

Tyndale Nativity 2021

Welcome and Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this third Sunday of December. Only 6 more sleeps 'till Santa! If you are a visitor, with us on line or here in the church, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us.

The worship today will include our annual Nativity with our Ministers, Michael and Rachel, and a number of the fellowship taking part virtually.

This evening at 6 o'clock we will be holding our Carols by Candlelight service. Please come along and join us for, what is always, one of the special services in the lead up to Christmas.

On Tuesday, our in-person Coffee Shop will take place here in the Sanctuary from 10am until 12 noon, where a warm welcome will await everyone.

Please note *time @tyndale* is not happening this week. It is now closed until the New Year, when a new programme of events will be advertised.

Our Thursday Zoom coffee shop takes place at 11.00am, with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

Our Christmas morning service this year is here at 10.00am next Saturday, with our friends from Redland Park joining us.

Please note there is no service next Sunday, but we are invited to join the congregation at All Saints, Pembroke Road, Clifton at 10.00am for their Family Eucharist with Churches Together including Christmas Carols.

The next notice concerns the revised version of the Church Directory. Tina Parsons is hoping to produce this early in the New Year. Please could you advise her of any changes to your details, and if you are new to Tyndale and would like your contact details to be included, please could you provide these to her. I would stress that it is only produced for members of the congregation and is only supplied to people included in it.

And that just leaves me with wishing you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year from myself and my fellow joint Church Secretary, Denise.

Thank you.

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 IV

Leader: In the dark places and the silent nights

ALL: We hear the sound of singing

Leader: Where there is life and where there is death

ALL: We hear the cry, 'Don't be afraid!'

Leader: For a child is born for us, the gift of God, with angels and shepherds and Kings,

ALL: Come Lord Jesus, we too will bring our gift of love to this sacred moment.

Song Come to be our hope, Lord Jesus Music Group

(Brazilian)

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 This Child

Music Group

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

Carol O Sad and Troubled Bethlehem

Reading [Isaiah 9: 2-7](#)

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 [Be born in me](#)

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]

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 diff'rent 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]

Song BPW 176 Silent night! Holy Night!

Music Group

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 !
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 BPW 167 Infant Holy

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 wise 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.

Reflective Song [When we seek him](#)

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.

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 Who are we seeking?

Of course, many would say they aren't really seeking anything. They are just getting on with life, work, home, friendships, partying, gathering what they need to celebrate another Christmas, including the gifts they will give. Tidying up in time for visitors. Tidying up desks for some welcome time off screen. Scouring the Radio Times for what films, TV are a must, note the irony, what specials are on the cards. Will Gavin and Stacey return again? And will we ever find out what happens with Nessa and Smithy and THE Proposal?

What will the Dr face this time? Hopefully not more of those Weeping Angels. Surely not at Christmas! Angels shouldn't be weeping at Christmas! Well, I suppose they might at where we have buried the birth of the Christ Child amidst the tinsel and baubles and let's not forget the Christmas Rabbits and even more Christmassy the general snowy scenes which are so true to life...if you live in Scandinavia! Or one of the poles. Or up a very high mountain. Anyway, I mustn't get side tracked.

Others might say, they're seeking a bit of peace and quiet, friendship, a bit of fun, a bit of normality, whatever that is, some would even say they're seeking the specific toy that their child has requested desperately not wanting to disappoint. Some are seeking medical help, some are seeking a space in a shelter, or a house swap in a system where there aren't enough homes for everyone who needs one. What are you seeking is not a straightforward question.

Perhaps instead we should ask what was God seeking? After all, we're telling God's story. So when the Christ Child pitched up in the stable and then became a refugee in Egypt, then a Carpenter in Nazareth, what was God seeking? There are a lot of very good and deep theological answers to that question. But what came to my mind when I asked the question, over and over, were the words of a carol that is sometimes written off as twee and inaccurate and a kids carol - it was the words, Be near us Lord Jesus we ask you to stay close by us forever and love us, we pray. Those words that capture what God was seeking, the God who has counted every hair on our heads, every grain of sand on the sea shore, every star in the sky, every sparrow that falls to the ground. God seeks to be near us, we don't even have to ask. God wants it. Has always wanted it. God risked all the vulnerabilities of being human in pursuing it. And we are offered unconditional love. We don't need to pray for it. It's already surrounding us. Although the carol says something much deeper than perhaps we realise - Because for all God's seeking, there's a moment for every person when our own seeking coincides with God's and we are never forced to acknowledge God. Instead we have to open the door to the possibility of God. I was with someone recently who described it as feeling like Jesus has been on her shoulder for years and she's tried to ignore him, and wouldn't turn round and look. She had just looked. Our own 'Be near us' 'please stay close by and love us' is what brings the story to life. That child like response to love. And goodness knows we have seen the opposite of that enough. We are seeking a God of love. And that must be true here, and in our community, in Parliament and in Washington, and in the Kremlin, and Beijing, as well as Afghanistan and Haiti. God is everywhere. So the potential for love is everywhere. And in our child like cry for God to be near us, we also become those who are part of the story, like a mother and a father, like shepherds and wise ones, maybe even the sheep.

Intercessions

O God our maker, we thank you for the gift of your self and the call to the manger. With wonder we peel back the layers piled high on Christmas to find the meaning behind this moment. So we offer you our love and ask you to be near us throughout this Christmastime.

Be near our loved ones, family and friends, near and far, those we will see and those we won't be able to. May your loving presence be like a blessing of comfort and peace to them.

Be near our neighbours in this city, those with homes and those without, those with family and those without, those with illness and those who will struggle with the darkness of the days and the fear of Covid. Those who will have too much partying, too much of everything and put themselves in danger. Those who have lost loved ones and those who are carers in their homes or on behalf of our community.

Be near our politicians with all their bold words and compromised positions, with their muddy motives and the pressures placed on them that skew their decisions. For their priorities and their privilege confront them with your priorities and humility.

Be near those children like Arthur and Star, who will not experience warmth, gifts, goodness, full stomachs, stockings filled with goodies, hugs, love. For those who will experience neglect, violence, fear, abuse, sadness. We ask you to be close to them and to give the gift of wisdom, courage and vigilance to our social workers and child protection workers, teachers and police who must uncover when they are in danger and take action.

Be near your Church throughout our city, help us all to demonstrate your love in ways that enable others to seek you out, to know who can help them in their search, to experience your love through acts of generosity, kindness, goodness and grace.

Be near us we pray. Remind us through your story of our place in it and your great love for each one of us. Where we are afraid of what the future holds, where we are worried for those we share our homes with, where we feel an emptiness that is hard to bear, where we are tired and see only more to tick off the list, where we anticipate the joy of children and grandchildren, where we look forward to our favourite moment of Christmas and who we will share it with. In so many ways, in the good and the difficult, in the celebration and the quiet spaces, be near us we pray, and shine the light of your love upon us once more. For the sake of the Christ Child Amen.

Carol BPW 168 It came upon a midnight clear

Blessing

The blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and remain with you always