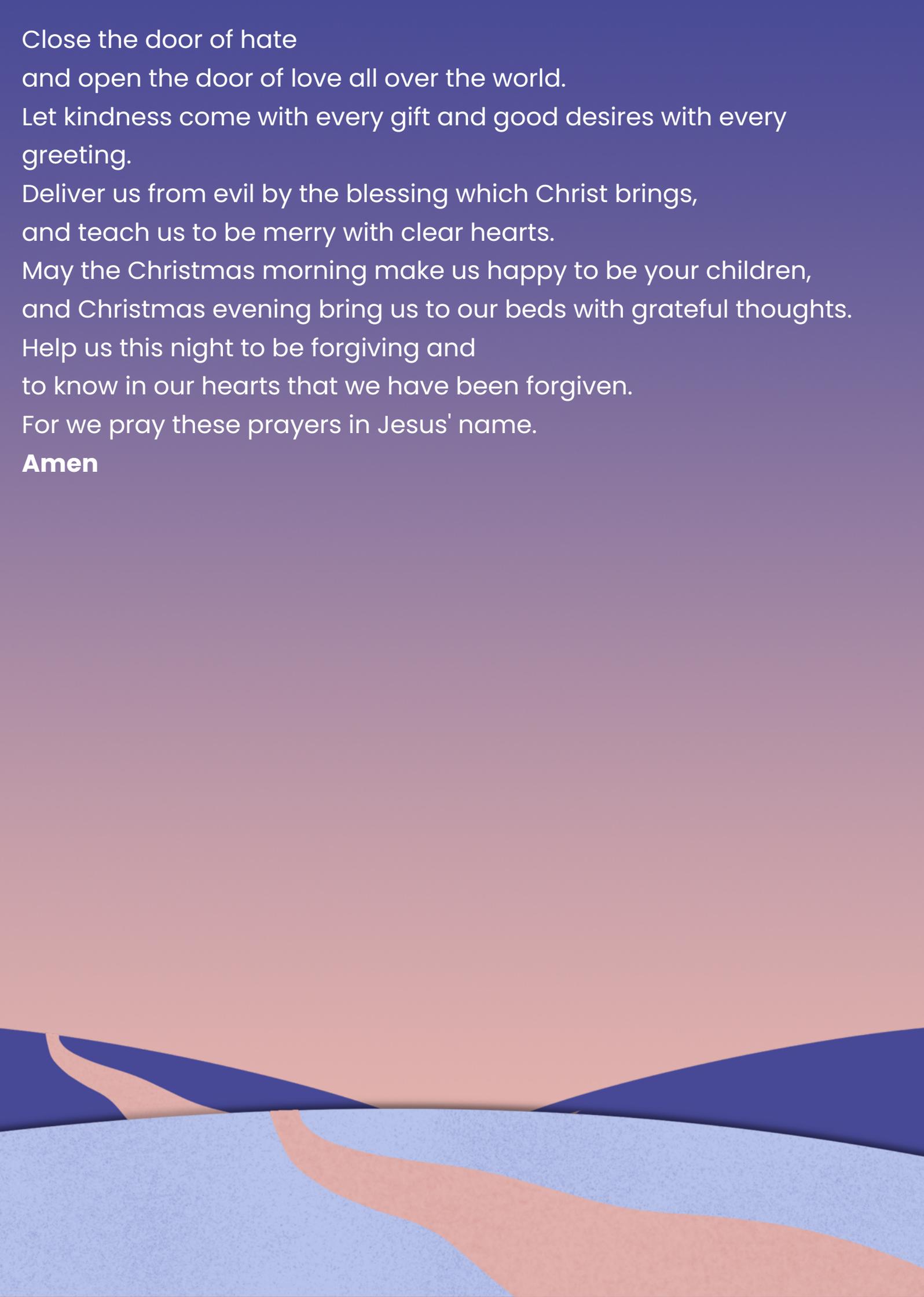
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts.

Help us this night to be forgiving and
to know in our hearts that we have been forgiven.

For we pray these prayers in Jesus' name.

Amen





Church Together

Thought

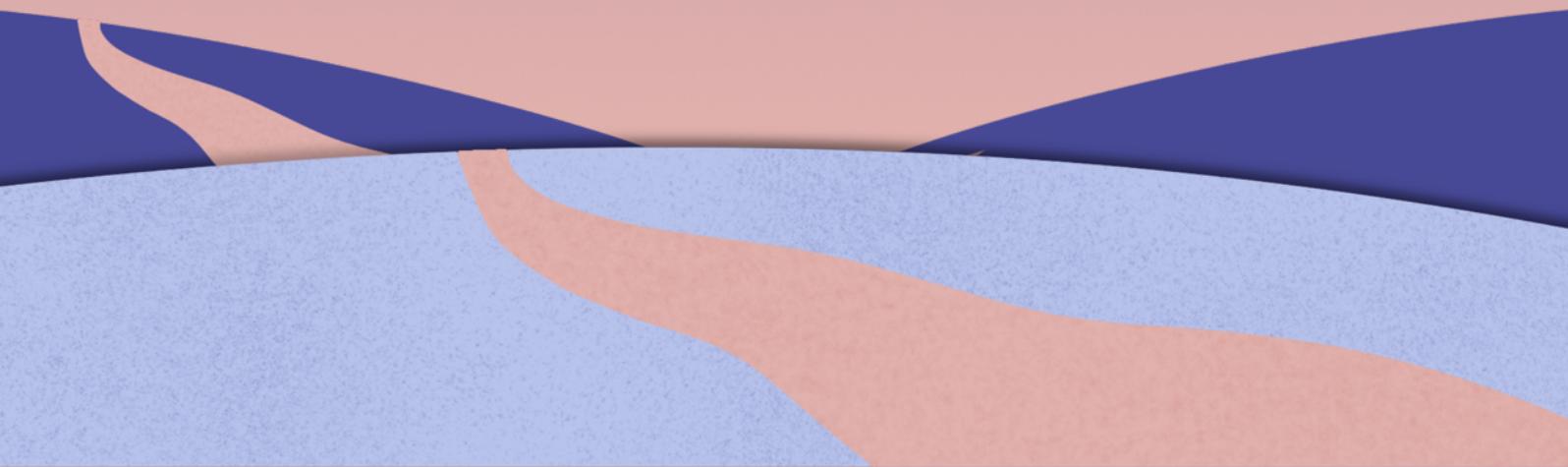
A Helpless Presence

For hundreds of years, the world's great artists have been inspired to paint Jesus new - born and lying in a manger. It is the most wonderful story, so it is not surprising that it has produced the most wonderful paintings.

Interestingly, there was a tradition of painting the scene in a particular way. They would paint Mary, Joseph and Jesus as if the birth was taking place, not hundreds of years ago in Bethlehem, but as if it were happening in their home town in the year when the picture was being painted.

So, French artists painted the nativity in a rolling French landscape. Italian artists painted the nativity amongst the ruins of ancient Roman buildings. To follow in that tradition, the contemporary English artist Paulo Baigent was asked to paint the birth of Jesus as if it took place in 1997 in a modern city.

A Copy of Paulo Baigent's picture can be found on the previous page. Why look at the birth of Jesus in this way, not in the traditional way? Maybe the answer is that there will be plenty of traditional pictures of the nativity to see over coming days as Christmas cards arrive but



seeing it like this brings home to us this night a number of thoughts that highlight to us on this Christmas Eve that **HOPE IS BORN – BECAUSE JESUS HAS ARRIVED!**

JESUS CAME IN POVERTY

You would expect the King of kings to come to earth splendidly. But traditionally we are told that Mary and Joseph are cruelly turned away by the innkeeper who shows them no compassion, that they were kicked out of the only lodgings available in Bethlehem and had to find shelter wherever they could. Actually, the Bible never mentions the innkeeper! The Greek word normally translated as 'Inn' in **Luke 2 v. 1** is best translated as '**place to stay**'. It's been suggested that there was probably no room in the home of Joseph's family in Bethlehem.

Since Joseph couldn't find room in the 'Inn', the traditional thought is that he and Mary were forced to stay in the stable. In almost every Nativity scene ever created it appears that Jesus is born in a barn of sorts. But again, the Bible doesn't say he was born in a barn. It only says that Mary 'laid him in a manger'. (**Luke 2 v. 7**). Although that might seem to suggest a barn or stable, it was common for mangers to be kept in the main room of village houses during the time that Jesus was born. It would appear that animals were often housed just a few feet away in an adjacent room.

It seems likely then, that Mary gave birth to Jesus while they were staying at the home of Joseph's relatives in Bethlehem; that the room in which they stayed meant that Mary gave birth to Jesus in a place used to accommodate the animals and therefore placed Jesus in the manger used by the animals themselves.

WHY DID JESUS COME?

It is crucial to understand Jesus' identity as both fully man and fully God in order to understand the reason why He was born in the first place. Matthew tells us quite clearly in **Matthew 1 v. 21** where he quotes **Psalms 130 v. 8** explaining that: 'He will save His people from their sins'. That is why Jesus came to earth – to save us from our sins.

He didn't just come because He loves us. He didn't just come to be with us. He didn't just come to identify with humanity. He didn't just come to show us how to live a righteous life. He didn't just come in order to make disciples. He came to save us from our sin.

That is the essence of why we celebrate Christmas – we have been saved from the ravages of sin by Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. This is God's greatest gift to us.

Sadly, many people in our world today don't realize that they are sinners and that they are separated from God by their sin, so they don't realize their desperate need for a Saviour. But Scripture is very clear that all of us are born into sin.

Romans 3 v. 10 tells us that: 'There is no one righteous, not even one!' Romans 3 v. 23 teaches us that: 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. And Romans 5 v. 12 teaches us that we have all inherited his (that is Adam's) sinfulness and therefore we stand condemned before God. That is the horrible truth that we all must come to grips with. But praise God that's not the end of the story.

Romans 5 v. 18 goes on to tell us that while sin entered the world through one man and death through sin: 'so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men!' So, for

those who have placed their faith in Jesus and have given Him control of their lives, the gift of forgiveness and salvation from sin, is our greatest joy in life. And the beauty of this is that it can never be taken away.

We may become sick, we might face financial loss, we will no doubt face stress and anxiety and depression just like the rest of the world, but with the knowledge that we have been saved from our sin we have an inner sense of peace and joy that underlines all of life's trials and tribulations.

Romans 8 v. 38 – 39 gloriously boasts that once we receive new life in Christ there is nothing that can separate us from the His love. Paul beautifully outlines this when he says: 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present not the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

JESUS COMES FOR US NOW

Although the baby Jesus was born thousands of years ago, the impact of that day lasts for all time.

The tiny new - born baby whose blood had begun to pump, pump through his tiny veins grew into the toddler, who grew into the child, who grew into the teenager, who grew into the man who did everything that was needed for you and I to live as friends of God today.

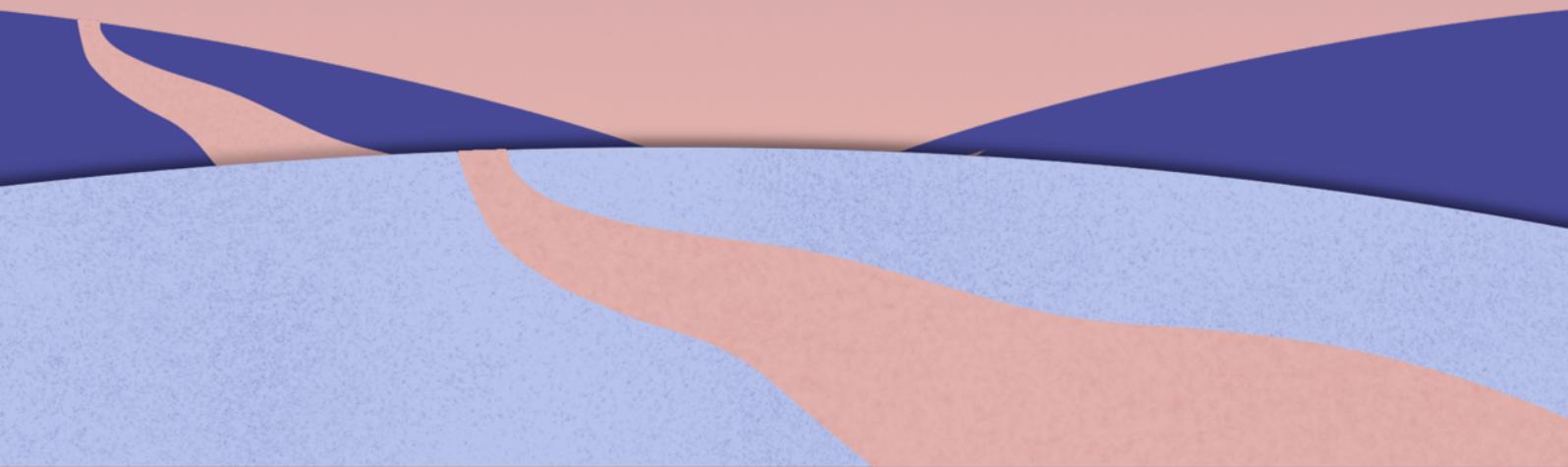
This very day, he is alive in heaven, waiting for us to experience his

love, his forgiveness, and his joy.

He could have been born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, or two hundred or two million - it only makes a difference if he is born in you today!

So, this year, on this Christmas Eve, as we celebrate the holidays, your happiness may come and go. You might face the winter blues or struggle once again with the pain of lost relationships or memories of the past, but the gift of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace in Christ is available to you because Jesus came to save you from your sin.

Maybe the best Christmas present that you can have this year is to commit yourself to Him today and receive the gift of eternal life and eternal joy.





For
unto us

a Child is Born

and his name

Shall be called

Wonderful Counsellor

THE MIGHTY GOD

The everlasting father

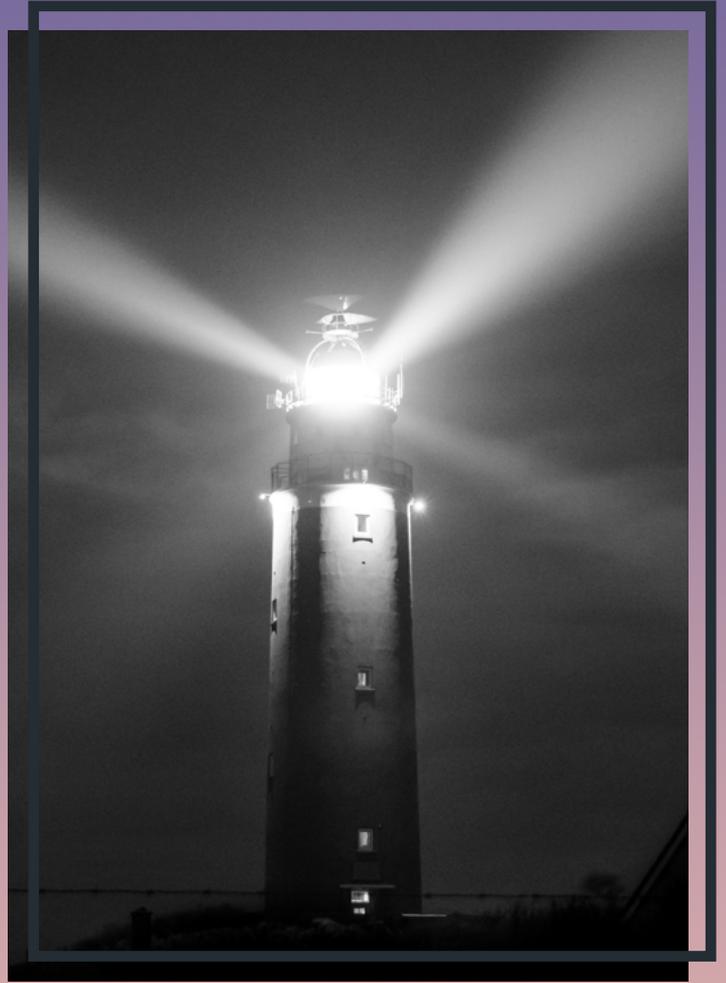
THE PRINCE OF PEACE

ISAIAH 9:6



Song Suggestion

Once In Royal David's City



Bible

Reading

Luke 2 v. 8 – 20 NIV

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

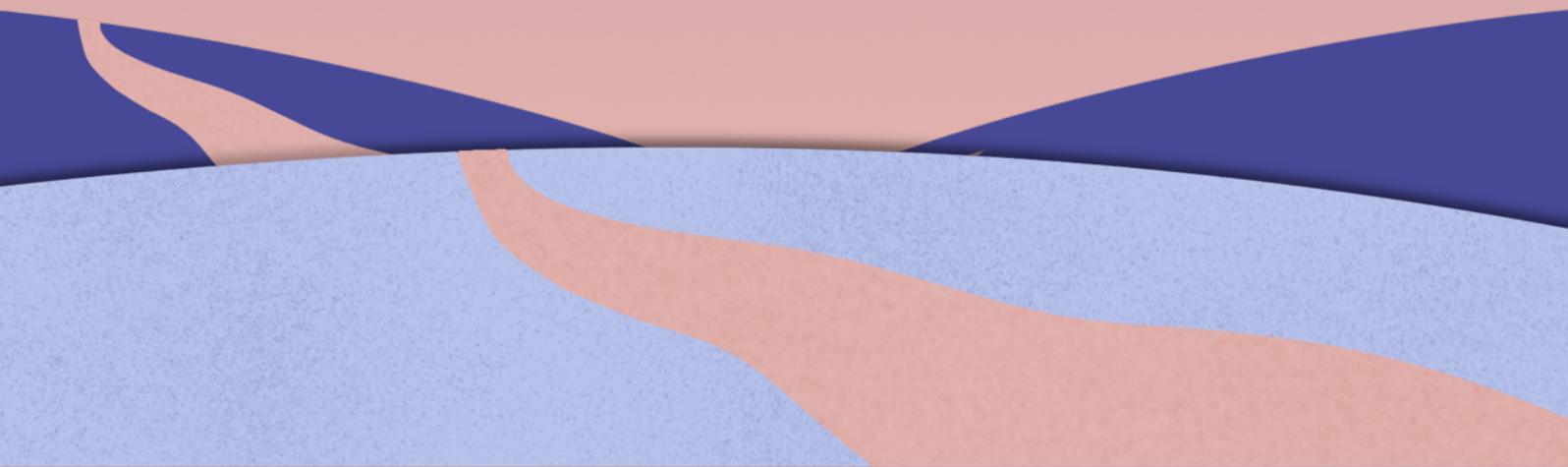
14 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the

word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



Tithes, Gifts & Offerings



No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

Now that we find ourselves once again holding services in Church, we are able to give of our finances to the work of the Lord when we are in church.

If you feel that your are able to, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

Song Suggestion

O Holy Night - Chris Tomlin



Song Suggestion

Hark The Herald Angel Sing



Bible

Reading

Luke 2 v. 21 – 40 NIV

21 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.

Jesus presented in the temple

22 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 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord'), 24 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'.

25 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. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 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, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

29 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

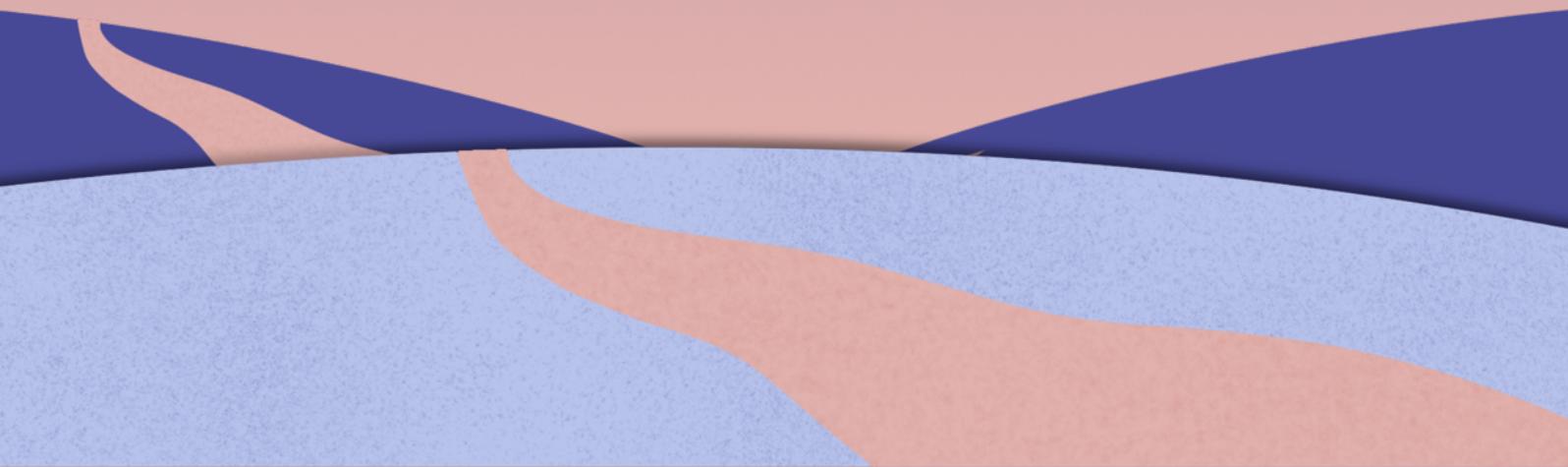
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.'

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

him. 34 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, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

36 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, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 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.

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.



Christ Was Born For You

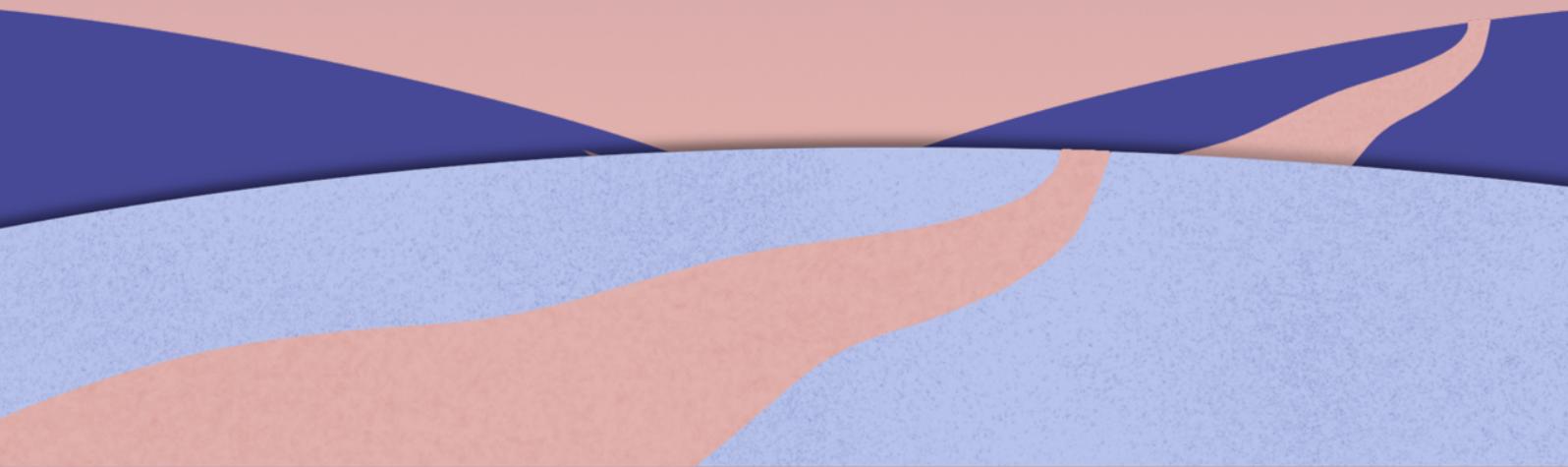


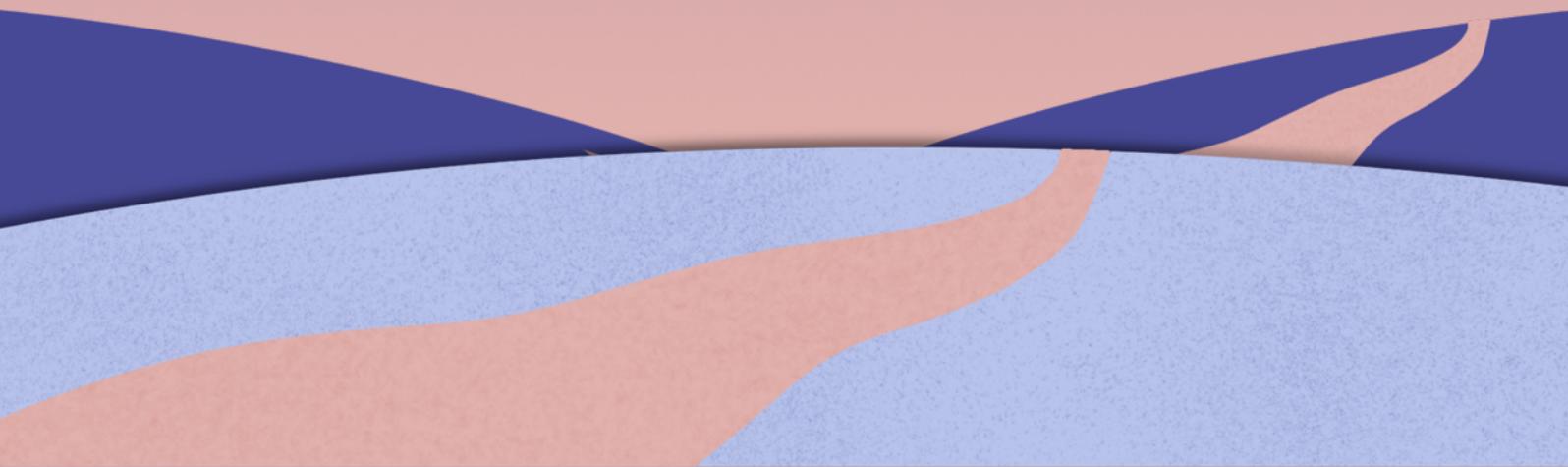
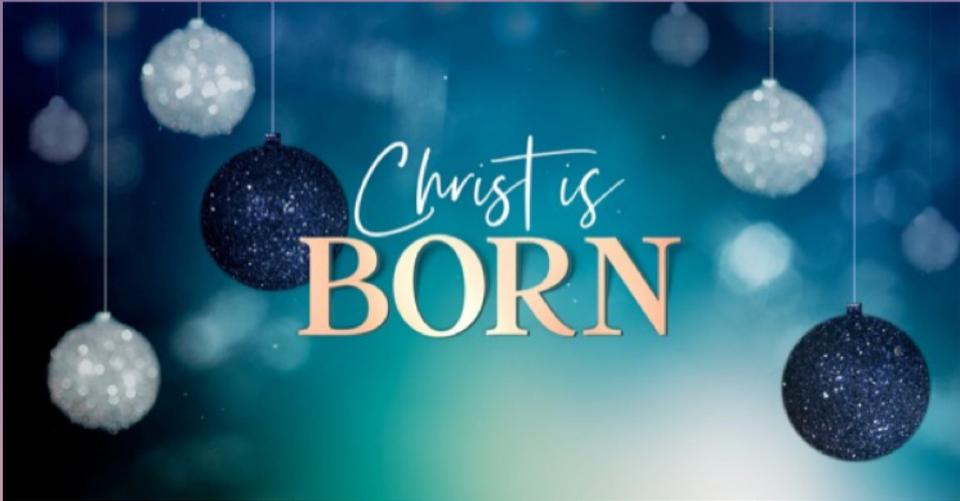
A true Christian Christmas

Christmas isn't showy gifts
Or glittering decoration;
It's honouring our Saviour, Jesus Christ
In humble adoration.
It's serving those less fortunate,
Meeting their needs before our own;
It's making sure at Christmas time
That no one is alone.
It's taking what we would have spent
On things that no one needs,
And using it to help someone
With service and good deeds.
Our Saviour showed us how to live
With charity, faith and service.
It makes the holidays a joy,
More peaceful, and less nervous.
So let's remember Christmas is
About our Saviour's birth;

That's the way to happiness,
The way to peace on earth.

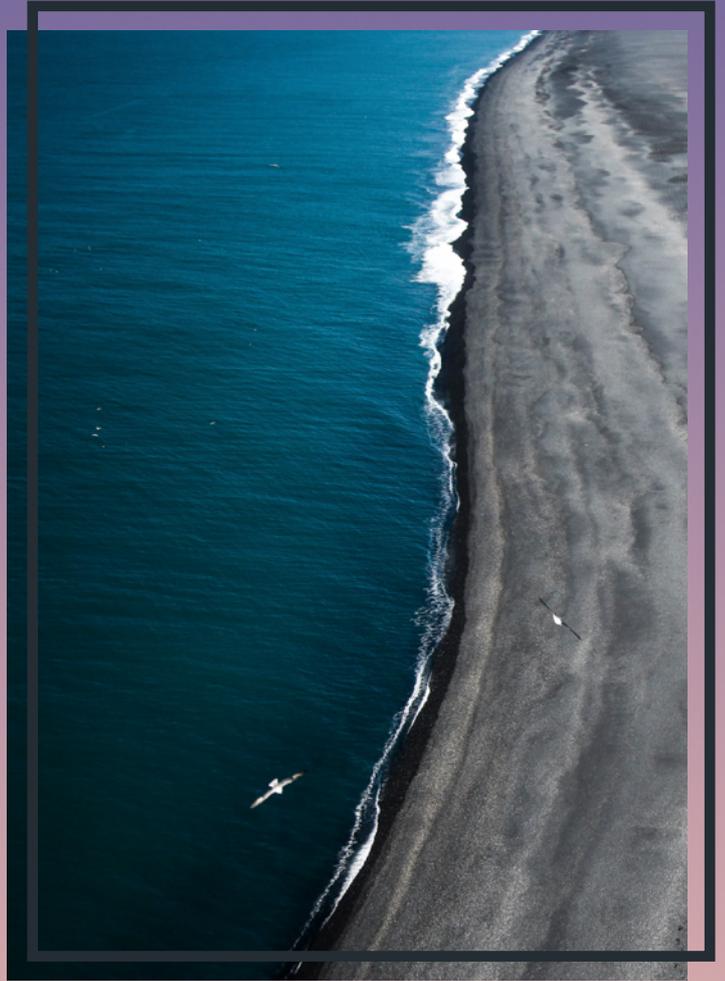
By Joanna Fuchs





Song Suggestion

O Come All Ye Faithful



Blessing



May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Amen

