

Opening Prayer:

Loving Lord, as we worship we join with all those who are worshipping this day.
Whether alone at home, or online, whether in a building or in an open space amongst others.
Constrained by circumstances, we lack opportunity to meet each other in love.
Come amongst us generous, hospitable God, and welcome us into your loving presence
as we worship you. AMEN

Hymn No.228 Hail to the Lord's anointed. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkrepBvrLI4>

Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater son! Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free, To take away transgression and rule in equity.	He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth; before him, on the mountains, shall peace the herald go; and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.	O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest; from age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest. The tide of time shall never his covenant remove; his name shall stand for ever, his changeless name of love.
He comes, with succour speedy, to those who suffer wrong; to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong, to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.	Kings shall fall down before him, and gold and incense bring; all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing; to him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend, his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.	

PRAYERS.

All seeing God, you watch over every instant of our life, showing us the glory of your creation if we should but pause to look; showing us the generosity of your Spirit if we should but hold out our hands to receive; showing us your work that needs to be done if we should only use our eyes and ears.
Turn us away, loving Lord, from our insistent self and lead us to see more clearly what you give and what you ask of us this day AMEN

Readings: Luke 1: 26-38

Hymn No.208, Let earth and heaven combine. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adVq_JMovqw

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.	suffice for us that God, we know, our God, is manifest below.
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.	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.
Unsearchable the love that hath the Saviour brought; the grace is far above or man or angels thought;	Made perfect first in love, and sanctified by grace, we shall from earth remove, and see his glorious face: his love shall the be fully showed, and man shall then be lost in God.

Reflection THE SOUND OF GOD

A small boy was busy drawing, the tip of his tongue out in concentration. His teacher came and asked him what he was drawing and he replied, "I am drawing a picture of God." His teacher, a little taken aback, said, "but nobody knows what God looks like" to which he replied, "well they will when I've finished." I don't pretend to know what God looks like but I know what he sounds like. He sounds like new born baby crying. "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man." We sing it happily most Christmases but probably without thinking what a mind blowing statement that is. We often talk of Sacrifice associated to Easter but I believe the great sacrifice started right there at the birth of Christ, the second person of the Trinity which is God. All powerful Creator God, immense, immortal, a human baby vulnerable, needy, dependent. The breath-taking wonder of it. The pure Love of it. Why? So that we may understand the ways of God, so that we may know that he understands our lives, our struggles, our frailties, our temptations, our pain, our losses. From the very beginning we begin to learn of his ways. His first visitors are Shepherds, outcasts from the Orthodox, spiritually unclean by the very nature of their work and so excluded from Gods standards, except that they are not, they are right there with him acceptable and accepted. It makes our pride in any small success or any small notoriety, any small power, any small sociable climbing look ridiculous. We matter and are accepted just as we are, we can approach him directly, not just through Church, not through any mediator but person to person any time. As this baby grows we discover that human life was meant to be oh so different. We see Christ full of love for the children, talking to the outcasts, the women, the foreigners, the disabled, not seeking the favour of those considered by the world to be great. Above all, we see how very very different human life even in our time could be oh so different if we as individuals, as Nations could take on the life Christ showed. No poverty, no war, enough food for all and world made new and clean and respect instead of conflict. Those were the possibilities he has shown to us. He just needs our "YES" as he needed Mary's

Prayers of Intercession.

Answering God we pray today for all those who have unanswered questions we pray for refugees and displaced people, for the homeless and those who ask "when shall I have a home".

We pray for those worried about loss of work, shortage of money, collapse of plans, who ask "what happens now"?

We pray for the lonely, the scared, and the vulnerable who ask "who can help me"

We pray for those on our own hearts at this time.....

Answering God, bring your love to these your people in need and help them to see you in their life. AMEN

Hymn No. 175. Light of the world. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBKzCpkXJR4>

Light of the world,
you step down into darkness
Opened my eyes let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you
hope of a life spent with you

*So Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

King of all days
Oh so highly exalted
glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came
to the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

*So Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down*

*Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon
that cross
I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon
that cross
I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon
that cross
I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon
that cross

*So Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

Blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. And the blessing of God remain with you throughout this festive season, knowing that wherever you are He will never abandon you. Amen.