

SYMBOLS and GIFTS

We welcome you here in the blessed name of the Lord Jesus, Whose birthday we celebrate tomorrow.

Many things that we traditionally do or see or hear around Christmas time are symbols, and all of these symbols have a special meaning.

One of these symbols is the Christmas tree. This year we've decorated our tree with silver gift boxes to remind us of the wonderful gifts that God has given to us, and we're going to say a lot more about these gifts in the service.

At the end of each section the Leader will say -

Let us, together, praise God for His gifts to us.

then we reply, following the service sheet or the overhead projector screen :

We thank and praise You, Almighty God.

Please stand to sing the hymn

All things bright and beautiful

Chorus :

*All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.*

1. Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing
colours,
He made their tiny wings.

Chorus

2. The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning
That brightens up the sky:

Chorus

Please sit.

3. The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

Chorus

4. The tall trees in the greenwood
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water
We gather every day

Chorus

5. He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Chorus

The Christingle

The first part of the Christingle is the orange, which symbolises God's gift shown to us through His creation of the world in which we live.

From Genesis Chapter 1 :

God created the universe and when He had finished God looked at everything He had made and it was very good.

THE GIFTS OF CREATION

Gracious heavenly Father, we thank You that You have given us eyes to see the beautiful things that You have created, and voices that we might praise Your wonderful creation.

Let us, together, praise God for His gifts to us.

We thank and praise You, Almighty God, for Your wonderful gift of creation.

The second part of the Christingle is the four arms or fruits, symbolising God's love shown to us through His provision and His blessing in each and every season.

From Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 verses 1,2 and 14 :

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.

He sets the time for birth and the time for death,

the time for planting and the time for pulling up.

I know that everything God does will last for ever. You can't add anything to it or take anything away from it. And one thing God does is to make us stand in awe of Him.

The first arm and its fruit reminds us of spring bringing new birth, spring flowers and lengthening daylight hours.

The second arm and its fruit remind us of summer bringing growth, summer flowers and longer daylight hours.

The third arm and its fruit remind us of autumn bringing harvest, falling leaves and shortening daylight hours.

The fourth arm and its fruit remind us of winter bringing colder days, rain, firelight and shorter daylight hours.

Let us, together, praise God for His gifts to us.

Thank You for all the changing seasons of our lives.

The Christingle, *continued*

The third part of the Christingle is made up of a red ribbon that circles the orange.

From Acts Chapter 10 verses 34-43 :

God treats everyone on the same basis. Those who worship Him and do what is right are acceptable to Him, no matter what race they belong to. You know the message He sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ. Then they put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross. But God raised Him from death three days later and caused Him to appear to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from death. And He commanded us to preach the gospel to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. All who believe in Him will have their sins forgiven through the power of His name.

And so we place this red ribbon around the Christingle to remind us of the love Jesus has for all people and His willingness to die for each one of us.

We thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your sacrificial gift to us.

Let us, together, praise God for His gift to us.

We thank You, Jesus.

The Christingle and the Advent Wreath

As the last part of the Christingle celebrates the ministry of Jesus, so the last candle in the Advent Wreath stands for Jesus Himself.

The fourth and last part of the Christingle is the candle, which symbolises God's light that shines through the life and witness of Jesus and of all His followers.

So we place the candle in the orange to remind us of the wonderful light that Jesus brings into the lives of all who love Him and desire to follow Him.

Let us, together, praise God for His gift to us.

May we also receive Your gift of light

The centre and last candle in the Advent Wreath is called the Jesus candle, and as we light it now let us pause for a moment to think about all He means to us.

Thank You, Jesus, for all You have given us

Let us, together, praise God for His gifts to us.

Thank You, Jesus.

Please stand for the carol

1. **The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in
fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay a-keeping
their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so
deep.**

Chorus

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

2. **They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and
night.**

Chorus

3. **And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country
far;
To seek for a king was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it
went.**

Chorus

Please sit for

The first nowell

4. **This star drew nigh to the north-
west
Oer Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where
Jesus lay.**

Chorus

5. **Then entered in those wise men
three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and
frankincense.**

Chorus

6. **Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our Heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and
earth of nought,
And with His blood mankind
hath bought.**

Chorus

the Message

The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath is made up of a circle of evergreen leaves entwined around four candles with a fifth candle in the centre.

The evergreen represents everlasting life found in Christ; **the circle** of the wreath symbolises life without end; and **the candles** remind us of Christ as the light of the world.

The candle of HOPE reminds us of God's promises to His people and the hope we have in Jesus Christ and His promise of eternal life.

Let us, together, praise God for His gifts to us.

We thank You for the Hope which You give to Your people.

Please stand for the carol

Away in a manger

1. **Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**
2. **The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love Thee Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**
3. **Be near me, Lord Jesus: I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.**

Please sit

From Luke Chapter 2 verses 1-14 :

At that time the Emperor ordered a census to be taken. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own town. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David, because he was a descendant of David. He went with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger - there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

JESUS IS BORN; THE SHEPHERDS WORSHIP HIM

The candle of PEACE reminds us of God's promise of Peace to all who please the Lord.

Let us, together, praise God for His gift to us.

We thank You for Your gift of peace

From Matthew Chapter 2 verses 1-12 :

Soon after Jesus's birth, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be king of the Jews?" The chief priests and teachers of the law said, "He will be born in the town of Bethlehem". And so the men travelled to Bethlehem. They went into the house, and when they saw the Child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshipped Him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh

THE WISE MEN COME TO WORSHIP

The candle of JOY reminds us of God's gift of glad tidings of great Joy.

Let us, together, praise God for His gift to us.

We thank You for Your gift of joy

Please stand for the carol

Joy to the world

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Joy to the world; the Lord is come !
Let earth receive her King !
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.</p> | <p>2. Joy to the world; the Saviour reigns !
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, Repeat the sounding joy.</p> |
| <p>3. 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 And wonders of His love.</p> | |

Please sit

From John Chapter 3 verse 16 : *God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son*

The candle of LOVE reminds us of God's gift of Love, and His love for the world.

Let us, together, praise God for His gift to us.

Thank You, God, for your gift of love.

Making the Christingle

Please stand to celebrate the birth of Jesus

**Happy Birthday to You,
Happy Birthday to You,
Happy Birthday dear Jesus -
Happy Birthday to You.**

- which we shall sing twice

Blessing the Christingles

Please blow the candles out !

Please sit or kneel for the prayer, which we shall end by singing the Lord's Prayer

Thank you, God, for all Your wonderful gifts to us. The gifts of Your creation, the gift of Your Son Jesus, the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. Help us to use these gifts generously and prayerfully.

We thank You for Jesus and all He means to us. May our understanding and love for Him increase during the coming year.

We pray for all who are sad and lonely at this time, please bring joy and companionship into their lives.

We pray for all who are at war with one another. May Your kingdom of peace begin to reign in their hearts today and always.

Amen

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth, as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil,
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours, now and for ever. Amen**

Please stand for the carol

Silent night

1. **Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and child,
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace;
Sleep in heavenly peace.**
2. **Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.**
3. **Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiance beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.**

Please remain standing for

the Blessing

Our next Family Service is on March 27th, Easter Sunday; we would love to see you there.

Kids Club restarts on Tuesday March 1st 2005.

We wish you all a blessed and joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

Contributors

Names omitted