

ALTON BAPTIST CHURCH

e-Service

Friday 25 December 2020

CHRISTMAS DAY

God's plan is born

Welcome

Once more we find ourselves with parliament banning our usual Christmas celebrations and as a result too many will be on their own. So we will bring this to the Lord in prayer:

Opening Prayer

We ask you O Lord to lead us out of this maze we find ourselves in that is both a social disruption, in not being able to freely meet, for those, too many, who will as result of the law be on their own, and financially a disaster individually and nationally, that Your will be done in guiding us and our leaders as to the right course to take in these unknown waters. We thank you that we are able to meet whether via our e-Service or in your house to worship you on this day as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Your Son O God. We ask a blessing and a ray of spiritual sunshine in our gloom.

Our 1st hymn

It is not in the Bleak midwinter as we have enough bleakness of another kind from that portrayed in the carol. So let us listen to what we are doing

O come, all you faithful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tM5pwvUGMI&feature=youtu.be>

Readings for today

Why I have chosen this reading will be made clear later.

Matthew 1

Joseph accepts Jesus as his son

20

..... an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Joseph) in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

- 21 She will give birth to a son,
- and you are to give him the name Jesus,
- because
 - He will save
 - His people from
 - their sins.'

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

2nd hymn

After that reading and the purpose of being here today the second carol has to be

For unto us a child is born

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PM0gDu27lcA>

Intercessory Prayers

- ✚ Our opportunity to bring to the Lord our praise, thanks, petitions on behalf of ourselves and others.
- ✚ Our previous Minister and his wife, Chris Russell and Ruth.
- ✚ Dave and Jenny in their new home in Totton.
- ✚ Barnabas Fund for the persecuted church.

3rd hymn

O little town of Bethlehem

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI7_TGZaOIE

Let us look at His word.

We are meeting today to celebrate Christ's birth on this the 25th of December. Well, we do not know the actual date, it is one Christians have assigned as we do with our Monarch in having an Official Birthday. Nothing wrong with that; except many will say it was actually a pagan festival day. Well so be it, the Christians have taken it over and the pagans can't use it; the triumph of good over evil.

**The date of Jesus birth is not important;
it is good we celebrate His birth.**

We are here to celebrate that our gracious Creator, God, sent His son into the world. Now surely He did so for a purpose? When we are born I doubt very much our parents had any thought what we were going to do on earth - what job - would we marry and whom - where would we live and so on.

Of course there are a few people where that's pre-destined; for those who are born into a family firm that they may well run.

'The Firm' as it is known, our Royal family. Nowadays, it will be the eldest child of the monarch who will become the future monarch. When our Queen was born she was destined to be a minor royal princess for the rest of her life until her uncle threw in the towel.

Even for our Queen her future could not be predicted at birth.

She was born like the majority of the citizens at the time in a terraced house on a busy road in west London and went on to be the monarch and live in a palace. Yet I was born along with 2,000 others in a palace, to be away from German bombers, but did not become royalty; although as a conciliation prize I and the Queen share the same title (well in my job). So it was that Jesus' birth took place in a humble location, quite the opposite from where one might expect the Creator's son to be born. Relevant to our time it was great socially distancing from other humans.

Where one is born is really not of any importance.

In 1959 the west London church that I attended opened a new building and with it new facilities including a bookstall that I helped run. The nearest bookshops were miles away, and online

buying was in the realms of science fiction. I bought a book entitled 'Workers New Testament' that had verses underlined showing one of ten themes concerning Christian promises. So I looked at the Christmas story and the 21st verse of the New Testament states the purpose of God's son named Jesus coming into the world.

- ²¹ She will give birth to a son,
- and you are to give him the name Jesus,
- because
 - He will save
 - His people from
 - their sins.'

Of course this has become a matter of contention down the ages but is the central reason for Christianity's existence. We as Christians might do a host of other activities that can distract us from this core reason. How often does a Christian publication or Zoom or YouTube forget to mention this sole purpose? So as we celebrate His birth to-day let us not forget this message now or during the coming year and to His coming. It is of course the utmost importance we remember Jesus' sole purpose for being born. (No other reason is given!)

- He will save
- His people from
- their sins.'

4th Hymn

We will finish with this hymn that was chosen by BBC1 Songs of Praise viewers as their number one carol.

Holy night

<https://youtu.be/iyjm6VpNaNA>

Closing Prayer

Thank you God you sent Your son into our world to save us from our sins.

Amen