**PROVIDENCE METHODIST CHURCH**

**ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICE**

FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY

**Friday 25th December 2020**



**WELCOME** The long-awaited day has arrived. It may not be as exciting as in former years, due to the pandemic being experienced by the world. History however cannot be erased; the birth of Jesus Christ is an established fact necessitation our celebration. Our praise and thanks are lifted now to God who, because of His love for us, sent the Son into the world. Please join me in the Call to Worship, using a portion of Luke’s narrative of the Saviour’s birth.

**CALL TO WORSHIP** Leader - “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

**People - And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”**

Leader - The shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

**People - So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.**

**Hymn** **64 VIP**

1 HE was born on Christmas Day In a land so far away And his mother meek and mild She did love de baby child.

 *Run, come quick*

 *Come gather round de stall*

 *Jesus is born*

 *Him born fi one an’ all*

2 And de three men dat was wise

 Saw de bright star in de skies

 So they follow as it led

 To the manger dat was bed

3 “Glory be,” de angels sing

 Little Jesus is de King

 An’ de pickney dem a sing,

 Baby Jesus is de King.

**PRAYER OF ADORATION, CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS** - Loving God, we too would come with haste to adore the new king born to be the Saviour of the world. We are fully aware that You communicated the news of Christ’s birth to simple shepherds as well as to persons of noble birth. Indeed, You clearly indicated that we all, whatever our, race, nationality or social status, are children of the most high God. That earth and heaven combined to render praises to the incarnate deity is reason enough for us to embrace the tradition and to lift our voices in a similar act of adoration.

We admit to You, merciful God, that in the build up to this day, many of us were concentrating on selfish things – how many presents are we going to receive; will we enjoy the meal that others will prepare for us – and we completely missed the point of Advent and Christmas, that it is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ who first came as a baby in Bethlehem, but who is due to return at any moment, when we least expect, for a second Advent.

Forgive our selfishness and shortsightedness. We are ashamed that our preoccupation with self has been at the expense of conveying love and concern for those with whom we share God given space in our homes, our communities and nation. Having been insensitive to the demands expected of us as Your children, we plead with You, dear God, to pardon us.

Having owned up to our weaknesses, we humbly ask that You forgive our sins of commission as well as our sins of omission. Knowing that You forgive when we confess, we now gladly accept Your pardon. In thankfulness for Your mercy, we feel genuinely determined not to make the same or similar mistakes in future. Please lay Your hand upon us, so that in future we submit totally to the expectations You have of us.

May this nativity festival be special, as we become new persons, changed for the better. This we humbly pray. Amen.

**ADVENT CANDLE LITURGY**

WELCOMING THE GUEST

**Reader One:** This is the day we have long awaited. Advent hope moves us; Advent love leads us; Advent joy stirs us; Advent peace stills us, that we might affirm our King Jesus.

**Reader Two:** It is time we set flame to this Advent affirmation by lighting the Christ Candle.

**THE CHRIST CANDLE AND ALL OTHER CANDLES ARE LIT**

**Reader One:**We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the long-awaited Messiah whose coming was prophesied. The same Jesus lives today in our hearts. He deserves our highest loyalty and total commitment. In Jesus Christ our hope is fulfilled; our love is consummated; our joy is complete; and our peace is sealed. Rejoice, a Saviour is born. indeed. Joy to the world!

**Hymn 65 VIP**

1 JOY to the world, the Lord is come!

 Let earth receive her King;

 Let every heart prepare him room,

 And heaven and nature sing, *(rep.)*

 And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!

 Let all their songs employ;

 While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

 Repeat the sounding joy, *(rep.)*

 Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 He rules the world with truth and grace,

 And makes the nations prove

 The glories of his righteousness

 And wonders of his love, *(rep.)*

 And wonders, wonders of his love.

**NOTICES**

**MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

**Collect:** .**Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING, Isaiah 52: 7 – 10**

**7**How beautiful upon the mountains
    are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
    who announces salvation,
    who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
**8**Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
    together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
    the return of the Lord to Zion.
**9**Break forth together into singing,
    you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
    he has redeemed Jerusalem.
**10**The Lord has bared his holy arm
    before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
    the salvation of our God.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSIVE READING - PSALM 98**

**1**O sing to the Lord a new song,
    for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
    have gotten him victory.
**2The Lord has made known his victory;
    he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.**
**3**He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
    to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
    the victory of our God.

**4Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
    break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**
**5**Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
    with the lyre and the sound of melody.
**6With trumpets and the sound of the horn
    make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.**

**7**Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
    the world and those who live in it.
**8Let the floods clap their hands;
    let the hills sing together for joy
9**at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming
    to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
    and the peoples with equity.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

**THE EPISTLE READING, Hebrews 1: 1 – 12**

**1**Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, **2**but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%201%3A1-12&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-29949a)] whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. **3**He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%201%3A1-12&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-29950b)] all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4**having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. The Son Is Superior to Angels

**5**For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son;
    today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father,
    and he will be my Son”?

**6**And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

**7**Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds,
    and his servants flames of fire.”

**8**But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%201%3A1-12&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-29955c)] forever and ever,
    and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%201%3A1-12&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-29955d)] kingdom.
**9**You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
    with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

**10**And, “In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth,
    and the heavens are the work of your hands;
**11**they will perish, but you remain;
    they will all wear out like clothing;
**12**like a cloak you will roll them up,
    and like clothing[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%201%3A1-12&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-29959e)] they will be changed.
But you are the same,
    and your years will never end.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn 63 VIP** “Hark The Herald Angels Sing

1 HARK! The herald-angels sing

 Glory to the new-born King,

 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,

 God and sinners reconciled.

 Joyful, all you nations, rise,

 Join the triumph of the skies;

 With the angelic host proclaim:

 'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

 *Hark! The herald-angels sing*

 *Glory to the new-born King.*

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,

 Christ, the everlasting Lord,

 Late in time behold him come,

 Offspring of a virgin's womb.

 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!

 Hail, the incarnate Deity!

 Pleased as man with us to dwell,

 Jesus, our Immanuel:

3 Mild he lays his glory by,

 Born that we no more may die,

 Born to raise children of earth,

 Born to give them second birth.

 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

 Light and life to all he brings,

 Risen with healing in his wings.

**THE GOSPEL, John 1: 1 – 14**

**1**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was in the beginning with God. **3**All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4**in him was life,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%201%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26039a)] and the life was the light of all people. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

**6**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8**He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9**The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%201%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26044b)]

**10**He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. **11**He came to what was his own,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%201%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26046c)] and his own people did not accept him. **12**But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13**who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

**14**And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%201%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26049d)] full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of Christ. **Praise be to Christ our Lord.**

**SERMON -** Rev. Dr George Mulrain

**Hymn – All For Jesus** (by Ernie Smith)

Jesus come today, for a poor, poor man like me.
Salvation come my way, my soul set free.
Jesus come for all, and we must hear His call.
Open up your heart today, and let it be.

*CHORUS:*

*Nuh matter if you t'ief, or if you dread,
Of if yuh have a crown pan yuh head.
Nuh matter if you have no heart at all,
Jesus bring love for one and all.
Sing it children. I for Jesus, you for Jesus,
All for Jesus, fall for Jesus,
Come to Jesus.
Jesus come for one, he come for all.*

Jesus come for I, see manger where He lie.
See cross where He must die, for a wretch like me.
For God so loved the world,
Man, woman, boy and girl.
He gave His Son for you, His Son for me.

*CHORUS*

Jesus Christ today the same as yesterday The one the only way the king for me Let it come to pass mankind find love at last Just as it was time past so let it be

*CHORUS*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In our prayers of intercession, we give thanks for the Saviour from whom we may derive maximum benefits by allowing Him in our lives.

We pray for children today, that this same Christ Child will bless and protect them, especially those who feel that there is no one who truly loves them. We remember abused children, battered children, living in homes where they are deprived of any indication that others love and care for them. Help us to be counted among those who are genuinely loving to children.

We pray for persons whose lives are in turmoil. We remember those for whom this Christmas is a very lonely time, especially since the pandemic prevents the getting together of friends and family. We remember those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. Grant them the comfort that only You, o God, can give. Remind us to make contact with others using the methods of communication that are available to us.

We bring before You, O God, countries in the world where there is no peace, but war, squabbles, fighting for territory, and ongoing battles of all sorts. We know that communities plagued by violence, crime and lawlessness may become peaceful, not merely with the cessation of gunfire or of harsh angry words, but that the peace which Christ gives, the inner peace, will be theirs. We ask that more persons will embrace Christ’s advice to seek peace and pursue it. We pray especially for those in political leadership, that they be motivated by the desire to heal internal conflicts and guide their nation along the paths of peace.

Grant that as a church, we may dedicate ourselves to create harmony in society; that as individuals we recommit our lives to serve Jesus Christ who came as a baby on earth, who intercedes for us at the right hand of God, and who will come again to be our judge.

Hear these prayers which we ask in the name of the Christ child whose birthday we celebrate. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer (sung) Caribbean Praise CD, Track #6

**Hymn 66 VIP** (**verses 1, 3 & 4)**

1 O COME, all ye faithful,

 Joyful and triumphant,

 Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

 Come and behold him,

 Born the King of angels:

 O *come, let us adore him,(rep.3 times)*

 *Christ the Lord.*

3 Sing, choirs of angels,

 Sing in exultation,

 Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:

 Glory to God

 In the highest:

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,

 Born this happy morning,

 Jesus, to thee be glory given:

 Word of the Father,

 Now in flesh appearing:

**THE BENEDICTION**