

Stoke Poges Church

St Giles' and St Andrew's



Welcome to this Family Communion Service

The Gathering

Welcome & Notices

Advent Prayer

Turning towards each other
in this holy season of Advent,
we light the final candle,
trusting that you will always bring
your covenant of love to completion.
God, among us, in hope and expectation
in fulfilment and flourishing.
Amen.

Opening Song How Great is our God

Written by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves. worshiptogether.com songs and six steps Music (admin by EMI Christian Music Publishing) Alletrop Music (Admin by Music Services); WorshipHouseMedia.com

Summary of the law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: the first commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandments greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Confession

After a period of reflection

Today, days before we celebrate your self-giving in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage, we turn to you knowing how often we fall short in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage.

Forgive us, and make us more like you, not because it will make you love us more, but because it is for our sake, and for the sake of the people you love so much, that you came among us.

Amen.

May almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring you his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

Amen.

Collect

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reading Luke 1.26-38 read by Pam Blewit

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, **27** to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. **30** But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. **31** You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.'

34 'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?'

35 The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. **36** Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. **37** For no word from God will ever fail.'

38 'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her.

Sermon Natasha is opening God's Word for us today

Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand
of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Intercessions written and shared by Simon McDowell

In you O Lord ... **Do I put my trust**

Song Faithfulness

Songwriters: Raymond Badham, Hillsong Worship, Hillsong Publishing, WorshipHouseMedia.com

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

We know that Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church. In these times, it may seem strange to 'share the Peace.' But peace is from the heart and from God. God's peace in the Spirit moves among us and unites us, physically distanced yet one in the Body of Christ.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, we give you thanks and praise through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word, through whom you have created all things; who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh; as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin, he lived on earth and went about among us; he opened wide his arms for us on the cross; he put an end to death by dying for us; and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life; so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:

*Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life: Lord Jesus, come in glory.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in the one bread.

Giving of Communion

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

We are invited to make spiritual Communion with God, who comes to meet us wherever we are. And as we do so please listen to ... Hope and Glory.

performed by Lindsey Mackie. Song writer Tim Hughes.

Prayer after communion

And we say together ...

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen**

The Dismissal

Song O come O come Emmanuel

Translated by JM Neale (1851); Performed by Worship Team TV; worshiphousemedia.com

Final Prayer & Blessing

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go and share your master's joy at home, at school, at work and in the community.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Thank you for joining us today.

Going Deeper

This week's reading: **Luke 1.26-38**

Bible Notes

The emphasis on God's choice of the lowliest in society is one of the most striking aspects of Luke's Gospel. A teenage girl, with no wealth or status, from an out-of-the way part of the world, stands at the heart of God's plan to transform the world. This transformation is not found in a great show of strength, but rather through the birth of a baby – an everyday and common occurrence.

Mary's relative Elizabeth is also part of the plan. Elizabeth is vulnerable through being an older, childless woman. But here too is a miracle of birth. God entrusts this whole plan to the bodies of two women, and in this, both God and the women take on a considerable risk.

Thus, we read of the radical overturning of power, the confident sharing of power and then the chosen risk in God's plan to entrust the Messiah to the vulnerable body of a young woman. How often do we consider God's plan for our own lives to be 'ridiculous'? And how often are we prepared to take a risk, to be part of God's plan?

Questions for reflection



- What does this image say to you?
- A young couple, a pregnant teenager – how might you have reacted?
- If God was to turn your life upside down, how might that help you think and do things differently?

Live your faith

Look for opportunities to be strong, to express strength, or to convey a strong message, through a gentle action/response.

A personal prayer

Sometimes I say yes, and sometimes I say maybe, and sometimes I say no, and sometimes I am too distracted to know what I'm being asked.

Help me, O God of time, to find and make time for all the demands that come my way, so that I might say yes with joy, when I can. Amen.

Amen.

Name

Activity time

ROOTS children's sheet

20-26 December 2020

Luke 1.26-38

God chooses an ordinary girl for the extraordinary job of being the mother of Jesus.



Family time

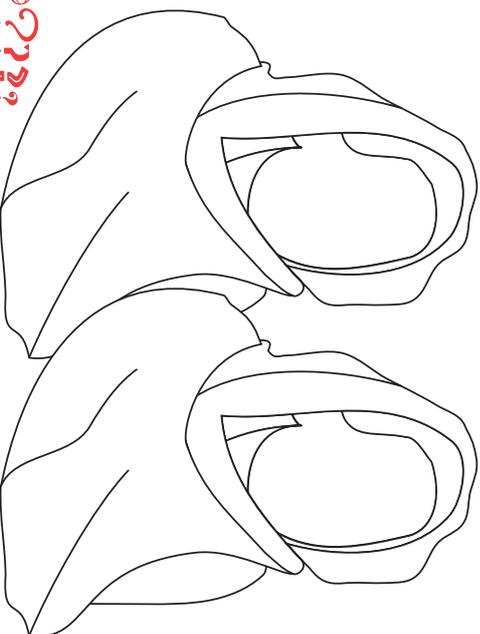
Talk Turn over a series of small objects and discuss together what they look like upside-down.

Do Create your own collage of Mary and angel pictures, perhaps using Christmas cards as you receive them or old ones from last year. Stick it onto your fridge until Christmas day to remind you of the way this ordinary girl helped God to turn the world upside-down.

Pray Make up an acrostic prayer together using the words 'upside-down'.

Draw

Add expressions to Mary's faces to show how she might have felt before and after the angel came.



Puzzle

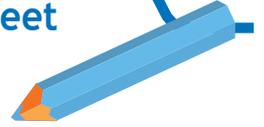
Try to write your name upside-down in the box.



Write

Can you unscramble the message to work out what the angel said?





Today's Bible reading

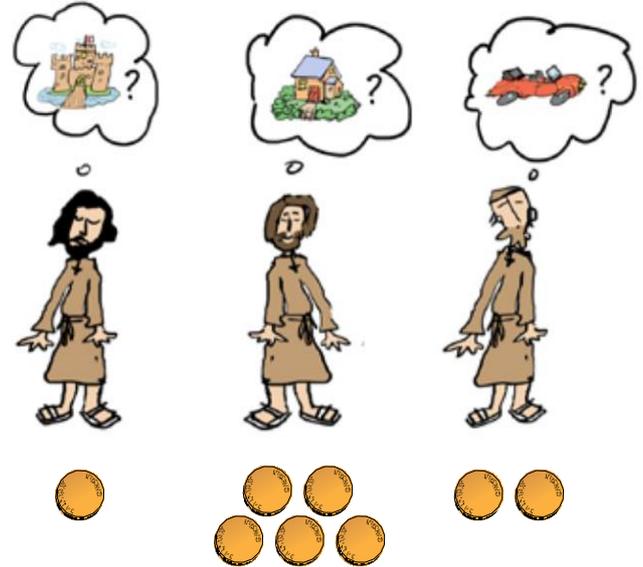
Matthew 25.14-30

Through a parable, Jesus explains that sometimes it is not enough to have something good, what really matters is how you use it.



Activity 1

How many gold coins were the servants given? Match the coins up with each servant.



Activity 2

Make a list or draw some of the things that you are good at.



god has given you many gifts.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you that you show us the best way to live.
be with us as we follow you this week.
Help us to choose to live your way
and use our gifts for the good
of others. Amen.

Live in faith

How will you know how to make good or bad choices this week?

Check it out

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, C S Lewis, HarperCollins Children's Books, ISBN: 978-0-00732-312-8. DVD Edmund is faced with a difficult choice by the White Witch.