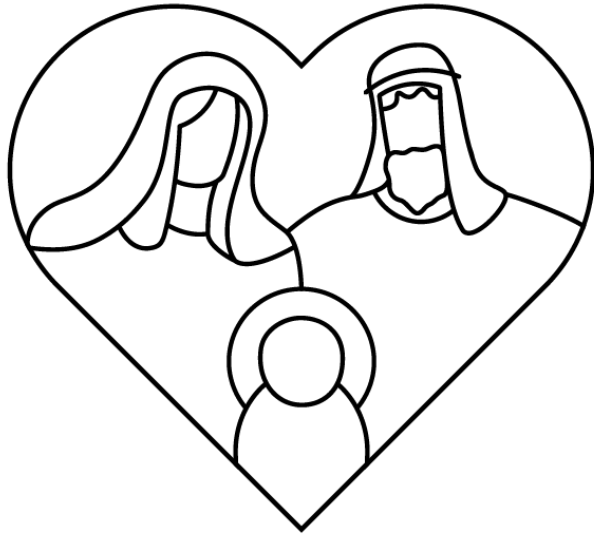


**Advent Quiet Morning**

# **At the heart of Christmas**



## Opening Worship

Come, my Lord,  
My light, my way;  
come, my lantern,  
night and day;  
come, healer,  
make me whole.  
Come, my Saviour,  
protect my soul;  
come, my King,  
enter my heart;  
come, Prince of Peace,  
and never depart.

(The Open Gate, David Adam SPCK 1994)

## **Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus.**

May the bright light of Christ enlighten our hearts,  
shine in our minds and direct our journeying,  
and give light to the world. **Amen**

**O Holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide in us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

(Philip Brooks 1835-1893)

**Session 1      Christmas Tree**  
**Reflection based on Genesis 3.8-13**

**Prayer**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and to put on the armour of light  
now in the time of this mortal life,  
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility;  
that on the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty  
to judge the living and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**Words of St Augustine of Hippo**

I was slow to love you, Lord;  
your age old beauty is still new to me:  
I was slow to love you!  
You were within me, yet I stayed outside seeking you there;  
in my ugliness I grabbed at the beautiful things of your creation.  
Already you were with me, but I was still far from you.  
The things of this world kept me away:  
I did not know then that if they had not existed through you  
they would not have existed at all.  
Then you called me  
and your cry overcame my deafness.  
You shone out and your light overcame my blindness.  
You surrounded me with your fragrance  
and I breathed it in,  
so that I now yearn for more of you;  
I tasted you and now I am hungry and thirsty for you;  
you touched me and now I burn with a longing for your peace.

- Consider the glory of God's creation – plants, animals, the sky, the sea, human beings. Use all of your senses to appreciate the wonder of creation. Consider the creation as an act of love – God's love for the world, God's love for us.
- Reflect on your relationship with God. Know that wherever you are, whatever you do, God today desires to have a relationship with you. What can you do to draw closer to God? Expect your friendship with God to grow each day.

## **Session 2      Christmas Cards**

**Reflection based on Isaiah 7.10-14**

**Matthew 1.18-25**

### **Prayer**

Lord, open our eyes to your presence:

Open our ears to your call.

Open our lips to sing your praises.

Open our hearts to your great love.

May we awaken out of sleep

that we may be aware of you,

glimpse at your great glory

and enjoy your presence. Amen

### **Incarnation by Ann Lewin**

He's grown, that Baby.

Not that most people have noticed,

He still looks the same,

Lying there in the straw, with

Animals and shepherds looking on.

He's safe there, locked in that moment

Where time met Eternity.

Reality of course is different,

He grew up. Astonished people with his

Insight, disturbed them with

Ideas that stretched them into new maturity.

Some found him

Much too difficult to cope with,

Nailed him down to fit their

Narrow minds.

We are more subtle  
Keep him helpless,  
Refuse to let him be the Man he is,  
Adore him as the Christmas Baby  
Eternally unable to grow up  
Until we set him free.

By all means let us pause there  
At the stable, and  
Marvel at the miracle of birth.

But we'll never get to know  
God with us, until we learn  
To find him at the Inn,  
A fellow guest who shares the joy and sorrow,  
The Host who is the life we celebrate.

He's grown, that Baby.

- Expect to meet God in the day that lies ahead. Lie down at night in his presence and say quietly "Surely the Lord is in this place".
- Think of examples of God's presence in your life in the last few days or weeks. How can you open your heart and mind to the good and hopeful signs of God's presence in the world? What creates a sense of awe and wonder in you?
- How can you help others to see God's presence in their lives? What talents, gifts and resources do you have to offer?

### **Session 3      Baubles**

**Reflection based on Genesis 1.26-27    Isaiah 11.1-10    Luke 1.46-55**

#### **Prayer**

Dear Jesus,  
help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.  
Flood my soul with your spirit and your life.  
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly  
that my life may be only a radiance of yours.  
Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as you shine,  
so to shine as to be light to others;  
the light, O Jesus, will be all from you,  
none of it will be mine;  
it will be you, shining on others through me.  
Let me thus praise you in the way that you love best,  
by shining on those around me.    Amen

(John Henry Newman 1801-1890)

- Are there ways in which you can develop your relationship with God?
- What can we learn from Mary's Magnificat about how the values of our society contrast with God's values? How can we reflect God's kingdom in our daily lives? (You may wish to compare Mary's Magnificat with Hannah's song from 1 Samuel 2.1-10)

## **Closing Worship**

Lord of this world,  
we work, we watch, we wait for you.  
**Come down, come in, come among us.**

Lord of this life,  
we labour, we look, we long for you.  
**Come down, come in, come among us.**

Lord of this second,  
we strive, we serve, we search for you.  
**Come down, come in, come among us.**

That we may dwell in you and you in us for ever. **Amen**

**O Holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide in us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

(Philip Brooks 1835-1893)

## **Blessing**

Give glory to God who loves us with an everlasting love.  
The presence of the Mighty God be with you,  
the love of the Everlasting Father enfold you,  
the peace of the Prince of Peace surround you,  
the light of the Wonderful Counsellor guide you,  
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and your loved ones at this season and for evermore. Amen