



Why Christmas ?



The gift is given

It's Christmastime again. We are being encouraged to spend, spend, spend. The trees have been put up and decorated, there are still presents to buy, and of course there is the food to order. In this ever more materialistic age it can be easy to get lost in the mad rush of preparations and the pressure of the advertising.

But then we may start to think **"why celebrate Christmas at all?"** What is it really all about?

The first Christmas was celebrated, if that is the right word, over two thousand years ago in a place called Bethlehem when a son was born to Mary and she had to put him in manger because there was no room in any of the inns. So, a very humble birth indeed. That very night shepherds heard about the birth and came to visit the new born baby. Some months later the young child, who had been named Jesus, was visited by wise men who had travelled from the east and had brought with them very special presents.

The presents that the wise men brought are not the only gifts we need to think about. There is a lovely carol that you will surely hear sung this Christmas *O little Town of Bethlehem*. The third verse says:

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

It reminds us that the boy who was born in a stable to Mary two thousand years ago was God's gift to us. This is the best gift of all and the shepherds were among the first to be told about it: "This day has God fulfilled His promised word, this day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord." (from the carol *Christians, awake!*)

You can find out more about these events and the significance for us today by coming along to one of our Christmas Services (see opposite) or by reading the accounts in the Bible. Two of these accounts are on the back cover.



Northallerton Evangelical Church

opposite Sainsbury's
www.necny.co.uk



An invitation to our



Christmas Carol Services

Sunday 15th December
10.30am and 2.30pm

Preacher: John Little (Reeth)

Carols, Readings and Message

***Our normal Sunday services
during December and January are at 10.30am***

The Shepherds visit the new born baby

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Luke 2:8-16 (NIV)

The Visit of the Wise Men

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, ... so he called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law and asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. ... Then Herod sent them to Bethlehem ... and the star which they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

Matthew 2:1-11 (NIV)