

- Christmas Day service

## Gifts!

- We saw lots of presents earlier on!
  - how did you know they were gifts?
  - looking for new, wrapping paper, in a stocking, had a label, ...
  - what makes for a good present?
  - looking for useful, fun, cool, thoughtful, something I need, finishes off a collection I already have, ...
- Great to receive gifts:
  - and to say thank you!!
- Great to give gifts too:
  - do you find it easy to choose what to give to other people?
  - how do you do it?
  - how do you get ideas?
- Giving and receiving gifts can be great fun, and is a wonderful way of showing that we love people and care for them!

## How can Jesus be a gift?

- Sometimes we talk about Jesus being God's gift to us at Christmas!
  - when you stop and think about it, that sounds a bit funny!!
  - can you imagine coming down the stairs in your house on Christmas morning and finding a baby tucked into an extra big stocking?!?
- Jesus wasn't wrapped up like a parcel:
  - he didn't come in a stocking
  - he didn't have a label, at least not sticking to him!
  - so why do we think he was a gift?
- Because God told us!
  - he didn't attach a wee label to Jesus, but he certainly announced the gift!
  - in the passage we read earlier, he spoke to Joseph through an angel (v.20): "what is conceived in her (Jesus) is from the Holy Spirit" - God saying, "He's from me!"
- Something else tells us that Jesus was a most special gift from God:
  - the gift was perfectly matched to us!
  - the best gifts are from someone who loves us, who knows what we enjoy and what we need, and gives us something that makes us go "Yes!"
- And that is just what God's gift of Jesus is to us:
  - God made us to be his friends, to enjoy him for ever;

- but because we do things that don't please God, its like we'd pushed that friendship away;
- so much so that we **can't** on our own be friends with God;
- and so God saw that our greatest need was someone to **save us** and make it possible for us to be God's friends again!
- someone who would treat us as friends, even though that's not what we deserved, who would treat us generously and graciously
- someone who would deal with the sin that kept us away from God!
- that's what the angel was telling Joseph in v.21: "**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**"
- *(Jesus means God saves)*
- So, we know **God sent the gift** (he told us so!); and we know **it was a perfect gift for us** (meets our deepest need; brings us greatest fulfilment and purpose)
- I don't know whether it was hard for God to think up such a gift...
  - but it certainly cost him a great deal!
  - for to give his precious son for us meant he had to allow Jesus to suffer dreadfully, to lose for a time that which is most precious!
  - amazing generosity!
- Maybe sending a "**thank you**" **card** to God seems a bit of a funny thing to do!
  - but we should certainly want to **say thank you!!**
- **Prayer of thanks!!**