

# Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

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13/12/2020 – The Journey

## The Journey



Next week we are holding our online Candlelight Carol service at 6.30pm. Please join us by using the following link which will be the same for our Christmas Day 10am service. Everyone is welcome to all the online services:

Topic: Christmas Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79987466327?pwd=VFMzd0JBYWx0U1V5UzRFQ3JPa1NtZz09>

Meeting ID: 799 8746 6327

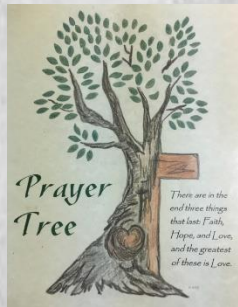
Passcode: g2zQ23

All lockdown services can be found at: [www.mbccs.co.uk](http://www.mbccs.co.uk)

'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.'

**Micah 5:2**

## **Good morning and welcome to our journey to Christmas.**



Dear Lord, we pray for all of those that we remember who are no longer with us. You know how much we miss them, those that have gone before us, those that have made us who we are today. Lord we ask that they live on in us and all their aspirations and hopes we continue to bring to this world in which we live. We also pray for those with us in our lives today and ask that you stay with us all watching over us with your great everlasting love. Amen

Our carol today is “In the Bleak Mid-Winter”

[In the Bleak Midwinter - Susan Boyle - Lyrics- \(HD scenic\) - YouTube](#)

- 1. In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan;  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter  
Long ago.**
- 2. Our God, heaven cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain,  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty —  
Jesus Christ.**
- 3. Enough for Him, whom  
Cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for Him, whom Angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.**
- 4. Angels and Archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air;  
But only His Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss.**
- 5. What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a Shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I give Him,  
Give my heart.**

## **Our reading today are taken from Luke 2:1-7**

[Luke 2: 1-7 NIVU - - Bible Gateway](#)

Today at Bethel we would be in the hall, whilst the children are practicing in the church for next week's nativity.

It's a time when we remember all those that have gone before us, we think of all the people who God has taken to be with him, and maybe we shed a tear or two, but rejoice in the fact that we all someday will be called to be at God's side.

We also take time to bring gifts, which we have carefully chosen to be taken and given to those who are less fortunate than us at this time. This year we know there are many more in this situation and as we carry on our journey to Christmas let us remember those with love.

Today as we journey to Christmas, I wonder if Mary and Joseph were more like the people we are praying for and providing gifts to today.

Our reading tells us that Joseph, took Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Joseph was a poor carpenter and Mary; we assume is a teenager and by now very heavily pregnant. On top of that Augustus has called for the first census which means Joseph and Mary would have to travel about 90 miles. Why would God want his son to suffer such a journey and risk his birth?

For all of us who competed our Gold Duke of Edinburgh's' (DEA) that would be completing it twice. So we are talking a minimum of 6 days travel over rough terrain. I don't think there was nice tarmac roads or trains. No this was a journey on foot and we presume a donkey, but I can't find that reference in the bible, so possibly Gold DEA X 2 with no donkey!

I wonder where they stayed on their journey, who fed them. Were they alone? I guess so as it was only the two of them requiring a room.

As stated I think Mary and Joseph were more like the disadvantaged, the people in the refuge we support, the people who don't have the security of a roof over their head this Christmas and may not have all the delicious food and treats that we may take for granted.

Then after that long uncomfortable 90-mile journey when they arrived in Bethlehem there was no hotel, boarding house, B&B for them to stay in. So from being a poor couple who had been given amazing news from an angel at least 9 months previous this poor couple are alone without a roof over their heads, probably very hungry and tired.

It really is a very sad story, much like the people that we are thinking about today. We may even be feeling sad thinking about who we may not be with this Christmas. This pandemic forcing us to change our arrangements, working out how we can have the best Christmas possible in the face of the adversity we have faced this year.

However, God works, even in difficult situations, to work wonders. Out of Mary and Josephs struggle came great Joy and hope. We know that from this very difficult time in Mary and Josephs story something really amazing would happen. God was with them. God used even a hard-hearted Roman Emperor to bring about the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, where the prophet Micah had said it would be centuries before.

And the result? Nobody can say that Jesus had special privileges. He came into this world at the bottom of society. And everyone should say: "What an amazing God, that he would love you that much!"

Remember today that we serve a God who is working for good in whatever adversities come our way. He is here. He knows what he's doing. Let's be like Mary and Joseph and say yes to his call, follow faithfully where he leads us, and trust that He will guide and provide and that there is blessing at the end of the road. Through our giving to those in adversity, our love and our faith, amazing things, great joy and hope will be delivered.



**Let us pray.**

**Thank you, God, that you can make amazing things happen from the deepest depths of despair. Help us to follow faithfully where you lead, and trust that you will guide and provide, and give us your blessing. can truly receive from you all that you give. Amen.**

**Have a  
Blessed  
Christ-mas**



**Guide  
Mary and Joseph  
to Bethlehem.**



**MAY GODS BLESSING SURROUND YOU**

**EACH DAY**

**AS YOU TRUST HIM AND WALK IN HIS WAY;**

**MAY HIS PRESENCE WITHIN**

**GUARD AND KEEP YOU FROM SIN.**

**GO IN PEACE, GO IN JOY, GO IN LOVE!**