

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025:** Sunday after Epiphany 1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Time

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.*

**Theme for today is “God’s precious Son”**

**Our call to worship:**

Words from Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.  
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;  
worship the Lord in holy splendour.

**Hymn: Stf 107 H&P 334            I sing the almighty power of God**

**Prayers**

Ever-living God, whose glory was revealed in the Word made flesh, may we, who have seen such splendour in the coming of your Son, be true witnesses to your self-giving love in the world; Amen

Loving God, you have searched us and known us, our blindness, our frailties, our fears and our selfishness.

In sorrow we confess that we have sinned against you and disobeyed your command to love.

Forgive us, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who became like us that we might become like him. Amen.

The true light that gives light to everyone has come into the world. To all who receive him, he gives power to become children of God. This is Christ’s gracious word: ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ Amen. Thanks be to God.

**Introduction:**

Many of us will be sharing in covenant services at the beginning of the new year. The covenant is often linked to the principle of making new year’s resolutions and the beginning of a new year is seen as an opportunity to change things in our lives.

For Christians and for the Methodist People in particular the covenant is far more than this, for God so loved the world that he sent his only son, and we have marked that most important event in our varied Christmas celebrations and now, as God has renewed His covenant with us, we respond by renewing our covenant with him.

In our worship this morning we consider the importance of God’s precious son and how that impacts on our lives at the beginning of 2025

**Hymn: StF 83 H&P 13            Praise, my soul, the King of heaven**

**Bible readings:            Isaiah 43: 1-7 Acts 8: 14-17 Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22**

**A message from a Circuit Friend**

Isaiah 43 talks of the preciousness of Israel and for them not to worry about the things that trouble them, for Israel mean more to God than other nations like Egypt or Sudan. God says “don’t be afraid for I am with you” if it is true for Israel, it is true for Christ and is true for us today, for as we live out our lives God will lead us, guide us, care for us and love us and this would be true for Jesus in his life, Isaiah tells of his future birth, his work as Messiah in chapters 42 and 50-65 and also in the prophets we read in Advent.

Mary, Jesus Mother must have realised the child’s uniqueness and preciousness in his conception, birth and the star to guide, the gifts brought by the shepherds and wise men and the angelic choir announcing to all, even to the point of the male babies being slaughtered. Mary would have shown Jesus the gifts that the wise men brought and on thinking about them would find his life and ministry would take shape. Gold for a kingly rule, incense for holiness and a life of prayer and myrrh for the anointing of his body in death.

We see the previous relationships that Jesus had with his Father, God, when he was just twelve years old questioning the temple elders about God and his relationship with himself and God’s people Israel and how Jesus can build his life upon God’s presence and teaching as found in the Bible as well as God’s fatherliness in his life. Then to mark the beginning of his ministry, Jesus comes forward to receive the baptism of God from the hands of John the Baptist, his cousin and the dove resting upon him with the words of God “you are my own dear son, in whom I am well pleased!



Surely this is marking the preciousness of Jesus, confirming who he was as The Son of God and very dear to him. May we find this relationship in our lives to God as our Father and live our lives in preciousness to God.

From Della Collingwood, one of our Local Preachers who worships at Wells-next-to-the-sea.

At the beginning of this new year reflect for a few moments

- How precious is Jesus to you?
- How precious do you believe that you are in his sight?

**Hymn: StF 440 H&P 215          Amazing grace, how sweet the sound**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Unlooked for, Christ comes.

Loving God, we pray for our community . . . In the midst of our everyday lives, surprise us with glimpses of the glorious, humble love at the heart of existence.

Lord, come to your people. **In your mercy set us free.**

Searched for, Christ comes.

To the wise and powerful, star-led to Bethlehem, seeking a king, he comes, child of Mary, crowned with meekness, worthy of every gift.

Loving God, we pray for the leaders of the world. . . Guide them with your light to the true wisdom of justice and peace, of freedom and respect for every human life.

Lord, come to your people. **In your mercy set us free.**

Longed for, Christ comes.

To Anna and Simeon, whose days are lived in faithful expectation, he comes, a new life to the old, a living prophecy of hope.

Loving God, we pray for the Church in all the world . . . Unite us by your Spirit, and make us faithful witnesses to the hope we have in you.

Lord, come to your people. **In your mercy set us free.**

Prayed for, Christ comes.

To men and women, girls and boys, crying out in darkness, pain and loneliness, he comes, baptized, at one with us, our Saviour, healer and friend.

Loving God, we pray for those whose lives are hard and painful or whose existence is sorrowful, bitter or empty . . . In their need, may they know your healing touch, reaching out to comfort, strengthen and restore.

Lord, come to your people. **In your mercy set us free.**

Unlooked for and searched for, longed for and prayed for, loving God, you come to us now as you have come to your people in every age.

We thank you for all who have reflected the light of Christ. Help us to follow their example and bring us with them to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**Hymn: StF 546 H&P 788          Behold the servant of the Lord**

**Closing blessing –**

May he, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill our hearts with his light and joy and peace; and the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remain with us always. **Amen**