**Bidding**

Come, you faithful ones, come on a journey. Let us travel in our minds, in our imagination, back in time and space to the hill-top village of Bethlehem some 2,000 years ago.

Come to a land governed by a tinpot dictator, a strongman put in place by the Romans, the military superpower of their time, who put down any hint of dissent with a display of power and who stripped the land of its wealth through heavy taxes.

Come to a people who were chosen by God, but whom God seemed to have abandoned. The last of the prophets had been killed 300 years before, and since then, only silence. Where was the promised Messiah? When would he set his people free?

Come to a land where a few faithful believers clung to God’s promises, while the rest had long since given up on God except as a concept to motivate the masses and a nationalistic icon.

Come like a child, and hear afresh the Christmas story. Forget what you know, and become like those who were there, who glimpsed only a part. Share in their bafflement, their anger and their fear, their wonder and their joy.

Come, let God speak to you of his ancient wisdom, of his power and his love, a God who made himself nothing that we might be with him.

Come!