

The Vine at Home
First Sunday after Christmas Day – Year C
Sunday 26th December 2021

Call to worship

He has been.
He is here.
He has come to change and transform you.

God is here, the miracle of Christmas.
Amen.¹

Hymn: 212 STF – O Come All Ye Faithful –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GSOpW4vLHI>

Opening Prayers

Praise be to you, O God, in this Christmas season of joy and hope.

You spoke... and we were created
You spoke... and the prophets brought us your message
You spoke... and came amongst us, the Word made flesh.

You knew the messiness of human life, and so in my messiness I praise you.
You knew the fragility of human life, and so in my fragility I adore you.
You knew the wonder of human life, and so in my wonder I worship you,

Creating God, Living Word, Restless Spirit.

In a season of gatherings, I say thank you for your constant companionship with me;
In a season of caroling I thank you for placing a song of joy in my heart;
In a season of feasting I thank you for every way in which you sustain me;
In a season of giving I thank you for the gift of yourself, incarnate in Jesus.

And in a season of tragedy, destruction and grief, I thank you

for your identification with me in my sorrow,
your strength when mine is gone,
your grace when I am broken,
your love which binds us, renews us and walks with us, every moment.

Amen.²

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version most familiar or comfortable to you.

Readings: Luke 2:41-52 - The Boy Jesus in the Temple

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. **42** And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. **43** When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Jill Baker

parents did not know it. **44** Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. **46** After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. **48** When his parents^[a] saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." **49** He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"^[b] **50** But they did not understand what he said to them. **51** Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years,^[c] and in divine and human favour.

Reflections on the reading

'They grow up fast, don't they' – it's one of the typical lines people say to youngish parents, as the children seem to add an extra inch every time you look in the opposite direction. Or perhaps one of the things you might say to the person sitting next to you in church when that child you remember being a babe in arms is now doing one of the readings, or preaching the sermon...

And the gospel story for today certainly feels like that moment for Joseph and Mary's little family – just yesterday we were all celebrating the miracle of the virgin birth and now the young lad's turned twelve!

Jesus may be young, but he is about to step out into a deeply unjust society filled with corruption and poor leadership. In that context, he must offer a different kind of leadership style that enables others to grow but also offers a corrective to the broken system they are in.

This begs the question for you – how are you responding? How are you building the kingdom where you are? How are you letting go of your own plans and aims and selfish desires, in order to allow God to move within you?

As we are in this 'in-between Sunday', which is both the sixth day of Christmas and a few days before New Year, what are you looking to be a part of in 2022? How are you going to be involved in making the world a better place, how can you bring Christ closer?

As 2022 dawns, can you continue to grow in stature and favour with the Lord?

However old you are, however long you have been on this journey with God, let 2022 become for you a year of growth, where you seek to experience new things, open yourself up to the encounter with the incarnate God, and commit your life to channeling the divine into your everyday moments.

When that happens, the love of Christmas shines down around, and through, you.³

Hymn: You might like to listen to this song, recorded by the National Methodist Choir – **Love Shone Down** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbgyAX5JKCs>

³ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Blessing

You are part of the community of the incarnation,
The people of faith living out the story of the God who comes,
Who lives and walks and loves and sleeps and eats.

Go out into the world, and tell them of the hope of the Christ, the hope of the God who comes and keeps on coming.
God is with us. God is with you.
Go in peace, and serve the Lord. Amen.⁴

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

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