

Christmas Day 2025. Benefice Holy Communion, Gilling.

Happy Christmas! Today we announce and proclaim the great news of the birth of our Saviour, the most joyous news of all – that into this dark world there has come a light, a great light. A light which no darkness can overcome. This night brings a light, and a joy, that fills the world, now and always. Which is, when you think about it, *why* the joy of this night is such good news. It is because the joy of Christmas comes to all, regardless of our circumstances. It does not depend on anything in this world. This joy is eternal, unchangeable, and priceless. We are here because we know where this joy is found, in a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. This child came into this world to bring us joy. It is why he was born, you might say. He came, as he himself once said, so that his joy may be in us, and that our joy may be complete. Our joy is found in Jesus, and our joy is made complete in him.

What is this joy that Jesus came to bring? First, this joy is the joy of the *incarnation*. The joy that comes from God becoming human, from the Word becoming flesh, from God becoming one of us.

Think of what Christmas really means for us. It means that God *chose* to become one of us, a fellow member of humanity. Whatever else people might say about humanity, whatever shortcomings we might have, nothing can take away the fact that God willingly chose to become one of us. A human being on the planet Earth.

Because God chose to become one of us, we now share in God's own nature. God chose to become one of us, so that we might become one with God. Hold that thought! What a glorious, awesome thing! We are not just made in the image of God, but God's own son is now made flesh in our image. This is the joy of the Incarnation, and this is the

good news of great joy that the angels shared with the shepherds.

But the joy that comes from the incarnation is not the only joy that Jesus came to bring, and not the only joy we give thanks for tonight. Jesus also came to bring us the joy of *salvation*.

The good news of great joy which the angels sang of to the shepherds was not just that the Messiah was born, but that he was also our *Saviour*. The Messiah came to save us from our sins. Jesus did not just come to be born, and to show us the glory of being human, He also came to save us, because humans are not always so glorious. Our inclination is to find ways to give up our glory, and to fall short of what God expects of us. That is what we call sin. The Christ child was born for us – to give us this joy, and so that our joy may be complete, and all who celebrate his birth discover this joy, each time we come to the manger and each time we come to the Eucharist.

No matter what is happening in this world or in our lives, this joy is there for us. The joy of Christmas. The joy of our salvation, all wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

“Born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King.’”

May you all have a joyful Christmas!

Thanks be to God. Amen