

Carol Service

By God's Grace may I speak in the name of the God who was and is and is to come. Amen.

There is much violence and war in this world, much pain and senseless destruction. Our first few readings this evening spoke of that. So much war, so much suffering. But into all that God speaks hope and promises. A saviour will be born, the Prince of Peace.

What kind of God is this, who makes such promises? The God we find in the Christmas story wants to be known by us. And for us to understand more easily what kind of God we are dealing with, this God decides to share life with us in the person of Jesus Christ.

To a world hurting and broken, torn apart by hatred, war and violence, the baby born of Mary is good news. As the angels proclaim to the shepherds:

Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour

God is born in a stable, wrapped in strips of cloths and laid in a manger. God comes into the world, utterly vulnerable, in solidarity with those most vulnerable in this world.

War and violence hurt us all, but it most often hits hardest those already vulnerable due to their health, their finances, or their place in society. Jesus throughout his life reveals God as the one, who stands in solidarity with the disempowered, the poor, the outcasts and the

vulnerable. Jesus also reveals a God of peace, who does not want destruction or death. A God who shows us another way of being, of gentleness instead of brute force, of love instead of hatred, of giving instead of taking.

We pray for peace in the wider world regularly here at St Margaret's. But war and peace start small. In our homes, in our neighbourhood, in our schools, our workplaces, anywhere and everywhere we encounter people. This Christmas, the tiny baby in the manger invites us anew, to come and follow his way of gentleness, love and giving. Are we ready and willing to follow the way of the Christ Child?

Amen.