

News and Prayer Update for 20th December

Rostherne with Bollington, St John High Legh and St Paul Over Tabley

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Do You Need to Talk To Someone? Call any of the above, we have other people who are also experienced in listening who are willing to help, so **please do call, we are here for you.** All conversations are in strict confidence.



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Link for this week's Service: <https://youtu.be/WCeXTccAITg>

HYMN: Take My Life and Let it Be

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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Collect for 4th Sunday of Advent:

God our redeemer,
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm: Psalm 89: 1-8

¹ My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: ♦

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- with my mouth will I proclaim your faithfulness throughout all generations.
- 2 I will declare that your love is established for ever; ♦
you have set your faithfulness as firm as the heavens.
- 3 For you said: 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; ♦
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- 4 "Your seed will I establish for ever ♦
and build up your throne for all generations."
- 5 The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, ♦
and your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones;
- 6 For who among the clouds can be compared to the Lord? ♦
Who is like the Lord among the host of heaven?
- 7 A God feared in the council of the holy ones, ♦
great and terrible above all those round about him.
- 8 Who is like you, Lord God of hosts? ♦
Mighty Lord, your faithfulness is all around you.

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First reading: 2 Samuel 7: 1-11,16

- 1 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him,
- 2 the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.'
- 3 Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.'
- 4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan:
- 5 Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in?
- 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle.
- 7 Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'
- 8 Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel;
- 9 and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.
- 10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly,
- 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.
- 16 Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Gospel Reading: Luke 1: 26-38

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²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'

²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.'

³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'

³⁵ The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[d] will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'

³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.

³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.'

³⁸ Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)

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REFLECTION ON THE READING

We have come to the final Sunday of Advent and both today's readings speak of God making covenants with human beings. The OT contains several covenant agreements between God and human beings, but they are all between God and a man. God had spoken to women sometimes – the mothers of Samuel and Samson for instance – but these were only conversations, not covenants. Covenants are a form of agreement and reflect the commitment between God and his people.

In our OT reading today God made a covenant with King David that David's line, his dynasty if you like would last for ever. Verse 16 – "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever." This covenant is one of the milestones in OT revelation marking the successive stages in the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose.

In the NT reading we see the redemptive purpose of God unfolding further but for the first time the revelation comes to a woman. This is the beginning of the New covenant between God and humankind.

By the age of 12 a Jewish girl would be considered to have come of age.

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At this point Mary would have been expected to keep the parts of the Torah, the Jewish law, that applied to women. Marriage would be considered for girls from around the age of 14 and we know that she was betrothed to Joseph – who was quite a bit older than Mary. Because good Jewish girls would be obedient and submissive to their parents, Mary would have accepted this situation although it is likely that she had very little choice in the matter.

How did the archangel address Mary? Not by her name but, in this translation, as the “favoured one”, which, along with the sudden appearance of the heavenly being caused her to question, to wonder what exactly was going on. The shock probably wasn’t helped by the further revelation that she was God’s favoured person to help fulfil his promises – indeed the promise given to David in our first reading. But it came with the statement/promise “the Lord is with you” which is what Nathan had said to David.

Although Mary questioned how it would come about, she didn’t question the ability of God to bring his purposes to fruition. The archangel explained about Mary’s cousin Elizabeth confirming that nothing is impossible with God. So she accepted the role God had for her in quiet obedience despite knowing that this could spell trouble for her, her family and her forthcoming marriage to Joseph. She was, as we know, accepting what would turn out to be a difficult role, with some very dark times ahead. Mary then entrusted herself and her future to God completely and willingly with the obedience of faith to the one she had been brought up to know as the God who loves his creation and his people.

Both David and Mary saw dark and difficult times but they clung to the promises of God. They followed him obediently.

I wonder whether we, despite or even in the face the difficult times many have experienced this year as the pandemic has raged, are still able to put our trust in the God who loves us. Are we still walking closely with God, watching and waiting, looking out for what God may be calling us to do and when we see things that, maybe only we can do, are we willing to give it a go in quiet obedience? Mary is a model of faith for each one of us, can we say with her “Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

HYMN: Tell Out My Soul Timothy Dudley Smith (b.1926)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age to same;
His holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty One

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Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure,
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore.

Link for Storytelling Service : <https://youtu.be/ZfYnVgZ938o>

If you would like the service sheet to go with this please let Revd Patricia know – pmrobinson51@gmail.com.



PRAYER in the coming week – 4th week of Advent:

Advent candle prayers:

First Candle – The Candle of Hope

We speak of hope – because God keeps his promises to us.

We focus on the Patriarchs, Abraham, the Old Testament Ancestors of Jesus

God of Abraham and Sarah,
and all the patriarchs of old,
you are our Father too.

Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,
Son of God and Son of David.

Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth
to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit
to make his home among us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

Second Candle – The Candle of Peace

We work for peace – because Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace' and he calls his children
to work for peace in his name.

We focus on the prophets who foretold the birth of Jesus

God our Father,
you spoke to the prophets of old
of a Saviour who would bring peace.

You helped them to spread the joyful message
of his coming kingdom.

Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
to share with those around us
the good news of your power and love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

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Third Candle - The Candle of Love

We show love - because Jesus gave everything for us and led us to know the forgiveness of God.

We focus on John the Baptist

God our Father,
you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age
a son called John.
He grew up strong in spirit,
prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,
and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.
Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,
to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,
and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

Fourth Candle - The Candle of Joy (Pink candle)

We share joy - because the Holy Spirit fills our hearts and minds with the presence of the God

We focus on Mary the Mother of Jesus

God our Father,
the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary
that she was to be the mother of your Son.
Though Mary was afraid,
she responded to your call with joy.
Help us, whom you call to serve you,
to share like her in your great work
of bringing to our world your love and healing.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

The Last Candle - The Birth of Christ (Christmas Day)

We focus on Jesus

God our Father,
today the Saviour is born
and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,
to live in the light of your Son
and to share the good news of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who has come into the world.

Amen.



Comfort and Joy activity for 4th week of Advent (from Cof E website)

What brings joy today? *Health and people who care*

Draw a rainbow. Around it, write the names of your local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. Colour a heart by each one to show you are thankful for them.

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Who needs comfort today? *People who are feeling sad*

Find a sticking plaster. Draw a sad face on it. Stick the plaster onto your bathroom mirror to remind you to pray for people who are sick or sad.

Comfort and Joy activity for Christmas Eve

What brings joy today? *Everything that makes Christmas exciting*

Gather round your Christmas tree and look at the decorations. Tell each other which is your favourite and why.

Who needs comfort today? *Those who are home alone*

Do you know someone who will be home alone this Christmas? Surprise them with a phone or video call.

Comfort and Joy activity for Christmas Day

What brings joy today? *The gift of God's love in Jesus*

Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Light a candle (safely) and sing Happy Birthday for Jesus before you open your presents. (Remember to blow the candle out!)

Who needs comfort today? *People who have no homes*

Some people don't have their own homes where they can celebrate Christmas. Pray for charities like Crisis who will provide safe space for them to eat and sleep today.

Comfort and Joy activity for Boxing Day

What brings joy today? *Those who serve us in shops, cafes, and entertainment*

Go for a walk with your family. As you pass shops and cafes, thank God for the people who serve us in them. (If there are no shops or cafes near you, think of the ones you last visited.)

Who needs comfort today? *Those who have no work to do*

Some shops and cafes have closed because of the Covid crisis. This means people no longer work there. As you pass closed shops and cafes on your walk, ask God to be close to the people who used to work in them.

Prayer for the Month:

Father in heaven,
our hearts desire the warmth of your love
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.

Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
and give us strength to grow in love,
that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence
and welcoming the light of his truth.

The Roman Missal

NOTICES

❖ **Services for the next week:**

FACE COVERINGS – These are still mandatory in places of worship. Please come prepared. (Please inform the clergy if you are exempt from wearing a face covering and do let the service leader know if you lip read).

Sunday 20 December:

10.00 Holy Communion at St John High Legh

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10.30 Holy Communion at St Mary Rostherne
11.00 Christmas Holy Communion at St Paul Over Tabley
16.00 Christingle Service at St John High Legh **** (Booking Essential – see below)**
18.30 Carol Service at St Mary Rostherne *** (Booking Essential – see below)**
This service will be live-streamed and The Mereside Brass Band will play carols outside as people arrive if the weather permits.

Christmas Eve – Thursday 24 December:

16.00 Service in the Stable at St John High Legh **(Booking Essential) ****
(A reflective service listening to the voices of those who were there in the stable when Jesus was born.)
11.30 Midnight Communion at St Mary Rostherne **(Booking Essential)***

Christmas Day – Friday 25 December:

09.00 Family Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Little Bollington
10.00: Family Holy Communion St John High Legh **(Booking Essential)****
10.30 Holy Communion St Mary Rostherne **(Booking Essential)***

Booking for Services

To ensure we maintain social distancing and support the effort to reduce transmission of Covid-19 you **MUST**:

***If you wish to attend any of these services at St Mary Rostherne contact Revd Patricia Robinson and ensure that you have places reserved for you.**
Phone: 01565 830 595; Text: 07854 418 488
Email: pmrobinson51@gmail.com

****If you wish to attend any of these services at St John High Legh contact Revd Trish Cope and ensure that you have places reserved for you.**
Phone: 01925 754787; Text: 07703 470101
Email: trishcope2012@btinternet.com

Sunday 27 December

No Services in our churches. Please join the online streamed service which can be accessed through the News and Prayer Update (contact Revd Patricia – see opposite, to join the Mail Chimp list) or from St John's Website www.stjohnshighleghe.org

Wednesday Mornings

09.00 Celtic Morning Prayer at St John High Legh (9th, 16th and 23rd December)

It is important that no one feels they must come to services if they are reluctant to.

We will continue to stream a service each Sunday

❖ **Coffee and Chat Wednesday 23rd December:** We will not be having a Zoom Coffee and Chat meeting this Wednesday morning. But because Christmas is different this year we will have a Christmas Day Zoom at 17.00 – join anytime between then and 18.00 and we will exchange greetings and share our experiences. The link is:-

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89858983312?pwd=aU40czlRWEIST293SXItWEU0c1QrUT09>

If you need the ID and Passcode please contact Revd Patricia 01565 830 595 or email pmrobinson51@gmail.com

❖ **Christingle Services in the United Benefice:**



There two more planned for the following dates:
Sunday 20 December at St John High Legh
Sunday 24 January at St Paul Over Tabley.

An online Christingle Service is also now available at: <https://youtu.be/1CHlvU77fAg>

We also have our own Christingle giving page with the Children's Society so if you would like to make a donation to the Children's Society go to:

<https://thyg.uk/CUS47758>

❖ **Advent study group**

Living in Hope a York Course by Catherine Fox 'This course is a chance to have a think about what it means to live well, and to die well. We are people of history and people of hope. We look back to the Bible to see where we've come from, and we look forward in hope to what lies ahead'. We plan to follow this course online over the weeks leading up to Christmas. Please let us know (Revd Patricia email: pmrobinson51@gmail.com or telephone 01565 830 595; Chris Stanisstreet: 01925 755559) if you would like to join us daytime or evening. We have the option to use virtual breakout rooms so we can have smaller discussion groups where necessary. You can use hard copies of the course booklet; or digital copies which you would pay for and download yourself. We have some hard copies (£3.80 each) already on order.

❖ **A REAL Advent Calendar**

To help us journey through Advent during our Covid 19 Restrictions St Philip and St James at Alderley Edge has created an Advent Calendar to take everyone on a Christian journey through Advent. Simply click on the link below and then choose the date on the Advent Calendar. There you will find a "Thought for the Day" along with music and craft ideas.

<https://www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk/advent/>

❖ **Advent Musical Reflection online**

Lymm Baptist have put together an Advent Musical Meditation which can be viewed online. Its whole purpose is to provide a space to think and meditate and pray about the true cause for celebration at Christmas. The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shcx5XVYC-c>

❖

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❖ **Join the Prayer Chain:**

Our Reader, Chris Stanisstreet has organised a **Prayer Chain** which is done by email and telephone. The idea behind this, is that when a specific prayer request is made, it is passed on by group e-mail to the people on the list who then pray for the particular situation.

If you would like to receive prayer requests or would like to make a prayer request, please let Chris Stanisstreet know:

Tel: 01925 755559; Mob 07918 981 723; stanbess2003@yahoo.co.uk

❖ **Thank you to all who supported the St Mary's Christmas Produce Sale**

People have been incredibly generous with their support and donations and as a result the Christmas Produce Sale has raised over £1100! Thank you to everyone who organised, baked, delivered, printed, supported, and bought; you have all helped towards this amazing total!

❖ **The Hideaway – Hope Centre in Partington**

Partington is just a few miles away – about 15 minutes in the car. Yet the lives of many people there are very different than the lives of most of us here in High Legh and Little Bollington. Approximately 1/3 of the residents live below the poverty line and it is in the lowest 5% of deprived areas in the UK.

Churches Together in Lymm and District have supported The Hideaway – Hope Centre in Partington during the Covid 19 crisis. They are running a foodbank, providing hot meals daily, hosting a play-centre, giving family advice and counselling. An amazing beacon of hope in that deprived area.

They plan to open a shop selling surplus food and uniform at affordable prices but unfortunately one of the businesses that had offered money is not able to give and they are £3000 short and desperately need to begin this project by December.

Can you support them? Any amount will help and if possible, within the next two weeks.

Please use the Lymm Baptist Church giving website:
lyymbaptistchurch.com/giving

Any money you give will go directly to the Hope Centre.

If you cannot use online giving but would like to support them please contact Rev'd Trish for help.

Thank you

We are all in need of hope in these difficult times. Please will you give a little hope to our neighbours.

❖ **Offering and Fund Raising** – Please continue to give if you can

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❖ **Knutsford Food Bank – St Mary's and St Paul's**

During Advent and into the New Year please help us support the Knutsford Food Bank by bringing items for us to collect and take to The Welcome at the start of the New Year – a time when families and people in need can find themselves in difficulty.

❖ **Homemade Jams For Sale:**

There are various Jams and Marmalade available at prices between £2.00 / £3.00 per jar depending on size, either from St Mary's or by telephoning the Vicarage- we will deliver them to you.

St Paul's are offering: Strawberry, Gooseberry, Damson or Strawberry, Greengage and Gooseberry jams.

St Mary's are offering: Strawberry, Rhubarb & Ginger, Rhubarb Jelly, Redcurrant Jelly, Marmalade and Yellow Raspberry.

❖ **Rostherne Christmas Cards** sold in aid of St Mary's Church

These good quality cards feature the Christmas tree lit up at the bottom of School Hill. They measure approximately 19cm x 13cm and come with self-seal envelopes.

Prices are: single cards £1.50; 5 cards £6.50; 10 cards £12.00.

Order/ purchase from the Vicarage: 01565 830 595
or email pmrobinson@gmail.com.

❖ **Morning and Night Prayer**

If anyone does not yet have access to the "Worship at Home" booklet containing the Order of Service for Morning Prayer or Night Prayer, please contact the Vicarage, as there are large print copies and ordinary size ones that can be posted out or versions that can be e-mailed.

Bible Readings and Psalms for the Coming Week from the Lectionary.

Here are some suggestions for more Psalms and Bible readings to use with Morning and Night Prayer:

Readings for Morning Prayer: These readings usually follow on from each other so you get a bit more of the story each day (except on special Saints Days).

Monday 21st Dec – Psalm 121; Isaiah 52: 13- 53 end; 2 Peter 1: 1-15

Tuesday 22nd Dec – Psalm 124; Isaiah Chapter 54; 2 Peter 1:16 - 2:3

Wednesday 23rd Dec – Psalm 130; Isaiah Chapter 55; 2 Peter 2: 4 -end

Thursday 24th Dec – Christmas Eve: Psalm 45; Isaiah 56: 1-8; 2 Peter Chapter 3

Friday 25th Dec – Christmas Day: Psalm 98; Isaiah 52: 7-10; Hebrews 1: 1-4 [5-12];
John 1: 1-14 (Also Additional Sets of Readings for Christmas in the Lectionary)

Sat 26th Dec – Stephen First Martyr: Psalm 13; Jeremiah 26: 12-15; Acts Chapter 6

Readings for Night Prayer (for Advent)

Short Bible Reading: Mark 13.35-end.

Keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

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You may also like to continue using the readings in the Worship at Home Booklet.

Psalm: Psalm 143

- 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and in your faithfulness give ear to my supplications; ♦
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Enter not into judgement with your servant, ♦
for in your sight shall no one living be justified.
- 3 For the enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground, ♦
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
- 4 My spirit faints within me; ♦
my heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I remember the time past; I muse upon all your deeds; ♦
I consider the works of your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to you; ♦
my soul gasps for you like a thirsty land.
- 7 O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; ♦
hide not your face from me lest I be like those who go down to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning, for in you I put my trust; ♦
show me the way I should walk in, for I lift up my soul to you.
- 9 Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies, ♦
for I flee to you for refuge.
- 10 Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; ♦
let your kindly spirit lead me on a level path.
- 11 Revive me, O Lord, for your name's sake; ♦
for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble.
- 12 In your faithfulness, slay my enemies, and destroy all the adversaries of my soul, ♦
for truly I am your servant.

Collect:

Sir up your power, O God,
and come among us.
Heal our wounds,
calm our fears
and give us peace;
through Jesus our Redeemer.

Blessing:

Restore us again, O God of hosts;
show us the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.
Bless and keep us, this night and always.

Readings for Night Prayer (for Christmas)

Short Reading: In him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

Collect:

We give you thanks, O God,
for the gift to the world of our Redeemer;
as we sing your glory at the close of this day,

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so may we know his presence in our hearts,
who is our Saviour and our Lord,
now and for ever.

Blessing:

May the love of the Word made flesh enfold us,
his joy fill our lives,
his peace be in our hearts;
and the blessing of God be with us
this night and always.