

## A Short Act of Worship Sunday 20 December

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ let us remember our sins – those things about which we're sorry and ashamed – and ask God for forgiveness.

*Please take a few moments of quiet to reflect on the week that has passed and on what lies ahead.*

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Mary's gift beyond all telling we recall today: Son of God within her dwelling, born to show the way. Who could guess the final story? – cross and glory; Easter Day!*

*God's Word:*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.' 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.

*(Luke 1: 26-38)*

*Take a few moments of silence to think about these words*

*You may like to spend a few minutes in silence, or slowly read (maybe sing) this hymn:*

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
Tender to me the promise of his word; in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name! Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the same; his holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might! Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word! Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord to children's children and forever more!

