



THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF YORK

Archbishop Stephen writes a message for Christmas in today's [York Press](#)

What a joy and privilege it is that our city of York now has a permanent tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. Her new statue outside York Minster is magnificent! Helping to bless and unveil it with King Charles was one of my highlights of the year. Hordes of Christmas shoppers and residents will be heading down to what will be known as 'Queen Elizabeth Square' to see the monument for themselves. Perhaps that will become a lovely little seasonal tradition for many families.

For millions of us, the Queen will always be synonymous with our memories of Christmas. It will feel a bit strange not to watch her deliver the famous 'speech' tomorrow afternoon - although my family and I look forward to hearing what her son has to say! I'm sure King Charles will do a wonderful job.

The Queen was always able to powerfully articulate just what the birth of Jesus Christ meant to her life - and the difference his loving example made to the world. In the struggles and the bleak times - as well as in the joyful and happy ones. I think it's a message and a story we need to hear now more than ever. With an evil and unjust war still raging in Ukraine and a cost of living crisis impoverishing many people, we live in dark and difficult times.

Yet for me, the arrival of the Christ-child to a broken and hurting world offers us true hope and real transformation. He came as 'Emmanuel' - God with us and for us - whoever we are, wherever we are from, however much faith we think we possess.

To change the world you have to change the human heart. I believe that through Jesus Christ only God can really do that. His sacrificial love makes all the difference.

But don't just take my word for it. There's still time to discover and immerse yourself in the Christmas story. To hear God's voice in it and through it.

Our region's churches - from Helmsley to Huntington - are ready and waiting to welcome you to a Christmas service. I'm looking forward to speaking at York Minster at 11am tomorrow.

Finally, let me encourage you - as I'm sure the Queen would - to not just stand outside this story, or look at it from a distance, but - like the shepherds and the wise men - to enter into it. It's my hope and prayer that as you do this, however tentatively, you will find a God who loves you and inspires you to be a world changer!

God bless and Happy Christmas!



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