

Revd Michael Burns  
Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon : Midnight Mass  
Sunday 25th December 2022

---

**CHRISTMAS SERMON 2022 – Midnight Mass and 8am HC**

Not so long ago there were basically four ways for people to communicate with each other. There was, obviously, **speaking** to each other face to face. Or we could put pen to paper and **write** a letter. There were **telephones**, though certainly not in all homes – and finally, in moments of crisis or extreme urgency, there were **telegrams**. And that was it. That was how things stayed for years. But even that didn't always work. I clearly remember SOS messages being broadcast on the radio before the 6pm news – “Would Mr and Mrs Smith believed to be travelling in the South West of England contact Barnsley Hospital where Mrs Smith's mother is dangerously ill”. Yes, that really used to happen. I always remember thinking: what happened to the mother? Did Mrs Smith get there in time? We were never told. Then the internet exploded onto our world and changed our lives forever, bringing countless new ways for people to communicate. Visit Bletchley Park and that secret place tells the

story of the first computers, of the first email sent in 1969 and of the world wide web exploding into our world in 1989, only 33 years ago.

Yet if we think about this a bit deeply, there are still, even today, many different ways of conveying messages other than by words and technology:

A painter who wishes to communicate uses brush and paints;

a composer uses music;

a deaf person will use sign-language;

a sailor will sometimes use flags;

a radio operator can use Morse code.

When God wished to convey his message that he loved us – his “Word” so to speak – he sent it in the person of Jesus Christ his Son.

So it is that we are here to celebrate a birthday – the birthday of the Son of God, who was born into our world to show us how we should live our lives. Whether or not you are a regular churchgoer, whether or not you have a religious belief, Jesus Christ was born into our world to teach people how they should behave. True, human beings have often ignored this teaching – but there are many who do follow it and try to live by it.

It is often said that the Christian message is best spread about not so much by our **words** but by our **actions**. In the familiar Christmas story, with Mary, Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, the wise men, one person is

often overlooked – and that’s the innkeeper. He was there because he felt sorry for someone in difficulty and tried to do something to help. He didn’t just speak words, he took action. At Christmas we are often reminded about those less fortunate than ourselves. It is no good just feeling sorry. We have to try to do something about it as our circumstances allow.

For many, the best antidote to the violence, depression, loneliness and isolation in our dark world is the powerful message of peace told through the Christmas story. At the heart of this message is God’s love for human beings and his desire and hope that we should respect and value and care for each other. At Christmas we remember that God wanted to communicate with us and he gave a gift to our world – the gift of his Son – and it is this that we celebrate. So I hope you all have a very happy and peaceful Christmas.