

Love Came Down



Liddesdale 22nd December 2013

Order of Service

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Call to worship	Love Called
Hymn	CH4 301 Hark! The herald Angels Sing
Approach	Christmas Light
Hymn	CH4 316 Love Came Down At Christmas
NATIVITY	
Hymn	CH4 312 Away In A Manger (<i>Pilots sing 1st verse</i>)
Offering	Christmas Thanks
Hymn	CH4 387 No Wind At The Window
Sermon	Love Came Down
Hymn	CH4 When Out Of Poverty is Born
Intercession	Our Emmanuel
Hymn	CH4 300 The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy
Benediction	The Spirit Of Christmas

Call to worship Love Called

Love called the shepherds and love calls us
The love of God calls us to his presence
Love called the Magi across the desert
Let us bring our gift of worship
Love calls us to the coming of Christ
Let us lift up our hearts

HARK ! the herald angels sing,
‘Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!’
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim,
‘Christ is born in Bethlehem’.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
‘Glory to the new-born King’.

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail, the Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:

Approach

Christmas Light

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night
Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

You are the light of hope

You are the light of truth

You are the light of love

Father, you filled the sky with a thousand angels

And for a moment the night became day

Yet we did not listen to the angels' song

We have not worked for peace on Earth

We have not offered goodwill to our neighbours

Father, forgive us...

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

The light of faith

The light of Heaven on Earth

The light of love

Father, you wrapped the light in simple swaddling clothes

Yet we did not notice it

We discarded it and sent it to a stable to be born

And still today we discard others and look down on them

Father, forgive us...

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

The light of eternity

The light of the power of the Lord

The light of love

Father, you placed a star in the sky

Let the light you give us guide us

Let us make it our pole star and our direction

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

And today we share your words of prayer and say..

LOVE came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign ?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine.
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

NATIVITY

Hymn

CH4 312 Away In A Manger (*Pilots sing 1st verse*)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by myside til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

Offering

Christmas Thanks

Lord we thank you for the coming of Jesus
We thank you that he was born among ordinary people
People like us
We thank you for the message of the manger
That we are fed by your hand day by day
We thank you for the song of the angels
For times of peace
Lord we thank you for Christmas
And for all the blessings we have at your hands

Hymn

CH4 387 No Wind At The Window

No wind at the window, no knock on the door
No light from the lamp stand, no foot on the floor
No dream born of tiredness, no ghost raised by fear
Just an angel and a woman and a voice in her ear

Oh, Mary, Oh, Mary don't hide from my face
Be glad that you're favoured and filled with God's grace
The time for redeeming the world has begun
And you are requested to mother God's son

This child must be born that the Kingdom might come
Salvation for many, destruction for some
Both end and beginning, both message and sign
Both victor and victim, both yours and divine

No payment was promised, no promises made
No wedding was dated, no blue print displayed
Yet Mary, consenting to what none could guess
Replied with conviction, "tell God I say yes."

And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call him Jesus (Luke 1:31)

You can always tell when there's a baby in the room. We were having our end of term meal on Friday and I noticed this huddle of people - mostly women - at the other end of the room. Sure enough my colleague Polly, who's on maternity leave, had brought her wee baby Rowan in. A little later, at the school talent show, I noticed another similar huddle and, sure enough, it was Daniella's baby boy. There's something about babies - perhaps their fragility or their helplessness that brings out the protective in human beings - that speaks of love.

It was something I don't think I was quite prepared for when I became a father - the degree to which, looking down at that helpless little scrap of humanity that was my son, I found myself certain that I would do anything to look after him and protect him. It's so simple - something that anyone can understand and yet, when we think of the events of the Christmas story, we realise that it tells us something profound about God and his relationship with humanity.

Growing, developing in the womb of Mary, Jesus was just like any baby. No doubt the love that Mary would feel for him when he was born was little different from the love that mothers - and fathers too, by the way - feel for their kids. Jesus would matter to Mary and to Joseph - that would have been true without all the comings and goings of Gabriel. Maybe we get all too tied up with the miracle stuff that surrounds the story of Christmas and we can wind up with some marvellously complicated theologies about the virgin birth, the immaculate conception and all the rest of it; which is fine as long as we don't forget the truth about the relationship between God and us that lies at the very heart of the Nativity; that the love of God is something anyone can understand. It is the love of a parent for her child. It is love that came down at Christmas. That love matters more than all the convoluted christologies the human mind can come up with.

And as Jesus mattered to Mary, Mary mattered to Joseph. When Joseph

discovered Mary was pregnant his first thought, according to Matthew, was to quietly divorce her. Which is interesting. He must have been angry - livid; must have felt betrayed. The Law had a punishment for women who found themselves pregnant without a husband. They were adulteresses and the requisite punishment was stoning to death. However angry, however betrayed Joseph may have felt, he would not allow that to happen to Mary. Why not? Love. To Joseph Mary mattered more than his anger and his rage; mattered more than his sense of grievance and hurt; mattered more than the rules and the Law. It is through the compassion of Joseph - and, yes, I suppose, Gabriel's explanation - that Jesus got to be born. Love came down at Christmas.

And so among the overcrowded streets of Bethlehem, with hordes of people hurrying to find shelter for the night, amidst raised and probably angry voices and shouts of "no more space!" one more little scrap of humanity made his appearance on the surface of the Earth - just as countless millions had appeared in the millennia that preceded him and just the like the billions that would appear in the millennia to follow. Seemingly insignificant in the great scheme of things at the moment of his birth, but significant beyond words in the eyes of his mother and father. In their eyes he mattered and that was all that mattered.

This is why the way God came into the world is important. He came in the life of a human being - a human being that began in the womb of a human mother, growing inside her like every other baby before or since, being born in just the same way as any other baby before or since; born not into wealth or status or power, born not in a palace as so few are, but in the least promising of circumstances. Born as a whisper of love from a father to his children: ALL his children. Love came down at Christmas - a love that is as simple to understand as a mother cradling her child.

See, when all is said and done, this is what Christianity boils down to. It's what supports the foundations of our buildings and it is what rings out from the best of our hymns. It is what fills our churches with light and it is what underpins the pattern of our prayer. It is what sings in the Scriptures and what makes the Nativity so perfect for children because it is something that any child who has been held lovingly and protectively by their Mum or their Dad can understand: Love came down at Christmas - the love of God for all his children. A love in which everyone matters however insignificant - however poor, however weak, however powerless - they may seem in the eyes of the world.

This is more important than theology and it's more important than rules. It's more important than our creeds and our traditions and it's far away more important than the divisions we throw up between the various branches of Christianity and between ourselves and those of other faiths. Jesus was born like every other human being for a reason - the love that came down at Christmas is for every human being and it as simple to understand as a child cradled in the arms of his mother.

And maybe this too. When God chose to come into the world he could have made a lot more of impression. Instead he came as an ordinary child, conceived and brought forth by his Mum, like any other child. This, though, was the Son of God. Maybe this is God's reminder of who we are. We too are his children. We too are his sons and daughters. We too are made in his image, made to love and be loved. If we matter to God - and we do, beyond measure - then so do all his other children. And maybe we should matter to one another beyond measure too.

For the poorest as well as the wealthiest love came down at Christmas and everybody matters - that is how we are meant to think and how we are meant to live, how we are meant to matter to one another. For the weakest as well as the strongest love came down at Christmas - that is why we are meant to care for the most fragile scraps of humanity, whoever they are, how we are meant to matter to one another. For those of all races and all cultures, of all backgrounds love came down at Christmas - that binds us all, all humanity, as brothers and sisters to one another, mattering to each other as a newborn child matters to his Mum. For all those who've broken the rules and found themselves condemned by those who rush to judgement love came down at Christmas and would find a way for forgiveness to reach out for everyone; because everyone matters to God.

Love came down at Christmas. A love as simple as a mother cradling her newborn child. Such is the love of God, and it enfolds us all and embraces us all now and forever.

Lord you have shown us that your love is the love of a parent for his child by coming to us in a newborn baby - in Jesus. May we live out his teachings of love and follow in his way.

When out of poverty is born
A dream that will not die
And landless, weary folk find strength
To stand with heads held high
It's then we learn from those who wait
To greet the promised day
"The Lord is coming; don't lose heart
Be blest; prepare the way!"

When people wander far from God
Forget to share their bread
They find their wealth an empty thing
Their spirits are not fed
For only just and tender love
The hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still
"Be blest; prepare the way!"

When God took flesh and came to Earth
The world turned upside-down
And in the strength of woman's faith
The Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low
It pleased her to obey.
Rejoice with Mary in the call
"Be blest; prepare the way!"

Intercession

Our Emmanuel

And so we call you Emmanuel

Be ever with us as we serve

It's a funny place for a Prince to be born

A run-down stable with only a manger to rest in.

It's a funny way for a Prince to be born

His mother driven from the door because no one cared enough to give up their
bed

And yet among your children there are still many living in abject poverty

With little but a cardboard box to live in - often not even that

Among your children there are still people in need ignored and turned away

Among your children there are still people who are locked out by bigotry and
intolerance

Here among your children you were born

And so we call you Emmanuel

We pray for the poor and the homeless and the outcast

May the hungry be fed, the homeless housed, the rejected brought home

Give us strength Lord to work for your Kingdom

It's a funny way for a King to live

Wandering the country healing those who are sick

It's a funny thing for a King to do

Teaching those he meets that they are loved by God

We all know people who are sick. Be it in mind or soul or body

People who are frightened or angry or in pain because of disease

We all know people who feel alone; be it through bereavement or break-up

People who feel unloved or emotionally cold

Among people like these you lived and worked

And so we call you Emmanuel

We pray for all those who need love and support and kindness

May they find healing of all kinds through the care of others

Who are conduits of your love into the world

It's a funny way for the Son of God to die

The casual victim of arbitrary political violence
All over the world, though, human beings suffer under the tyranny of the gun
Be it in war, or oppression or in ethnic cleansing
Beside such people you suffered
And so we call you Emmanuel

We pray for an end to war and oppression and violence
May there be peace on Earth and goodwill to everyone
And may your Church work to that end with every fibre of its being
Until the Christmas hope of a tiny child born in Bethlehem is realised
And all the world sees clearly that you have always been with us.
And so we call you Emmanuel

Hymn

CH4 300 The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

O yes, believer!

O yes, believer!

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

The angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

The shepherds came where the baby born,
the shepherds came where the baby born,
the shepherds came where the baby born,
and they say his name is Jesus.

Benediction

The Spirit Of Christmas

Go now and share the spirit of Christmas
A word of joy to those in sorrow
A word of grace to those who are broken
A word of peace to those caught up in conflict
For the spirit of Christmas is love
The love of God for all his children
A love that embraces you and will not leave you or let you go.
Not through all the days of life or through all eternity

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Canonbie United 22nd December 2013

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Call to worship Love Called

Love called the shepherds and love calls us
The love of God calls us to his presence
Love called the Magi across the desert
Let us bring our gift of worship
Love calls us to the coming of Christ
Let us lift up our hearts

HARK ! the herald angels sing,
‘Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!’
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim,
‘Christ is born in Bethlehem’.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
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Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail, the Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:

Approach

Christmas Light

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night
Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

You are the light of hope

You are the light of truth

You are the light of love

Father, you filled the sky with a thousand angels

And for a moment the night became day

Yet we did not listen to the angels' song

We have not worked for peace on Earth

We have not offered goodwill to our neighbours

Father, forgive us...

Born on Christmas Day, in the darkness of the night

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

The light of faith

The light of Heaven on Earth

The light of love

Father, you wrapped the light in simple swaddling clothes

Yet we did not notice it

We discarded it and sent it to a stable to be born

And still today we discard others and look down on them

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But wherewith for sacred sign ?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine.
Love to God and all men,
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NATIVITY

Hymn

CH4 387 No Wind At The Window

No wind at the window, no knock on the door
No light from the lamp stand, no foot on the floor
No dream born of tiredness, no ghost raised by fear
Just an angel and a woman and a voice in her ear

Oh, Mary, Oh, Mary don't hide from my face
Be glad that you're favoured and filled with God's grace
The time for redeeming the world has begun
And you are requested to mother God's son

This child must be born that the Kingdom might come
Salvation for many, destruction for some
Both end and beginning, both message and sign
Both victor and victim, both yours and divine

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And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call him Jesus (Luke 1:31)

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This is why the way God came into the world is important. He came in the life of a human being - a human being that began in the womb of a human mother, growing inside her like every other baby before or since, being born in just the same way as any other baby before or since; born not into wealth or status or power, born not in a palace as so few are, but in the least promising of circumstances. Born as a whisper of love from a father to his children: ALL his children. Love came down at Christmas - a love that is as simple to understand as a mother cradling her child.

See, when all is said and done, this is what Christianity boils down to. It's what supports the foundations of our buildings and it is what rings out from the best of our hymns. It is what fills our churches with light and it is what underpins the pattern of our prayer. It is what sings in the Scriptures and what makes the Nativity so perfect for children because it is something that any child who has been held lovingly and protectively by their Mum or their Dad can understand: Love came down at Christmas - the love of God for all his children. A love in which everyone matters however insignificant - however poor, however weak,

however powerless - they may seem in the eyes of the world.

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For the poorest as well as the wealthiest love came down at Christmas and everybody matters - that is how we are meant to think and how we are meant to live, how we are meant to matter to one another. For the weakest as well as the strongest love came down at Christmas - that is why we are meant to care for the most fragile scraps of humanity, whoever they are, how we are meant to matter to one another. For those of all races and all cultures, of all backgrounds love came down at Christmas - that binds us all, all humanity, as brothers and sisters to one another, mattering to each other as a newborn child matters to his Mum. For all those who've broken the rules and found themselves condemned by those who rush to judgement love came down at Christmas and would find a way for forgiveness to reach out for everyone; because everyone matters to God.

Love came down at Christmas. A love as simple as a mother cradling her newborn child. Such is the love of God, and it enfolds us all and embraces us all now and forever.

Lord you have shown us that your love is the love of a parent for his child by coming to us in a newborn baby - in Jesus. May we live out his teachings of love and follow in his way.

When out of poverty is born
A dream that will not die
And landless, weary folk find strength
To stand with heads held high
It's then we learn from those who wait
To greet the promised day
"The Lord is coming; don't lose heart
Be blest; prepare the way!

When people wander far from God
Forget to share their bread
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The hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still
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When God took flesh and came to Earth
The world turned upside-down
And in the strength of woman's faith
The Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low
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Rejoice with Mary in the call
"Be blest; prepare the way!"

Intercession

Our Emmanuel

And so we call you Emmanuel

Be ever with us as we serve

It's a funny place for a Prince to be born

A run-down stable with only a manger to rest in.

It's a funny way for a Prince to be born

His mother driven from the door because no one cared enough to give up their
bed

And yet among your children there are still many living in abject poverty

With little but a cardboard box to live in - often not even that

Among your children there are still people in need ignored and turned away

Among your children there are still people who are locked out by bigotry and
intolerance

Here among your children you were born

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We pray for the poor and the homeless and the outcast

May the hungry be fed, the homeless housed, the rejected brought home

Give us strength Lord to work for your Kingdom

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Wandering the country healing those who are sick

It's a funny thing for a King to do

Teaching those he meets that they are loved by God

We all know people who are sick. Be it in mind or soul or body

People who are frightened or angry or in pain because of disease

We all know people who feel alone; be it through bereavement or break-up

People who feel unloved or emotionally cold

Among people like these you lived and worked

And so we call you Emmanuel

We pray for all those who need love and support and kindness

May they find healing of all kinds through the care of others

Who are conduits of your love into the world

It's a funny way for the Son of God to die

The casual victim of arbitrary political violence
All over the world, though, human beings suffer under the tyranny of the gun
Be it in war, or oppression or in ethnic cleansing
Beside such people you suffered
And so we call you Emmanuel

We pray for an end to war and oppression and violence
May there be peace on Earth and goodwill to everyone
And may your Church work to that end with every fibre of its being
Until the Christmas hope of a tiny child born in Bethlehem is realised
And all the world sees clearly that you have always been with us.
And so we call you Emmanuel

Offering

Christmas Thanks

Lord we thank you for the coming of Jesus
We thank you that he was born among ordinary people
People like us
We thank you for the message of the manger
That we are fed by your hand day by day
We thank you for the song of the angels
For times of peace
Lord we thank you for Christmas
And for all the blessings we have at your hands

Hymn

CH4 300 The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

O yes, believer!

O yes, believer!

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

The angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

The shepherds came where the baby born,
the shepherds came where the baby born,
the shepherds came where the baby born,
and they say his name is Jesus.

Benediction

The Spirit Of Christmas

Go now and share the spirit of Christmas

A word of joy to those in sorrow

A word of grace to those who are broken

A word of peace to those caught up in conflict

For the spirit of Christmas is love

The love of God for all his children

A love that embraces you and will not leave you or let you go.

Not through all the days of life or through all eternity