

Welcome, Introduction and Prayer

Welcome everyone! What a joy to be in the house of the Lord on Christmas' Day! What a surprise for us to hear the sound of our organ again. Brother Luke Priestley brought his friend Carl to fix it and we want to thank him for blessing our church in this way. Luke and Charlotte Priestley' son, Joshua is the 5th generation of members of this church and I learned from Luke that his great-grandfather Rev. Thomas James Hupper was one of the minister of Buckminster Road Baptist Church in the past and Luke grew up in this church and in July he is planning to get married at our church building in the summer. Roy and Sue Priestley are Luke's grandparents and they are members of this church but they have been unable to come due to some health issues, so please let us remember them in our prayers. In fact, I was praying for Luke and Joshua even before meeting them. Since I felt God's calling to become the new minister of this church, I've been praying and asking God to bring back the sons and daughters of the faithful members of this church so may God revive us again pouring out His Holy Spirit, in a way we can all return to Him and realign our lives to His will. God knows where they are and if they are here in Leicester, it is my prayer that we may be able to contact them. And if you know them, let us show our love and give them a call. I am planning to make a list of names so that we can pray and visit them when the circumstances allow us. Let us keep praying for a real revival in our church as we would love to see people giving their live to Jesus.

Reading – John 1:1-14

The Word became flesh

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. 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 all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all 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 everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive 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. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Preaching and Teaching

“Today is Christmas” by Pr. Claudio Moises

Introduction

We've got here our advent candles and today is Christmas and this is a season of light. Jesus is the light of the word! Every Advent Sunday we lit up a candle and light shines in darkness and lies are replaced with truth. In our first advent we lit the candle of hope

I – Jesus, hope of the Nations

He is our hope in times of trouble and He is our only hope. ***“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” Hebrews 6:19*** then we lit the candle of joy.

II – Jesus, joy to the World

Jesus is our joy and the joy to the whole world! The Bible also tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength and that Mary rejoiced in God when she received the news that she would conceive the Lord. John the Baptist jumped with joy in his mother’s womb when Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of joy, love and peace in the Holy Spirit and we rejoice in our salvation! The angel brought the good news to the shepherds. ***“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.’ Luke 2:10*** Then we lit the candle of love.

III – Jesus, God’s love to humanity

God is love and His love is like a river. He lavished His love on us and we ought to love one another! His love is always in movement and it transforms everything and everywhere He goes. Eventually this love transformed my own life. ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16*** Last Sunday we lit the candle of Peace.

IV – Jesus, Prince of Peace

Jesus is our peace! And we learned that we can have peace in all 4 dimensions. Peace with God, peace in our relationships, peace as being part of the kingdom of God and the inner and intimate peace we can have in our day to day life in our relationship with Jesus. ***“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7***

Today is Christmas and we’re now lighting the last candle. We are celebrating the birth of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ is the Son of God! The scriptures make very clear that Christmas, the birth of Jesus, the son of God was planned on eternity. Before heaven was formed and before the sun shone his light. Before the angels moved their wings in order to attend the orders of the infinite and omnipotent God, before the planets shone their light in the galaxies. The birth of Jesus Christ was established. God promised to our first fathers in the Garden of Eden. That from the seed of the woman would be born the one, who would smash the head of the serpent. ***And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’ Genesis 3:15*** And from that moment on all the patriarchs, the prophets they all expected and prophesized about this glorious day. The biggest event of all time! The biggest and most extraordinary mystery of humanity, the incarnation of the word, Jesus, the living word! ***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14*** God became flesh and He dwelled among us. The infinite God, the everlasting father coming into the temple, the infinite God became a baby and wore human clothes, lying in a manger. The creator of the universe, the one who formed the visible and invisible world became a little baby. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords born in a manger, what a glorious mystery! The messiah, Jesus Christ, was promised and the Bible tell us that everything before Him was like a prelude in the history of humanity...a preparation.

“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, Galatians 4:4 The scenario of the world was all set when Christ was born. We had the Greek culture with a universal language and later the unified Roman Empire with their politics, opening highways making transportation and communication easier all prepared by God so that this sublime and powerful message, the Good News of Jesus Christ could spread quickly and in a broad way. Jesus is the living word and he is alive living in us. God prepared the people of Israel with His written word and they were the guardians of the scriptures, they kept it safe and they copied it carefully and we have still today those manuscripts in Hebrew preserved for us today. When the entire scenario was ready, Jesus was born in a mysterious way. God sent His angel to Nazareth to Mary and to Zachariah in Jerusalem. It seemed as if the angel had arrived too early for young Mary and too late for old Elizabeth. One was too young to be a mother and the other was too old to conceive. But the scripture says that Mary responded ***‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Luke 1:38*** Scripture says that the messiah was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea. However, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth in the north and Bethlehem was in the south. None of God’s plans can be frustrated and all the scriptures prophecies must be fulfilled. And God moved the Roman Empire, so Caesar Augustus; the emperor established a census in which each citizen had to register in their native town. The Bible tells us that Joseph was a descendent of David and he had to register in Bethlehem, you could ask: “Why did Mary have to go with him?” As only Joseph had to register and Mary was heavily pregnant and to follow her husband on a long and difficult journey to Bethlehem was quite silly. The Bible doesn’t say why, but there are some clear inferences that Mary at this stage could have been attacked with all kinds of criticism. How could she possibly explain her pregnancy? Joseph must’ve taken her with him in order to protect her from the hostile and suspicious environment. And when they arrived in Bethlehem there was no place for them among Joseph’s relatives. But this also had a purpose, because Jesus had to be born in a manger. In a barn, cave or stable where they would have kept the animals and a manger is where the animals would eat from. Why he had to be born in a manger? Because a barn is the adequate place for a lamb to be born and the Bible tells us that Jesus is the Lamb of God! Jesus was born to die as a sacrifice for our sins. As a perfect Lamb of God and as priest he offered himself as a sacrifice for us all, so we could have the eternal life

Conclusion

Today is Christmas and the Angels celebrated Jesus’ birth. The clouds were full of music and the angels formed a large choir singing. ***“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.” Luke 2:14*** The first Christmas was celebrated in heaven and from that extraordinary day on Christmas is celebrated on earth every year because Jesus is alive. Jesus is the true reason for the season and our heart is full of joy and gratitude to God for sending Jesus to us. Merry Christmas dear friends! Let us all rejoice in Jesus, our Saviour. When we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating the birth of Jesus, the hope of the nations. Jesus is our joy, joy to the world and in Him we rejoice! The amazing love of God for humanity, Jesus was born so we could have eternal life if we believe in him and accept his gift. God lavished His love on us and we ought to love one another. He has justified us by His grace and we can have peace with God. We can also have peace in our relationships because Jesus is the Lamb of God and he sacrificed himself for our sins. He is ready to forgive us and we can love and forgive others and enjoy His Shalom. He

is the living word and He is alive and that is why we still celebrate His birth today. He is here with us!

Response Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Christmas, for the lights, for the presents, for the food we shared with our loved ones. We celebrate because your beloved son, Jesus Christ, although He came and died as a sacrifice for our sins He rose again and he is alive in our hearts today. Lord, I pray for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit and that your presence may be strong and evident in our community again. I pray that hearts may be turned back to you in repentance, accepting your good news and declaring Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. May your love captivates and brings back your sons and daughters to worship you. May we experience revival and be filled with hope, joy and peace for 2021 in Jesus' holy name, I pray. Amen.

Song 1 – What Child is This

<https://youtu.be/6jroBAI3WW8> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*What child is this who lay to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping*

*So bring him incense, gold and myrrh
Come peasant king to own him
The King of Kings Salvation brings
Let loving hearts enthrone him*

*This, this is Christ the King
Who shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring him laud
The Babe, the Son of Mary*

*O raise, raise a song on high
His mother sings a lullaby
Joy, oh joy for Christ is born
The Babe, the son of Mary*

*This, this is Christ the King
Who shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring him laud
The Babe, the Son of Mary*

Song 2 – O Little Town of Bethlehem

<https://youtu.be/-Q6b9ZdaD9U> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight*

*For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth*

*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel*

Song 3 – We wish you a Merry Christmas

<https://youtu.be/gzF5hCjR5hA> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*We wish you a merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

Final Words and Apostolic Blessings

Sunday we will have a guest speaker, the father of one of the young ladies who sang with Becky last Sunday, Brother Atanda, is bringing the last message of the year to our church. I have also asked his daughter, Princess, to play again the cello for us and

Richard is writing another poem too. Please sign up in order to book a place, in our service.

Let me finish the service by praying the priestly blessing over us all

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.”

See you all on Sunday