

Tyndale Nativity 2020

You are welcome here. Whether you're sitting at home or somewhere else, or here in the sanctuary, God welcomes you. Just as those who are part of the Nativity story joined it from different times and places, travelling from far and near, following angels and stars, arriving at their appointed times, so we are also part of the story of God with us.

Advent Candle Lighting Song 'Come now Lord Jesus' Tyndale Virtual Music Group

Call to worship

In the brokenness of all of life, we see a light shining and no one has ever put it out.

When people of power destroy the weak and vulnerable out of fear, we turn to a baby born in a borrowed stable in an out of the way town and say God is with us.

With the humble and the wise ones, we come to worship. For we are like them, and we seek a Saviour.

Carol [Angels from the realms of glory](#)

Opening Prayer

In a world of turmoil and disbelief, anger and injustice, where people are played and threat gathers, we turn to you the Prince of Peace looking for good news. With faith in our hearts we say, we are not alone in this world for you have come and lived and shared our hopes and aspirations. You have felt our pain too. We thank you that you are not remote from us, but in the midst, here when we stop to talk, alongside us as we walk the pathway each moment of each day.

To you, this day, we bring gifts of love and thankful hearts for all the good things that are in our lives; family and friends, work and play, and this place which has become for us a stable where out of our poverty of faith we come to worship at your feet.

We're thankful too for hospitals and emergency services, for places to learn like schools, colleges, universities; for shops full of stuff, for the choices we have. We're thankful for medical staff, and education staff, for security and emergency service staff. We're thankful for all those who are part of the food chain from farm to shop from all around the world. We have so much to be thankful for.

But we turn to you here because all the stuff in the world is not enough if we cannot live in peace, if we cannot respect and learn from our differences without dominating. If we can't make choices for life rather than death, then we are poor indeed and in need of one who loves and calls us towards light and goodness, kindness and peace. One who places the most precious gift in our hands and invites us to hold him and waits to see what we will do. Thank you for this most precious gift of Jesus.

So even though you are beyond us, teach us again of your being with us as we share in this nativity service. Show us again your humanity so we may learn from you and seek to change our ways and our world.

We bring you our hopes as well as our worship, Jesus Christ, God with us. Amen

So we share in the words of the Lord's Prayer.

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 forever. Amen

Scene 1 At Mary's home (Kitchen)

Narr

Welcome to our Christmas story

We re-tell it every year:

How God came from heaven's glory,

Came to make his home right here.

Jesus, lying in a manger,

Born in all our mess and fuss,

Made us friends who once were strangers,

Son of God who lives with us.

Soon we'll meet the shepherds, wise ones,

All the usual Christmas crew

And, perhaps, another story –

One that's now involving you.

In our world of joy and darkness,

In our laughter, pain and care,

Jesus came so we could know that

God is with Us – everywhere!

[Spreading arms wide]

So our story starts as always

With an angel, Gabriel,

Visiting the home of Mary,

Was she busy? Who can tell?

[shrugging shoulders]

Mary *[sweeping busily]*

All today I'm cooking, sweeping,
Feed the chickens, knead the dough.

[miming jobs]

Honestly, it's never-ending!

Time to sit down for a mo.

[sitting down, looking tired]

Narr

But as soon as Mary rested
Someone knocked upon her door.

[make knocking sound]

Grumpily she went to answer

Not expecting what she saw.

Gab

[looking impressive, with loud voice]

Greetings, Mary, highly favoured.

I have come to you from God

With a message straight from heaven.

[in a normal voice]

Oh! You look a little odd.

Yes. I realise you're frightened,

Seems to happen quite a lot.

People see the wings and halo –

Gives them all a nasty shock!

[concerning and caring]

Would you like a glass of water?

Do sit down dear, there's a love.

That's much better. Here's the message

I have brought from God above.

[clearing throat, ready to start again]

Narr

Gabriel explained to Mary

God had chosen her to be

Mother of a special baby –

God's gift for humanity!

Mary *[looking confused]*

Ummm, don't want to seem ungrateful,

But there's just one tiny thing

I should mention, just in passing.

See my hand? No wedding ring!

[showing both sides of left hand, like in the song

'Single Ladies']

Gab

Mary, don't get all beyonce!

It's ok, the child will be

Not the son of your fiancé,

But of God, the one on three.

[fingers showing 1 then 3]

Father God will send his Spirit

And become the Holy Son.

So the child you'll bear will be the

Son of God, the three in one.

[fingers showing 3 then 1]

Mary

Wow! That's quite a thing you're asking,

God himself will come to stay?

But I am the Lord God's servant.

Let it happen as you say.

[bowing slightly, hands in prayer shape]

Narr

So the angel bowed and left her.

Mary sat and drank some tea.

[miming drinking tea]

Called up her fiancé Joseph.

What would his reaction be?

[shrugging shoulders]

Scene 2 Joseph and the Angel

Narr

Right across the town of Mary

Joseph had a wood work shop.

He was busy making benches

When a phone call made him stop.

Joseph *[answering the phone]*

Joseph here, all tables mended,

Doors and windows, fences too.

[looking proud]

Carpenter to all of Naz'reth.

Who's there? Mary? Oh it's you!

Mary *[talking on the phone]*

Joseph dear, I've news to tell you:

We are going to have a child.

God's own son, an angel told me.

[looking worried]

Now please Joseph, don't get riled.

Joseph *[looking shocked and sad]*

Mary this is disappointing.

Not that I am mad or cross,

But I must do what is righteous.

[shaking head]

Sorry, but the weddings off.

[putting phone down and sighing]

Narr

Joseph planned to do this quietly,

Caring still for Mary's plight.

Gabriel had news for Joseph

In a dream, that very night.

Gab *[hands around mouth, calling]*

Joseph, son of David, listen!

You are frightened. That's okay.

[thumbs up]

It's alright to marry Mary,

You'll still have your wedding day.

Mary said the babe she's bearing

Is from God, and that is right.

Call him Jesus (which means Saviour)

He will be this dark world's light.

Narr

Joseph made it up with Mary

And they set a wedding day,

But before they picked the bridesmaids

Something happened – Ah! Oy Vey!

[Oy Vey! Is a Jewish phrase like Oh no!]

Joseph *[waving letter]*

Mary, I've just got this letter.
Not good news, cos it's from Them
You know, the Romans, 'bout our taxes.
Time to pay – in Bethlehem!

Mary *[looking shocked]*

What? You mean we've got to travel
While I'm pregnant? That's too hard.
Can't we pay by direct debit,
Visa Pay or Mastercard?
[waving wallet, purse or card]

Joseph *[shrugging shoulders]*

Sorry sweetie, not invented.
It is Bethlehem or bust.
I'll start packing. Put your feet up.
Comfy footwear – that's a must.

Reflective song [Breath of heaven](#)

Scene 3 By the Manger

Narr

So to Bethlehem they travelled,
('cos of Joseph's family tree)
walked for days and days to get there.
Were they tired? Guess we'll see.
[shrugging shoulders]

Joseph *[walking on the spot]*

Nearly there now, Mary darling,
won't be long till supper time.
We can stay with Bob, my uncle ,
in his guest -room, you'll be fine .

Mary *[walking on the spot, leaning backwards]*

Really hope so, Joseph dearest .
Baby's nearly on his way.
When we get there, call the midwife.
Think you'll be a dad today!
[patting tummy]

Song Born in the night Mary's child

Scene 4 Shepherds and Angels

Narr

Meanwhile, on a distant hillside
shepherds sat there, tending sheep
Amos, Seth, apprentice Colin
round the campfire, half asleep.
[yawning] *[suddenly awake]*
All at once they heard some singing,
saw a brilliant shining light.
Gabriel arrived in glory .
[looking scared]
What a terrifying sight!

Amos *[looking up, scared]*

What the flippin' 'eck is 'happenin' ?
Seth and Colin, wake up now !
Aliens, I think, or Martians !

Narr

Uncle Bob had made it lovely
but the room was very small .
Mary much preferred it downstairs,
just beside the donkey's stall.
So that night, as stars were twinkling
Mary's tiny babe was born.
Joseph filled the donkey's trough
with hay and blankets, soft and warm.

Joseph *[picking up baby Jesus doll]*

Can I hold him? Will he like me?
Do you think he'll call me 'Dad' ?
[eeeew!]

God's own son just wet his nappy.
Mary, dear, you're looking sad.

[noticing Mary]

Mary *[looking at baby Jesus doll]*

I was thinking, will he be a
carpenter like you, you reckon ?
Making chairs and tables, or does
something very different beckon?

[wondering]

Will he grow to be like you,
or will he take his Father's job ?
Nestling in your arms I see the
face of human, soul of God.

Narr

As they gazed in awe and wonder
at their baby, sleeping sound,
[looking around and above]
silently, beyond their vision,
all of heaven gathered round.
God no longer just in glory,
but right here where humans dwell.
[opening arms wide to include everybody]
God made flesh to be God With Us,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
[bringing hands together to present baby]

Mike Garnier

Don't look at 'em! Hit the ground!
[lying flat on face]

Gab *[apologetic]*

Sorry, didn't mean to scare you
(it's the halo, I suppose),
but I have some information .
'Scuse me while I strike a pose .
[in 'hero' pose]
Do not fear, I bring glad tidings !
News of joy for all the earth .
News about a special baby .
News about a new king's birth .

Seth

Get up off the ground there Amos!

There's no need to hide your face.

[doing 'face -palm']

Martians? It's a bloomin' angel,
not some dude from outer space!

Colin *[pointing upwards, amazed]*

Look, there's loads now, singing "Glory,
glory be to God on high.

Peace on Earth to everybody."

Angels filling all the sky.

Gab *[pointing sideways]*

Hurry now to David's city,
Bethlehem, and you will see
wrapped in cloth and in a manger,
Lord of all eternity.

[slight pause]

[in normal voice, not in rhythm]

Get a move on then! Don't just stand there
gawping.

Narr So the shepherds left the hillside,
and, just off the city square,
found the house with Mary, Joseph
and the baby lying there.

Amos *[beaming]*

Ain't he lovely? Who'd have thought it?

Me, old Amos, standing here,
right before the Lord of Glory!

Makes me knees come over queer.

[wobbling knees]

Seth *[scratching head]*

Feel I should have brought a present.

Could not think of what to bring.

What could shepherds give a baby
Lord of lords and King of kings?

Colin *[showing wool or sheep]*

I brought wool for him to sleep on,
comfier than straw and hay.

[sniffing wool / sheep]

Smells of sheep I know, but this is
from the heart. Is that OK?

[offering wool / sheep]

Narr

So the shepherds knelt and worshipped,

[looking down then looking up]

feet on Earth and eyes on heaven.

Jesus slept and snuggled softly
on the wool that they had given.

Sure, it had no fancy wrapping.

[shaking head]

Ribbons? None, nor sparkly bow.

But the gift they gave to Jesus

[nodding]

came with love instead of show.

So, as Colin, Seth and Amos

went back to their dozing sheep,

Jesus somehow went there with them,
giving presence they could keep.

Carol [While Shepherds watched](#)

Scene 5 Wise Ones Visit

Narr

Later on, a group of wise ones

Travelled in from lands afar.

Scientists, we'd call them these days,

Following a bright new star.

[pointing and looking upwards to star]

Mel *[riding on camel (pretend obviously)]*

Are we nearly there yet, Gaspar?

We've been travelling for weeks,

Can you just remind me why we've

Come, and what it is we seek?

Gas

Melchior, have you forgotten?

Honestly, you noodle brain!

[showing gift]

We bring gifts to greet and welcome,

Celebrate a new kings reign.

Bal *[pointing to book or chart]*

All our books and all our wisdom,

Told us that this star so bright

Means that king and God and saviour

Will be born this very night.

Narr

When the wise ones stopped their journey

What they found was quite a shock:

Mary, Joseph, babe in manger,

Shepherds outside with their flock.

Mel

Can I check, this is the right place?

I brought gold to crown a king,

[presenting gift]

But I wonder, where's the palace?

Is this manger quite the thing?

Gas

I brought incense, pure and holy,

Made to worship God on high,

[presenting gift]

Is this baby, weak and helpless

Mighty God with human cry?

Bal

I brought myrrh, which symbolises

One who dies to save us all.

[presenting gift]

Seems a strange gift for a baby,

Job too big for one so small.

Narr

So the wise ones gave their presents

Though they did not understand

How the child who lay before them

Would one day, give this command:

"Follow me!" he'd call to many,

Preach Good News in all he said,

Heal the sick and free the captives.
Would they follow where he lead?
Gave his life to pay our ransom,
Bought us all at costly price.
Righteous king and God and Saviour,
Perfect lamb as sacrifice.
Raised to life to raise us with him,
Victor, Christ and living Word.
All this lay before the baby

Sleeping soundly, undisturbed.
So the wises ones knelt around him,
Gave their costly presents, then
Suddenly, they knew that they'd be
Taking treasure home with them.
Richer than purest incense,
Costlier than gold or myrrh,
Wise, they took home truest Wisdom,
Prince of Peace and Comforter.

Offering We pause to offer once again the gifts that reflect our worship and desire to be part of your story of salvation through our lives, through Tyndale's life, for our communities and neighbours.

Reflective Song [Is there room in your heart](#)

We share these words together:

***The light of the Christ Child shine upon us
The grace of the Christ Child surround us
The peace of the Christ Child fill us
Amen***

Scene 6 God is with us

Narr

Now our story's almost ended,
Everyone has met him here.
Will you take the Christmas baby
Home with you throughout the year?
Let us hear from all the people
Who have met with God today.
How will this affect their stories?
Will this change them? Who can say?
[shrugging shoulders]

Mary

Strangest night, but stranger morning.
Joy and sadness like a sword.
When I kiss my baby's forehead
I believe I kiss my Lord.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Joseph

Though I'm his adopted father
I will raise him as my son,
Teach him all I know and love him,
Serve my King till kingdom come.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Amos

I don't really understand it,
All the stuff the angels said,
But I know I knelt and worshipped
By the Lord Almighty's bed.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Seth

Why would God come down to shepherds,
Poorest folk of all the poor?
Live with us and make us worthy
I don't know, but I adore.

[Hold up Jesus doll]

Colin

What have I to give to Jesus?
Nothing, but yet everything.
All my heart and soul and worship,
For the baby, God and king.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Mel

Gold I brought, expecting royals,
Majesty I found instead.
Higher King than all kings ever,
Lying in a manger bed.

Gas

I brought incense, made for worship,
Rising as a prayer to heaven.
Prayers now answered by the baby,
God's own gift to me is given.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Bal

Myrrh I brought, not understanding
How this babe would die and live,
Bringing life in all its fullness –
Gifts that only he could give.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Gab

So God's plan before creation,
Earth in heaven and heaven on earth,
Came in form of gentle baby,
Mighty God in human birth.
[Hold up Jesus doll]

Narr

Shout with us the Christmas story,
Let all heaven and earth declare:
Jesus came to earth from glory,
God is with us – everywhere!

Address

If ever there was a message for today, in a world where so much that happens seems a mystery to us, we are confronted again with the mystery of God with us in the muck and mess of life. God who places his life in our hands and says 'decide what you will do with it.' Will you nurture it, care for it, help it to grow within you? Will you ignore it, suck it dry of goodness and exploit it for your own purposes? Is it for kings or shepherds? Is it for unsuspecting ordinary people going about their everyday business? Is it for those whose world will be turned upside down by it? Is it for those who are hurting, those who are afraid, those who are desperate for acceptance, those who are angry? Yes, yes, yes, it is! For all of them. All are called to come and worship, to lay aside our very selves, and gaze in wonder that the stuff we have made important is not important at all because what is important is the weakest, most vulnerable, spark of life that we are invited to make room for. For the first time, or for as many times as we have heard this story and found ourselves within it. A story about God with us, here and now, for all time and all places, the light that the darkness can never extinguish, however much it tries. For we have seen its glory and goodness. We have seen and felt its hope! Even for today.

Intercessions

O God our maker, we turn to you with our hopes and dreams for these days we live in.

There is so much we cannot understand about how things happen. There's so much that we cannot see about the way ahead. So we cling to your promise to be with us and to share the road we travel.

We pray for those who are being exploited and enslaved around the world. Whether for the clothes we all wear or for baser human desires.

Set them free. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for those who are ill with Covid virus right now whether at home or in hospital. Bring your healing. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for those involved in creating, supplying, administering and receiving the vaccinations as they roll out across the country and beyond. For the hopes they inspire of a return to normal life. Give them patience. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for those working hard in hospitals, schools, security services, emergency services, research labs, and those tirelessly working to supply the essentials to our communities. Give them strength. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for those who work in retail, entertainment and the hospitality industry, bearing the brunt of closure, with bills to pay, but no income. For those feeling desperate, alone, fearful, despondent, hopeless about the future. For those struggling to survive the fallout and feeling abandoned. For those made redundant, and those looking for work, or signing onto universal credit for the first time. Be their hope. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for those who are mourning this week, in need of comfort, grieving the empty space, the restricted time, the lack of contact, the missed visits, the end of an era. Bring them peace. Be with them as you are with us.

We pray for one another and all who are part of Tyndale's story. We pray for our life together as we seek to live out being Christ's body. For commitment, courage, strength, openness, willingness to serve, energy, patience, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness. To hold God in our hands and make room in our lives to be hands and feet and eyes and ears and mouth – that those we meet each day will be drawn to Jesus.

Through the example of our lives, the faith demonstrated, the hope offered & the acts of love.

We offer you these prayers and those of our hearts through the Christ Child, who made his home amongst us and is the one we call Prince of Peace. Amen

Carol BPW 174 [See him lying on a bed of straw](#)

Blessing

[Celtic Christmas Blessing](#)

*With thanks to all who have participated in this morning's service and made it their act of worship.
We meet for zoom coffee from 11.30 am.*

Carols by candlelight is available this evening via the website.