

24th December 2023 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Christmas came simply

Christmas
came simply;
a pregnant woman
a worried father
a night birth
a healthy child.

Just God
unwrapped,
vulnerable,
lying in manger,
living in our world.

Ruth Burgess

Simply put, God came into the world as a vulnerable child to be with us, day by day; to live alongside us when we feel vulnerable, alone, worried...

To be with us when we feel loved, cared for, not alone..

God is with us always, we remember and celebrate once again, the Nativity mindful of the children in the rubble in areas of conflict around the world.

God comes to us in the mess and rubble of our lives, bringing hope for a better world, a peaceful one, and one where there is light even in the darkest of places.

I hope your Christmas will be the best one possible,
We all pray too for a Peaceful 2024

With love,
Ruth Crosland
LLM

St Mary's
Fordingbridge
SP6 1BB

St Mary's
Breamore
SP6 2DF

Holy Ascension
Hyde
SP6 2QJ

St Giles
Godshill
SP6 2JJ

St Boniface
Woodgreen
SP6 2AJ

St Mary's
Hale
SP6 2RF

Sandleheath
Uniting Church
SP6 IPT

We welcome all, especially visitors and those attending for the first time. If you need gluten free wafers at Communion, please speak to someone at the door before the service.

Please take this newsletter home with you for the week ahead. God Bless!

Readings for this Week: 24th December 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

COLLECT:

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

MAGNIFICAT

1. My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
2. From this day all generations will call me blessed;
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.
3. He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
4. He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
5. Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
6. He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
7. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,
8. The promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

II Samuel 7:1-11,16.

¹ Now when David, the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I

am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.’³ Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.’⁴ But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord Are you the one to build me a house to live in?⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle.⁷ Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’⁸ Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel;⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly,¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house.¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

At the end, the Reader says:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

THE GOSPEL READING

Please stand and turn to face the Gospel Reader

When the Gospel is announced, the Reader says:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Luke*

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

Luke 1:26-38

Mary is told about the part she will play in the story of salvation.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.’³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’³⁴ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’³⁵ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy;

he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸ Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

c) *New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible*

At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

"Thought for the Week" on **Saturday 23rd December**, is rather retrospective! Jeremy was questioned by Revd. Tom as to what motivated him to write the three 'Fordingbridge' Religious Plays - 'The Nativity', 'The Passion' and 'Astonishing Acts'. They were each performed by 'Churches Together', under splendid direction by Tom. The reply was recorded many months ago, (the trees are in leaf & the scaffolding is on the church!); but since then this video has been to the Holy Land and due to unpredictable pressures, has only recently returned! As usual it will be on 'Avon Valley Churches' Facebook under 'videos', and will remain there awhile. Also, on Christmas Day at 2pm, "Fordingbridge tells the Christmas Story": the video of last year's stage play will be reshown on our facebook page, to remind us all of the Christmas Message; it too will remain there awhile.

Christmas Day at Hale at 10am We will 'Build the Crib' - a family friendly Service, followed by a short Service of Holy Communion at 10.30am. All welcome to either or both!!

Our **Nativity in a bus shelter**, is once again set up in Woodgreen! We hope you will have chance to come and visit the Holy Family. They have arrived at the disused bus shelter, on the Village Green close to the old telephone box. Why not pop along and see our representation of the real meaning of Christmas...

Our Christmas Tree Festival is also up and running in St Boniface Church, with more trees than ever, and a chance to vote for your favourite tree and donate to a wide variety of charities. Merry Christmas from the Church Family of Hale & Woodgreen

Please note the **church office** will be **closed** on **Wednesday 27th** of December.

Save the date : Sunday, 21st January Epiphany concert to be held at St. Mary's Church, Hale, from 4pm. It will have all the tradition of our Advent concert but with a slightly different feel to it. Do come and support us. Raising funds for Trussell Trust and the roof fund. Thank you.

News about Rev Tom Burden - Tom Burden, our former Curate, is returning to England in March to take up a parish role as Vicar of Ventnor and Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight. Tom grew up in Ventnor and his responsibilities will include the church in which he was converted as a sixth former nearly 35 years ago. Tom left us to lead the Anglican School in Jerusalem during the absence of his predecessor, recent Ringwood Curate Sandra Matthews, who is able to return earlier than expected, thus giving Tom the opportunity to accept what he sees as the best job in the Church of England. The formal announcement from the Diocese of Portsmouth is at [Diocese of Portsmouth - News - Ventnor man to return as vicar \(anglican.org\)](http://Diocese of Portsmouth - News - Ventnor man to return as vicar (anglican.org)) and you will see that he will be licensed by Bishop Jonathan Frost, Bishop of Portsmouth (formerly Bishop of Southampton) in St. Catherine's Church Ventnor IOW on March 13th 2024.

St Mary's Fordingbridge – Parking: Please do not park your car in front of the Lych Gate. Parking is available behind the church hall and to the south-east side of the church. Thank you.

1st Sunday after Christmas

31st December, 2023

COLLECT:

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

AMEN.

PSALM 148

1. Alleluia
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.
2. Praise him, all you his angels;
praise him, all his host.
3. Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you stars of light.

4. Praise him, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.
5. Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
6. He made them fast for ever and ever;
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
7. Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;
8. Fire and hail, snow and mist,
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;
9. Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;
10. Wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and birds on the wing;
11. Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
12. Young men and women,
old and young together;
let them praise the name of the Lord.
13. For his name only is exalted,
his splendour above earth and heaven.
14. He has raised up the horn of his people
and praise for all his faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Alleluia.

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians

Galatians 4:4-7

We are God's children, with a unique relationship to God.

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

At the end, the Reader says:
This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

THE GOSPEL READING

Please stand and turn to face the Gospel Reader

When the Gospel is announced, the Reader says:
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Luke*.

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

Luke 2:15-21

The shepherds tell everyone about the amazing events in Bethlehem.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:
help your Church to live as one family,
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

REFLECTION

Looking across our Parish what an amazing selection of Carol services we have had this year. Apart from the traditional church services, up at Hyde we enjoyed Carols on the Common and thankfully the weather was kind. Over at Woodgreen it was Carols in the Horse and Groom pub (must try and make that one next year!) as well as their Carols and Readings service at 11:00pm on Christmas Eve.

(continued)

In all our churches we have raised our voices to sing these lovely songs, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. In this troubled world in which we live the words of many carols are very poignant and inspiring. So – Following Mary’s lead last week I’ll end this Reflection with the final verse from a carol - “*While Shepherds watched their flocks*”

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace,
Good-will henceforth from heav’n to men
Begin and never cease.”

Stephen Darke

**4th Sunday of Advent
24th December**

**Online services available via Facebook or Website
at ‘Avon Valley Churches’**

Sunday	8.15 am	Breamore	Holy Communion
24th Dec	10.00 am	Hyde	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Woodgreen	Holy Communion
	4.00 pm	Fordingbridge	Crib and Christingle Service
	11.00 pm	Fordingbridge	Midnight Mass
	11.00 pm	Woodgreen	Carols and Readings
Monday	8.15 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion
25th Dec	10.00 am	Breamore	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Family Communion and Carols
	10.00 am	Hale	“Build the Crib” - a family friendly Service
	10.30 am	Hale	Short Service of Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Hyde	Holy Communion
Sunday	10.00 am	Hyde	Parish Holy Communion
31st Dec			
Wed 3rd Jan	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion