



Circuit Contact

Welcome to our Circuit Worship for
24th December
prepared by Rev Julie Hassall

Worship in the following locations:

Ipstones Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Rev Julie Hassall and Crib service at
St.Leonards at 3pm

Wetley Rocks Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Rev Eleanor Smith

St. Andrews, Cheddleton - at Wetley Rocks Methodist Church

Rudyard Methodist Church - at 2pm with Local Arrangement

Endon Methodist Church - Christingle at 4pm with Rev Eleanor Smith
and 11pm Holy Communion

Trinity, Leek- Children's Activity at 4pm and Carols at 6pm

Wellspring- Christingle - Wellspring Team at 4pm and at 6pm at Wellspring Cheadle with
Rev Julie Hassall

Waterhouses- Crib service at Waterfall at 4pm

The Gathering at St.Andrews, Cheddleton - Christingle Service at 4pm

Christmas Day Services

Waterhouses Methodist Church - at 9.30am with Rev Julie Hassall

Trinity, Leek - at 10am with Rev Richard Pope

Endon Methodist Church - at 10am with Rev Eleanor Smith

Wellspring at Cheadle - at 10.30am with Rev Julie Hassall

Ipstones - at 10.30am at Butterson Church of England

Rudyard Methodist Church - at 11am with Mr Roger Cutts

St.Andrews, Cheddleton - at 11am with Rev Eleanor Smith

Wetley Rocks Methodist Church - at St.Andrew's, Cheddleton at 11am

31st December Services

Endon Methodist Church - at 10am with Rev Colin Cooper

Wellspring Methodist Church - Wellspring Team - at 10.30am with Rev Julie Hassall

Rudyard Methodist Church - at 11am with Mrs Gill Meredith

Trinity, Leek at 2.30pm with Rev Richard Pope

The Gathering at St.Andrews, Cheddleton - at 4pm

Waterhouses Methodist Church - at 6.30pm with Local Arrangement



As angels clear their throats to announce good news,
As shepherds bed down on a cold and bleak hillside,
As night falls on a bustling Bethlehem, and a frightened young couple prepare for a new life,
We gather to worship the God who holds each one in a loving and tender gaze.

Prayer

Hold the silence as you thank God for the blessings of your Advent journey...

- For the times of quiet and reflection
- For the days when you have heard someone else's story
- For the moments when you have sensed angels along your path
- And for the opportunities to serve your community on the road to Bethlehem

God of all grace, Holy and One, we offer back to you our journeying of these past weeks – we seek your enlivening and restoring. Grant that, as the daylight fades and the world holds its breath for the new things about to come, our hearts may be ready to welcome you. We bring our prayers in the name of the child of Bethlehem, light for the world, food for the hungry, peace for the troubled. **Amen.**

Song - [Silent Night : Kings College, Cambridge \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Reading – [Luke 1:26-38 NIV - The Birth of Jesus Foretold - In the - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1:26-38&version=NIV)

Reflection

I guess we might say that tonight is the night when there are angels just about everywhere. Since the start of this most extraordinary tale angels have popped up at almost every turn! Luke's gospel reminds us tonight of the visit of Gabriel to the unsuspecting Mary, just going about her normal household duties when she has a life-changing encounter. The same heavenly visitors will call in on shepherds on the hillside outside Bethlehem – lowly workers trying to squeeze a meagre living out of caring for their sheep, when suddenly they too are surprised, to put it mildly!

None of these folk are particularly noteworthy in their society – and yet it is to them that the good news of God's salvation in the birth of Jesus comes first. The angels must have realised that they were, in fact, quite terrifying or they would not perhaps have begun their greeting with '**don't be afraid**'!

On Christmas Eve, as we hear again this very familiar story it is important to remember the uncertainty and the fear of those who were first invited into it. They did not have the benefit of hindsight. They had no notion of where this story would take them. They were courageous in spite of their trepidation in saying 'yes!' to the angels.

The same could, of course, be said for many of the others who play their own part in this tale – for Joseph who gave a home and a name to a child he knew would bring scandal and behind the scenes 'muttering', calling his reputation and standing in the community into question. Or what about the wise travellers, strangers, who are yet to enter this story, and who were prepared to risk everything to acknowledge the One whose Kingship they welcomed!

These were all brave and gutsy people, most of whom spoke and acted not from positions of power but as the least and the last in their communities. Inspired by angels to commit themselves wholeheartedly to a King who took the form of a baby.

As you go to sleep tonight, remember their courage – and the courage of all those who since then have listened to strange and disturbing angels stirring them to be part of the good news of God’s gift to humankind. Think about the times when you have been challenged by angels to give your heart, and ponder, as Mary did on how you will respond the next time an angel speaks your name. As night falls, and the most amazing story unfolds, find a quiet space and ask God to bless this story to your heart tonight – to open you up to whatever it is the angels want to say to you, and to give you courage and passion in responding with a resounding ‘Yes!’ That’s what I will be doing this evening.... On behalf of all the Staff and the Circuit Leadership Team, I wish you all a very blessed Christmas – angels to draw near, to provoke and to invite, and a deep and lasting hope to fill our hearts. Rev Julie.

Song - [It was a starry night \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ugk10uLW408)

Prayers

On Christmas Eve, we ask God’s blessing on all who are travelling, or waiting, or fearing. We pray God’s comforting of all who are missing their children, for whatever reason that might be. We seek God’s strengthening for all who are far from home, alone, and afraid. We long for God’s encouraging of all who are new parents, or struggling to care for their families, or who are hearing voices of judgment and condemnation in their heads. And we pray for the gift of angels to point us towards the Kingdom of Heaven...**Amen.**

Blessing

May the blessing of the God of extravagant love settle in our souls this holy night,
May the blessing of the Christ child of Bethlehem fill our hearts with joy this holy night,
May the blessing of the Holy Spirit call us on to ever deeper hope in the God who speaks our names in the voices of the angels.
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.