

Dear Friends

As I look out of my study window on this day in early November I'm treated to a view of..... mist! - a far cry from the glorious August sunshine that greeted my arrival in the Drifffield-Hornsea circuit only three months ago. But, despite the autumnal weather, Helen and I feel blessed to be here to share in what God is doing in our part of the East Riding. We'd also like to pass on our gratitude for the warm welcome we received and for all the help and kindness offered to us as you've made us feel very much at home.

But this season of Advent reminds us that God's special gift of love to our world was, to a large extent, anything but welcome when He made His appearance in that cold stable in Bethlehem. Born of a mother forced, by a harsh administrative system, to make an arduous journey during the latter stages of pregnancy, our Lord entered our world in the squalor of a dirty shed behind a pub following the dismissal of His exhausted parents by surly innkeepers. And then, after the local authorities tried to kill Him, his parents became refugees in a foreign land.

And yet, here we are today, preparing to welcome God's chosen one into our midst once again, and to offer to the world His promise of sins forgiven and a way of peace as we proclaim Emmanuel - God with us!

As Methodists - born in song - we have a rich vocabulary at our disposal to share with the world around us

*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate deity  
Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing*

Words, of course, from some of the Christmas hymns of Charles Wesley. Someone once said of these carols, 'High Christology sung by urchins through letterboxes.' As Mr Wesley's preachers and leaders of worship we have the immense privilege of taking the wonderful truth of the incarnation and making it known to all who will listen at this time of year when hearts are perhaps at their most open to receive God's amazing love-gift to His world.

May God bless you as you serve Him in word and deed.

**Colin Marchment**