

**The Benefice of Silsoe, Pulloxhill and Flitton**  
*Growing as beacons of Christ's light in our communities*



**Sunday 20 December 2020**  
**4th Sunday in Advent**

**WELCOMING THE LIGHT:**  
**a service for approaching Christmas**  
**with Rev DAVID PAYNE**

**Recorded at**  
**St James the Great, Silsoe**

**Words of Welcome**

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

Before each of the Advent Candles is lit a prayer will be said.  
After each candle is lit we invite you to join in the prayers in bold.

**The First Advent Candle:**

*A prayer is said and the first candle is lit*

**All: Lord Jesus, Light of the world,  
born in David's city of Bethlehem,  
born like him to be a king:  
Be born in our hearts at Christmas,  
be king of our lives today. Amen.**

**The Second Advent Candle:**

*A prayer is said and the second candle is lit*

**All: Lord Jesus, Light of the world,  
the prophets said you would bring peace  
and save your people in trouble.  
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas  
and show all the world God's love. Amen**

**The Third Advent Candle:**

*A prayer is said and the third candle is lit*

**All: Lord Jesus, Light of the world,  
John the Baptist told the people to prepare,  
for you were very near.  
As Christmas grows closer day by day,  
help us to be ready to welcome you now. Amen.**

**The Fourth Advent Candle:**

*A prayer is said and the fourth candle is lit*

**All: Lord Jesus, Light of the world,  
blessed is Gabriel who brought good news;  
blessed is Mary your mother.  
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;  
and bless us your children who long for your coming. Amen.**

### The Fifth Advent Candle:

*A prayer is said and the fifth candle is lit*

**All: Lord Jesus, Light of Light,  
you have come among us.  
Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest. Amen.**

### The Light Shines in the Darkness - John 1:1-14

Read by Michael Olney

#### Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem

**1.** O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

**3.** How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of the heav'ns.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him still  
the dear Christ enters in.

**2.** O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to men on earth;  
For Christ is born of Mary,  
and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wond'ring love.

**4.** 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 with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.

### The Dawning of the Lighting

Read by Maggie Jeeves

### The Birth of Christ - Matthew 1:18-25

Read by Simon Stranks

#### Hymn: As With Gladness Men of Old

**1.** As with gladness men of old  
did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright;  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led to thee.

**3.** As they offered gifts most rare  
at that manger rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

**2.** As with joyful steps they sped,  
to that lowly manger-bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
him whom heaven and earth adore;  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

**4.** Holy Jesus, ev'ry day  
keep us in the narrow way,  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds thy glory hide.

5. In the heavenly country bright  
Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
Thou its sun which goes not down;  
There for ever may we sing  
Hallelujahs to our King!

## A Word for Christmas

### Prayers:

Silent Night played by Jo Payne

### 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.  
And 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.**

### Hymn: While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night

**1** While shepherds watched their flocks by night, **2** "Fear not," said he for mighty dread  
all seated on the ground, had seized their troubled mind  
an angel of the Lord came down, "glad tidings of great joy I bring  
and glory shone around. to you and all mankind.

**3** "To you, in David's town, this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

**4** "The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all neatly wrapped in swathing bands  
and in a manger laid."

**5** Thus spoke the seraph. And  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

**6** "All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
to those on whom his favour rests  
goodwill shall never cease."

### Blessing

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit  
remain with you this Christmastime  
and for ever more. **Amen**