

# twelvebaskets

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## CHRISTMAS DAY A

25th December 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening prayers

He has been! He is here! God is with us, Immanuel!

Christmas God, thank you for the gift of this day, this time when we can celebrate and give thanks that you are here, closer than we can imagine.

Amongst all the gift-giving, the eating, the TV, the visiting, cooking, cleaning and napping of this day, show me something of what it means that you are here, so near, God with me, Immanuel.

Amen.

In this space you have found, in the midst of Christmas (even if you are reading this on a day that isn't actually Christmas day – there is room for you here too!), may you know something of the encounter with the incarnate God, the God of mangers and angels and gifts and shepherds and stars and bells. Happy Christmas.

## Hymn:

216 STF – See him lying on a bed of straw - [YouTube](#)

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**You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or tradition with which you are most familiar**

**Readings:** Isaiah 9:2-7 – [Click for reading](#)  
Luke 2:1-14 – [Click for reading](#)

## Reflections on the reading

'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.'

'For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests on his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'.

In the nativity story in Luke's gospel held together is both the most ordinary and the most extraordinary. This story holds the simplicity of the stable and the wonder of a sky filled with the light of heaven's angels. It brings together individuals whose lives are entwined in an event, none of them could have believed possible. When the innkeeper and shepherds started their shifts that morning – who would have thought that by the end of the day their role and place in history would be recorded and retold over 2000 years later?

The story holds the mess, dirt, pain, fear and discomfort alongside transforming love and new life. It challenges power and authority with vulnerability and weakness.

In every generation since the birth of Jesus, God has called people to bear witness to the light of Christ. Bearing witness to the light means passing the message on, telling the good news, sharing our joy – and this calling is for each of us.

As you pause to hear the story of the birth of Jesus this Christmas Day, as you meditate and reflect upon what it means to receive the Prince of Peace into your heart, homes and encounters, may you be inspired as the shepherds were to praise God for this gift, the gift of risking all to be amongst us, giving his life for us, that raised to life and in the power of the Holy Spirit – ‘God with us’ may transform our world.<sup>1</sup>

### **Hymn:**

202 STF – Hark! The herald-angels sing - [YouTube](#)

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### **Blessing**

Whatever your Christmas day has in store for you,  
May you remain open to encounter with the incarnate God who came,  
Who comes,  
And who will go on coming amongst us.

Go from here, to your friends and family, to the people you will spend today with,  
Go and celebrate the incarnate God, Jesus Christ.  
Go and have a very happy Christmas!

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week**

### **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December**

- On this second day of Christmas, ‘Boxing Day’, many countries have traditions of giving gifts to those in need – it may be that the name of the day comes from the ‘alms box’ that would stand in churches for gifts to the poor (though this etymology is contested).
- Today, there are many people living in poverty in our world, and it is likely there will be some in your local community or at least the nearest town. What support networks are in place for them, and are there things you could do to help?
- As you pray into issues around poverty and injustice, you might like to look up the work of local charities responding to issues around debt, homelessness, poverty and other issues you are aware of in your local area. Pray for them too, and the work they are doing to respond.

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<sup>1</sup> Reflection written by Christine Dutton

<sup>2</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

## **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

- Living God, on the third day of Christmas,  
I pray for all who feel isolated in the communities and towns around me.  
I pray for those in my own family or networks who may be feeling the effects of loneliness during this winter season.  
God of love, show me how to be an answer to my own prayer – how to pick up the phone, or make a visit,  
In Jesus, name,  
Amen.

## **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

- When you have chance today, head outside and look at the sky (ideally not when it's pouring with rain!). Take note of the clouds, of the speed they are moving, of the light the sun is casting, perhaps you can see the moon or some stars if it is after sunset.
- Under the vastness of the open sky, reflect on how far away the clouds are, and how much further the sun and the stars are...
- As you look at the huge expanse of the horizon, think about how much bigger our Creator is, how the God we worship knows each one of us and yet is also holding the whole universe together.
- You may wish to give thanks for the amazing universe you get to be a part of.

## **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

- Take a moment to look at your hands. Reflect on the things you have used them for already this week: to do housework, to write emails, to make phone calls, perhaps some digging in the garden or some manual labour tasks.
- Thank you God, for these hands. Help me to use them as your hands in the world – to use my body, my mind, my whole life, for the building of your Kingdom here on earth.  
Amen.

## **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December**

- You might like to use this prayer as a blessing or grace before one of your meals today.
- Gracious God, thank you for the many ways you have blessed me, and for the nutrition in the meals I am eating this day. Thank you for the strength that comes from my food to keep me going. Thank you for the tastes I can enjoy and the refreshment I can feel.
- Gracious God, today, as I eat, I remember that all I have is gift – and I look out on the world around me, knowing that many people are not as blessed as I am, and many will go hungry today.
- God, help me to seek justice in your world.  
Amen.

## **Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> December**

- On what is in some traditions referred to as 'Old Year's Night', you could use your prayer time to reflect on 2022.
- How has this year been for you? How have you been shaped, changed, challenged and inspired by the things that you have done, that have happened to you, that have happened around you?
- What do you want to take with you as you head into the new year? What do you need to leave behind?
- Pray into these questions and the answers and feelings they prompt in you.