West Sussex Area Ministry, United Reformed Church (Billingshurst, Petworth and Pulborough)

 **Bulletin for Christmas! 25th/27th December 2020**

Happy Christmas!! Thank you all for your cards and good wishes, and I wish you all the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

This Order of Service is suitable for either Christmas Day or Sunday 27th, whenever you get the opportunity to pause for a while to worship the Prince of Peace.

More details of Christmas services etc can be found at the end of this Bulletin.

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“While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child”. Luke 2: 6

Hymn: Make way, make way for Christ the King (R&S 141)

Prayer: Even if we can’t all gather to worship in a full church…

 Even if we can’t sing carols together…

 Emmanuel, God is with us!

 May we feel the awe and wonder this Christmas -

 and know that we are deeply loved.

 Amen

followed by The Lord’s Prayer

Readings: Luke chapter 2 verses 1-20

Reflection: Into my inbox popped a message, with the subject line: ‘Christmas is about celebrating the humanity of God.’ Of course that seems obvious - we all love the approachability of the baby in the manger. I vividly remember the Christmas when one of my daughters’ friends in the village school had a new baby brother, born in late November, and the nativity play actually starred a real live baby (safely nestled in the hay, and gazed at by the other children, not - on that occasion - carried around)!

But the idea can still be a bit shocking. I think some people still think of Jesus as God ‘pretending to be’ fully human, rather than being exactly like the rest of us, with the same frailties, pains, bereavements - and equally the same joys. God knows what it is to be fully human because God became fully human. That is amazing.

God chose to become human… and to bless us by doing so.

One of my favourite hymns starts:

“Son of God, eternal Saviour, source of life and truth and grace,

Son of Man, whose birth among us hallows all our human race…”

So this Christmas may we celebrate the humanity of God. Amen

Hymn: Who would think that what was needed (R&S 178)

Prayer: God of compassion and understanding,

 born into our world, far from home,

 amongst the poor, the over-worked and the frightened:

 you feel the pain, the loneliness, the anxiety

 and the grief of those we pray for today…

 We hold before you the sick and those who care for them;

 and we pray for our local communities,

 and all those we love……..

 we bring to you our needs and concerns this Christmas…..

 In Jesus’ name we ask all our prayers, Amen

Hymn: O come, all ye faithful (R&S 160)

Blessing: May we hear the angel this week:

 “Do not be afraid; for see -

 I am bringing you good news of great joy…”

 and may the blessing of God,

 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

 be with us and with all those we love

 this Christmas and always. Amen

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Christmas Day: There will be short services of Christmas worship in all three of our churches on Christmas morning, at the earlier time of 10.00am. Please let your Church Secretary (Brenda, Gerald or Maureen) know if you’re intending to be there; and anyone coming to services in church please remember a mask and very warm clothing!

There won’t be any After Church Coffee Zooms on Christmas morning.

Sunday 27th December there will NOT be services in any of our churches;

but for those who would like to chat with friends there will be ‘After Church Coffee’ Zooms as usual at 11.30am.

There will also be a Sunday at Six Zoom worship service on Sunday evening as usual.

\*\* More information about the implications of our new Tier 4 status will follow a.s.a.p. and \*\* the next Bulletin will be out in time for Sunday 3rd January 2021.

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