

- *Christmas family service; also Matthew Charles' baptism and Gerard & Sarah's re-commissioning!*

Reunions

- Talk about anticipating meeting someone you haven't seen for a long time
 - maybe a relative who has lived abroad for a number of years?
 - maybe a friend from school you get back in touch with?
 - an old work colleague or similar you bump into
 - someone you used to study beside...
- If you knew you were going to meet them, how did it feel?
 - worrying?
 - exciting?
 - deightful?
 - terrifying?
 - *put facial expressions on flip-chart?*
- Then what was it like *actually meeting them?*
 - were they as you expected?
 - any surprises?
- During the service we'll hear about some people who felt that God was distant from them
 - they wanted God to come and sort out their situation
 - but when God came, would he be as they expected?

Coming Soon - a Clean Start!

- In the Bible passage we read earlier, God promised he'd come
 - and the fulfilment of that promise was Jesus coming at the first Christmas!
- But in the passage God also said that his coming wouldn't be quite as they expected:
 - in v.1 he notes "*the messenger.... whom you desire, will come*"
 - but by v.2 its "*who can endure the day of his coming?*"
 - not quite what they expected!
- What do you think was surprising about the way Jesus came?
 - *take suggestions...*
- One of the big surprises was that:
 - God's messenger (Jesus) would purify the people
 - and that his purifying would be painful

Get out various soaps etc

- match cleaner with object...
- note warnings on many of them - cleaning things is often uncomfortable, and the chemicals dangerous!

- We clean things so they be used for what they are meant for
 - people are made for loving God
 - but we all have wrong things in our lives that stop us doing that

- To clean bad out of our lives doesn't just take soap and water!
 - something much more radical than that!
- Jesus, when he'd grown up from being a baby, took the pain of purification
 - he died so we could be clean