

# Blue Christmas Service - Reflection

## Introduction

Our society has romanticised Christmas.

Today it is all about happiness, enjoyment, frivolity. And of course, presents. Lots of presents.

This makes Christmas hard for the many people who are isolated, grieving, or struggling in their relationships. There are so many different reasons you may find Christmas a difficult time.

Take a moment to look around. You are not alone in that feeling. Others have come here tonight because they feel the same way. Tonight, as we come together, we become part of a community. We can remind each other there are others who understand; and when we face Christmas with all our baggage, we can remember this night and now we are not alone.

## The story begins

The story begins with an angel,  
and an unmarried mother,  
who was a girl who lived in an era  
when being an unmarried mother  
resulted in rejection from the community...  
or even worse.

Some of us here  
may be feeling pain because of similar rejection.  
Whether we are isolated from family  
or have experienced bullying by those with power,  
the teenage Mary is like us,  
knowing what that experience means.

The Angel gave a message of hope –  
of meaning making about the nurturing  
of the growing babe;  
a message that helped Mary find the strength  
to pick herself up and continue.

May we all experience such a messenger from God  
in our lives.

*Reading: Luke 2:1-8*

## A time to reflect

Young Mary and her new husband, Joseph, had to travel.

They had to leave their home, and all they knew, simply because of the command of the authorities. Mary is heavily pregnant and it is a long and rough journey for the young couple.

How does she feel?

Relief at getting away from those who know her history?

Fear at facing childbirth without her family supporting her?

Does Joseph worry about how he will support his wife and the young child?

Imagine arriving with nowhere to go. Or perhaps in all the chaos of busy homes, where the only place for a young woman to labour is where the animals are housed. Is it an act of kindness or rejection?

*Reading: Luke 2:8-14*

## A time to reflect

Shepherds in Jesus' day weren't the romanticised people of Victorian Era Christmas cards. On the one hand, an already ancient image of kings was that of a shepherd. On the other they were viewed as shifty, dirty, and not the sort of people who were wanted in the neighbourhood. They were seen as complete outsiders.

Yet, in this story it is the outsiders who are included. The ones whom no one wants who are told the Good News. The ones to whom no one listens meet the angelic messengers. God reminds us that everyone is welcome; all are included by God's grace and love.

*Reading: Luke 2: 15-20*

## A time to reflect

The shepherds took a risk. They may have wondered what the young couple would say when they turned up to where the exhausted mother was, bringing their tales of angels. However, they took a risk; they also reached out and so they became part of this story of hope.

It would be easy to dismiss their story, to see it as the drunk ravings of shifty shepherds. And perhaps some of the people of Bethlehem did just that. But they were the people God trusted with the news, and the family of Christ accepted them and their words. They had something to say, and what they said were treasured by those who knew how to listen.

Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

## A time to reflect

There is something magical about lighting a candle.

If we were in darkness,  
then we would see the light more clearly.

Take a moment to think of someone –  
anyone –  
who has held a light for your darkness,  
no matter how small that light is,  
or how fragile it seems:  
for all these people we give thanks  
and pray for them and their needs.

May you at this time  
experience a light in your darkness  
and remember there are those  
who will help you to hold that light.

You are invited to come and light a candle  
and watch what happens –  
sharing the light does not diminish the candle,  
but simply spreads the light that little further.

*[People come forward and light one or more candles.]*

We hold all these prayers before you, O God,  
and pray that although our hearts are heavy,  
although Christmas is a struggle,  
we may be able to see glimpses of your light  
this Christmas-tide;  
Amen.