

Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Week: 25th December 2021, Christmas Day

Old Testament: Isaiah 9: 2-7

Psalm: Psalm 96

New Testament: Titus 2: 11-14

Gospel: Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)

Reflection on the Gospel reading, written by Maggi Dawn, Church House Publications.

This moment in the nativity story is traditionally interpreted as one of outsiders finding no welcome in a foreign town. As such, it is a story that can reflect the feelings and needs of outsiders, foreigners, minority groups, refugees – all who are excluded by society.

But there is another way to read it. The word for 'inn' – kataluma – can be translated as guest room. And in first-century houses that have been excavated in the Holy Land, the stable or animal room is not an outhouse, but located at the centre of the house, where the warmth of the animals would radiate through the home.

If Joseph and Mary returned to the town of their origin, and were put up by family, then the guest room would have been full to the brim with people. No place for a baby to be born. But at the centre of the family home was the animals' room. Warm, dry and the only quiet room in the house, it was the best possible place for this young women to bring her body into the world.

Were they excluded and representative of outcast and refugees everywhere? Or was their welcome into the warmest room in the house a lesson in offering Christ the best we have, however humble that may be? Whichever way you read the story, it tells us something about receiving Christ into our lives.

collect for Christmas Day

Eternal God, who made this most holy Night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England. This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.



Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am Sunday Morning Worship, Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm