

Prayers of Intercession

Following these intercessions, there will be a short period of silent reflection accompanied by a song. At the time of Jesus' birth, Mary must have had many questions about what Jesus' life would be like and what his future would hold as she knew he was the Messiah and God's own Son. I pray that we may see this as an opportunity to ask God the questions that are in our hearts and lay our concerns and troubles before Him.

Father God,

As Advent draws to a close, once again we gather round (often not in the same way that we are accustomed to) to hear the Christmas story, recognising those familiar characters and watching those scenes unfold. Although the world around us has changed, especially this year, let us rest in the knowledge of your presence. May our faith, hope and trust in you remain steadfast. We pray for ourselves and that the light of our deepening faith may shine out from within us.

Lord, hear us.

- **Lord, graciously hear us.**

In the darkness of that night...

Long and hard was the road to Bethlehem.

As we think of Joseph and Mary travelling together on that difficult journey. We pray for those that feel utterly alone in the difficulties they face...alone in their frustration....alone with their own internal struggles....

... those who battle addiction.

... those who are homeless suffering in the bitter cold and often only facing abuse.

... those who are in hospital.

... those who face redundancy this Christmas time.

We pray that they may know the comfort of your presence in their desolation.

We pray this morning for those who have died. Thinking of those we have lost from our own Church family and we especially pray for Edna Sedgley and her family.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In the darkness of that night...

Shepherds heard the heavenly message.

Let us pray for the troubled world that we live in and all of the messages we hear daily that make us despair and those that make us feel hope.

We pray for the Church of England as a whole and for our own local churches in the difficult times that we face. We think of all of those who are in church buildings today and those who worship from their homes.

We pray for your Son's birthplace the town of Bethlehem so many miles away and all those who live there today.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In the darkness of that night...
Three magi travelled from afar.

Lord God,
We pray this Christmas time as we await the celebration of your Son's birth like the wise men who carried those first gifts and Mary who treasured all of those moments in her heart for your love and wisdom amongst us.

As Jesus lay in Mary's arms, it is hard for us to imagine her thoughts knowing that she held such greatness, such majesty, such holiness yet someone born into humanity and lowliness... someone so small and fragile.

Instil in us and all Christians the faith to follow Mary's example and lay our lives before you placing our trust in you completely and without trepidation.

Mary stored it all up in her heart. Her hopes, her dreams, her love for him glowed bright.

And from that darkness there came a light.

A little child lying there
Safe in Mary's love and care.
Oblivious to the pain
he had come to bear.

A tiny stable,
a shining star,
A young mother
in land afar.

And swathed in her arms,
so loved,
so warm,
the Hope of all the world was born.

On Christmas Day,
Light a tiny candle,
Let it glow bright.
And say a prayer
For that first
Christmas night.

***Merciful Father,
Accept these prayers
For the sake of your Son
Our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.***

Song and time of reflection.