



EMMANUEL CHRISTMAS DEVOTION – BOXING DAY 2020



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

Isaiah 9: 2-3, 6-7 'A Child Born for Us'

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;

and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Two passages in the gospels always strike me as particularly poignant. One is when approaching Jerusalem, Jesus weeps over the city. Down through the ages, God sent prophets, messengers promising a Deliverer for the Jewish people: the coming of the Messiah was what every devout Jew anticipated, longed for. Yet as Jesus entered Jerusalem on his final earthly journey, after years of being with them, teaching and miracles, he knows that most had failed to recognise that he was the fulfilment of God's promise, and of all their expectation. He weeps at their blindness: "how often I wanted to gather you to myself, and you would not let me" (Luke 13:34). The second poignant passage I find in John's Prologue "he came to his own, and his own did not accept him" (John 1:11).

How blind we sometimes are! We miss so much if we fail to recognise God in today's world, in acts of loving care and generosity. As we celebrate another Christmas, may we give thanks above all that God loved us all so much that he gave us himself in Jesus. In believing in his incarnation and accepting him as Lord, we receive life in all its fullness, seeing God in all around us: in the beauty of the world; in the love of family, friends and neighbours. We have witnessed so much love and compassion in the darkest days of this pandemic as people in all walks of life have come with help to those struggling with pain, loss and loneliness. May we know our Lord with us as we live in today's world, certain that he lives and works his will in every generation. Still, he comes to each of us, asking that we work with him in establishing his kingdom of love, justice and peace. Our Lord's prayer must find fulfilment as and when God chooses. And of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Prayer: words from 'Into the Darkness of this World'
by Maggi Dawn. (STF 173)

O holy child, Emmanuel
hope of the ages, God with us,
visit again this broken place,
till all the earth declares your praise
and your great mercies own.
Now let your love be born in us,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

