

CHRISTMAS DAY 2018

**Advent Candles and Christmas Candle are lit
Call to Worship**

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

HYMN 301 O come, all ye faithful (all verses)

Responsive Prayer of welcome and confession

Jesus, born in poverty, your shelter inadequate, shut out, a stranger.

You found no welcome

Bethlehem life went on as usual, that morning.

**Today, once again, we are too busy to notice you,
alive among us. Forgive us.**

But despite the coldness of our welcome,

You are the one who welcomes us,

each one, to the feast of heaven,

to share the bread of life,

to taste the coming kingdom.

Jesus, you invite us today

to share the feast that you have prepared for us.

We accept, with thanks.

We will come at once.

Thanks be to you, O God. AMEN LORD'S PRAYER



He Qi – Nativity, 2013

Short reflection on the painting

HYMN O timeless and untrammelled Word (tune: Greensleeves)

O timeless and untrammelled Word,
God's joy, God's very essence,
first, by your plan, all things began –
you spoke and broke the silence,
Yet, now, you've entered time,
constrained, like us, within its rhyme,
embraced its sweat and grime,
the Word made flesh amongst us!

O holy and most heavenly Word,
with God's own glory shining,
your truth and grace unveil the face
of God's own inmost being.
Yet, frail like us you came
and lived and died in human frame;
shared pain with sick and lame –
the Word made flesh amongst us!

O living and empowering Word,
God's light, beyond all other,
exposing wrong throughout time's song,
God's sun ablaze for ever.
Yet, you our dark embraced,
eclipsed by sin, our failure face,
dying, death's darkness chased,
the Word made flesh amongst us!

John 1: 1-14

REFLECTION

Poem based on John 1

Helpless,
vulnerable,
exposed;
a frail human baby born in a cattle shed –
in such a manner
God made his home among us
that we might be drawn to him
through his very defencelessness.

There were none to deny entry
to that Bethlehem stable;
no security locks, no guards,
no barriers of any kind;
indeed, no Christ,
God came to break all barriers down.
To respond to that love
which risks all in reaching out to us
we surely must also take risks
in reaching out to others.



Risk is misunderstood;
risk having our overtures rejected;
risk becoming vulnerable, defenceless.

How else
can the true Christmas message
be transmitted?

How else
can the word of peace
the word of reconciliation,
become flesh in us?



Sharing of bread and wine

Prayer after Communion:

May the love that breathes life into all humanity and all of creation

Be born in us today

May the love that brings us healing

Be born in us today

May the love that overcomes hatred

Be born in us today

May the love that forgives and renews

Be born in us today

May the love that brings the blessing of peace

Be born in us today

May that Peace now be the gift we share with each other.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory

Christ is born, hallelujah!

HYMN 320 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

The Blessing said together

Let us go in faith to ponder in our hearts the mystery of this day.

And may life be born within us,

Christ Jesus be seen among us

and joy surround us like the angels' song. Amen