



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit



Sunday 28th December 2025: First Sunday after Christmas

Theme for today is "New Beginnings"

Prepared by Jacky Woor – Local Preacher

Call to worship

The living Lord is here, in our midst. And we are awake to the possibility of God's presence amongst us.

Come, by your Spirit, we pray, and open our hearts and minds to your grace.

Hymn 228: Hail to the Lord's anointed <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkrepBvrLI4>

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captives free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

He comes, with succor speedy,
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turned to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth;
before him, on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go;
and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.

Prayers

We thank God for that wonderful gift He gave that first Christmas. As we continue to celebrate this great event let us also think about what it means to us as Christians, and also to those who have no idea about the true meaning is for this season.

We thank God for His creation with all the wonderful colours we see in nature, the continual changing of the seasons, renewal, rebirth and regeneration of all that is.

Hymn 218 Unto us a boy is born <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvnceCVScDI>

Unto us a boy is born
King of all creation.
came he to a world forlorn,
the Lord of every nation

Cradled in a stall was he
With sleepy cows and asses;
but the very beasts could see
that he all folk surpasses.

Kings shall fall down before him,
And gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
His praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever,
His changeless name of Love.

Now may Mary's son, who came
So long ago to love us,
lead us all with hearts aflame
unto the joy above us.

Omega and Alpha he!
Let the organ thunder,
while the choir with peals of glee
Now rends the air asunder.

Readings:

Matthew 1:18-24

Matthew 2:1-12

Reflection by Jacky Woor:

When did we learn of this unique event which happened that night? For most of us it will have been in School or Sunday School, from teachers who would have been very knowledgeable in the story. But how do children, or adults for that matter, learn today? I find myself thinking about the many places in the world today that do not seem to be hearing the Good News, the coming of God's Son, to a lowly maiden and a manual labourer. A child visited by the lowest of the low (the shepherds) and the magnificent wise men (however many there were).

This was a new beginning, not one that was to have an immediate effect, but one that would rock the world in time to come. That night had seen the birth of a special child, one who was to grow up into a very special man, God's only begotten Son. Until he began his ministry only those who had been at Bethlehem during that first Christmas realized the importance of this baby's birth.

Maybe even they forgot over the coming years, until they heard of the new radical preacher/teacher who was travelling around their country. To everyone else he was just a baby born in strange circumstances, just a child growing in a normal family, doing what all children do as they grow and learn.

Perhaps for many people even today he is still just an ordinary baby, born in a stable, going no further, staying a baby. But what they miss is the whole point of that first Christmas, that in that birth, came God's salvation for all people. Jesus grew, he developed into a man, he worked for a living just like the rest of us, he cared for his parents, his brothers and sisters, only leaving all when he began his ministry in his 30s. Yes that first Christmas night saw the new beginning, the fulfillment of all the prophecies in the OT. And Mary pondered on all that happened and kept them in her heart.

Prayers of intercession

When Joseph was warned in a dream, he trusted and obeyed.

We pray for the Church, that we may listen for your voice,
and follow the paths you set before us.

Guide us, Lord, in your mercy.

When Mary carried the child into exile, she bore both hope and fear.

We pray for families in danger,
for mothers who protect,
for fathers who provide,
for children who long for safety.

Guard them, Lord, in your mercy.

When Herod sought the life of the Child, cruelty walked the earth.

We pray for all who suffer from violence,
for lands torn by war,
for people under unjust rulers,
for the innocent who perish.

Rescue them, Lord, in your mercy.

When the Holy Family became refugees in Egypt, strangers gave them shelter.

We pray for those without home or country,
for the displaced and the forgotten,
for all who offer welcome and hospitality.

Shelter them, Lord, in your mercy.

When they returned at last to Nazareth, they found rest in your providence.

We pray for peace in our communities,
for rest from fear and toil,
for trust in your guiding hand.

Bless us, Lord, in your mercy.

Holy Three-in-One, companion of pilgrims, protector of the weak, and Light in the dark,
Keep us and all your children in your care, this day and always. Amen.

Hymn 330: Joy to the world, the Lord is come

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OaM6b48k8>

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy,

Benediction

May the God of Christmas bless you, the light of the Son shine upon you and may the Holy Spirit guide you now, and for evermore. Amen.