

Christmas Message 2020 from Rt Rev. Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster

Bishop Jill's message is available [here on the Diocesan YouTube channel](#). It was recorded in the middle of Blackpool, with the town's famous Tower in the background.

We can feel quite *small* in the face of a global pandemic. It's affected us all very differently.

But unless you've bought shares in hand-sanitiser, life on the whole has become smaller, more fragile, more challenging.

But here's the thing: from ancient times, God's work has been with the small and the fragile.

Micah, an Old Testament prophet, 700 years before the birth of Jesus saw this:

"But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah,

Though you are *small* among the clans of Judah

Out of you will come for me

One who will be ruler over Israel,

Whose origins are from old,

From ancient times" (Micah 5.2)

God has a habit of choosing the small and the fragile:

- A teenage virgin
- A stable's manger
- Bethlehem shepherds

Why choose a young girl to mother the king?

Why choose to a manger for laying him in?

Is it too marvellous to understand...?

Thanks to Year 5 from St Stephen's C of E School in Preston who sang this as part of our Christmas Free For All service, which you can [find here on our YouTube channel](#).

And my thanks go to all our schools, our chaplaincies and our churches who have been so marvellous in this ongoing season of challenge. We have seen so much of the Spirit's work in our weakness across our County this year.

Micah's prophecy continues: "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will live securely, for then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And He will be their peace."

Our smallness, our fragility makes even more room for Jesus, our good shepherd, whose greatness reaches to the ends of the earth. The Prince of Peace.

So, this Christmas ...

In our smallness, may you know the greatness of our shepherd who is your peace

In our fragility, may you live securely in the strength of the Lord who stands with you

And may Jesus, His majesty, be your peace this Christmas. Amen.