

St Peter's Rectory, 67 Church Road Woolton, Liverpool
rector@stpeters-woolton.org.uk
www.stpeters-woolton.org.uk

22nd December 2020

Dear Friends

For many of us this has been a very difficult year.

I love the story of a Scottish farmer, who did not believe in the Christmas story and at times gave his wife and children a hard time because they did believe that God came to us in Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem. 'It's all nonsense' he said. 'Why would God lower himself to become a human being like us? It's such a ridiculous story.'

One snowy Sunday evening his wife took the children to church while the farmer relaxed at home. After they had left, the weather deteriorated into a blinding snowstorm. Then he heard a loud thump against the window. Then another thump! He ventured outside to see what was happening. There in the field was the strangest sight, a flock of geese! They had been migrating south and had become disorientated by the storm. They were stranded on his farm, unable to fly or to see their way.

The farmer had compassion on them. He wanted to help them and realised his barn would give them shelter for the night. He opened the barn doors and stood back, hoping they would make their way in. But they didn't realise it would be shelter for them. So he tried to shoo them in, but they ran in all directions. Perplexed, he got some bread and made a trail to the barn door. But they still didn't catch on. Nothing he could do would get them into the warmth and shelter of the barn.

Feeling totally frustrated, he exclaimed, 'Why don't they follow me? Can't they see this is the only place where they can survive the storm? How can I possibly get them to follow me?' He thought for a moment and then realised they would not follow a human. He said to himself, 'How can I possibly save them? The only way would be for me to become a goose. If only I could become like one of them, then I could save them. They would follow me and I would lead them to me.'

At that moment he stopped and realised what he had said. The words reverberated in his head. 'If only I could become like one of them, then I could save them.' Then at last he understood God's heart towards humankind. He fell on his knees in the snow and worshipped him!

On that first Christmas, Jesus is found among the weak, the weary and with the poor. In danger, Jesus is carried as a refugee to become an asylum seeker in a foreign land.

That is why he is Emmanuel: God with us.

God with us in the storms of life.

God with us in hurts and helplessness

God with us in struggles and difficulties

God with us absorbing and transforming pain.

He is with us from the cradle to the grave.

He is born to be with us on earth and in heaven.

God walks with us to bless us this Christmas and into the year to come.

May the love of God the Father bring unexpected comfort to our homes, connecting hearts that are apart.

May the hope of God the Son, born into dark disruption and deep uncertainty, ignite a light in our homes today, surprising us with joy this Christmas.

May the peace of God the Holy Spirit comfort us today, filling our hearts and our homes with the serenity of his presence this Christmas.

God bless you all
With love and prayers this Christmastide

Kip and Sue

And finally two notices:

❖ Details about services for the next couple of weeks:

Christmas Day - service 10.30 am - in church and online

Sunday 27th December - no service in church or YouTube. There will be a Zoom service at 10.30 am. Email Julia for the link (curate@stpeters-woolton.org.uk)

Sunday 3rd January - 10.30 am in church - no online service

Sundays 10th 17th 24th & 31st January - 10.30 am in church and online

❖ **The Bible Course** - starting Thursday 21st January 8pm. This will be run via Zoom over an 8-week period (split into two blocks of 4 weeks each). This Bible Society course is for "people new to Christianity, ideal as a follow-on from courses like Alpha or for mature Christians wanting to increase their understanding of the Bible".

If you would like to join please email Julia (curate@stpeters-woolton.org.uk) by Saturday 2nd January at the latest. If you would like a copy of the course manual, then please indicate this in your email. The manual costs £4.50 – if you want a copy, please pass a cheque for this amount, made payable to “St Peters Woolton PCC”, to Julia Pratt (25, Linkside Road), or, if this is difficult for you, cheques can be left at The Rectory.