

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 20th December 2020

God's plan delivered

A welcome to everyone whether they are here at our service or using it at home. May the Lord make it a special time for all of us.

We will think about how God delivered His plan for our salvation, remembering that it was through the coming of Jesus.

Our first hymn reminds us that, while so few humans were aware of His coming, it was prophesied and long-expected.

Hymn O come, O come Emmanuel / Come Thou long-expected Jesus
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKEUIJRQVbA>

Let us pray.

We thank you Lord for that great day when Jesus entered our world. We think of it as ours because we live here but it really belongs to you who made it. We thank you that He came to ordinary people and lived and worked among people like us and people with problems, some huge problems, and people who were sick and lonely. We thank you that this Christmas time we can remember God coming to live amongst us and we ask that we may be able to draw encouragement from the presence of Jesus.

Amen

Let us spend a little time in intercessory prayer.

Our next hymn reminds us that Jesus came from the glory of heaven.

Hymn 162 From Heaven you came
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpwfDXcKrNQ>

We will have reading from John's Gospel c1 v 1 – 14

JN 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

JN 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

JN 1:6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

JN 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

JN 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

It is very good for us to be reminded that we are contemplating God come to live amongst us. We can remember that like us He was born, although His birth was unique. We have candle light which can remind us that Jesus came into a world darkened by sin and evil, but He brought light, the light of God and can bring that same light into even the darkest of souls.

Our next hymn is set in the middle of winter and can remind us that Jesus came to bring the greatest blessing of all, peace with God.

Hymn 337 In the bleak midwinter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAzQIS4-MpY>

Perhaps it is appropriate that the Light of the World should be born at night. Then we can begin to appreciate his nature. He comes to bring light but this shows up the dirt and the faults. He came to make it possible to put these things right, but only if we can recognize our need and accept His help.

Our next song reminds us of this.

Hymn 345 It came upon the midnight clear
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Dzovu1XA

There remains in our thoughts the fact that something wonderful happened that night. It was indeed a Holy Night for all of us. I am sure a Holy Night to the heavenly host.

Hymn O Holy night
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17killxSdC0>

Today we want to think about what this means to us all.

Hebrews c2:14- 18

HEB 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

This is tremendous stuff. I remember after my father had died how much easier it was to talk to my friend when they lost a parent. It was a shared experience. But a relationship with Jesus is far better. Not only shared experiences but we are with someone who can change things. He is the King of Glory, the Creator of the World. But when we read John's gospel again we find we can have a special relationship with God. We receive Jesus and become children of God.

This truly wonderful, a new relationship with God. This is why Jesus came and suffered for us.

Let us sing with the angels to the glory of our saviour.

Hymn 35 Angels from the realms of Glory
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ymJFcBPcUY>

Let us give thanks for what our Saviour has done

Dear Lord, help us to be more aware of your goodness shown us in Jesus as we celebrate this Christmas time. Amen