

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



Christmas Miracles

28 December 2025

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Sermon by the Revd Canon Matthew Vernon

A Christmas miracle took place here in Bury Saint Edmunds. In the week before Christmas, in the Buttermarket in our town, in the shoe repair shop, Timpsons! I had been tasked with fixing my daughter's shoe. The buckle on one of her DMs had broken, so to trusty Timpsons I went. Jez had a look and said "it isn't an instant fix so leave it with me". That afternoon I went back and the shoe, its buckle was superbly fixed. How much? "Nothing to pay - Happy Christmas!" Nothing to pay! No charge for a repair I wasn't sure would even be possible!

The miracle? The miracle of kindness on our high street. The miracle of generosity in our culture driven by profit and consumerism. "That's not a proper miracle", you might say. "Kindness and generosity should be everyday experiences." Let me open your eyes.

The miracles of Jesus were extra-ordinary. The miracles are usually the opposite of what we tend to do. In his miracles, Jesus reverses what we often do. I don't just mean we turn wine into water! The gruesome massacre of the innocents in this morning's gospel is terribly relevant in the conflicts of our world. We kill children in our wars - Jesus holds up children as the heart of God's kingdom. Bodies are torn apart by our actions - Jesus made bodies whole. We might leave other people bleeding - Jesus stems the flow of blood. We often judge other people harshly - Jesus demonstrates acceptance and mercy. We see difference and label people outcasts - Jesus casts out demons so that people can be reconciled to their communities. We hoard riches and possessions - Jesus shares with 5000. We struggle with what to do about immigration and treat refugees with suspicion - Jesus, a refugee in Egypt as a baby, as an adult sees God's image in foreigners and Samaritans. We elect tyrants and strong men who blow their own trump-ets - Jesus miraculously enters our world as a weak, vulnerable baby, and shows us that is the way to God.

There in Timpsons – a miracle in the reversal of our norms. We expect to pay for services received in our shops. The kindness and generosity of Jez was the reverse of what I expected.

At Christmas we celebrate again the reversal of God. We perceive separation between us and God. Jesus' birth, the Incarnation, shows us there is no separation. We think God is outside our world and enters our world at Christmas. Jesus shows us the spiritual and the physical are intertwined - immanent. Emmanuel - God with us.

In Timpsons! A surprise, an everyday miracle, shared between people. The miracle of noticing God's presence with us and between us. The miracle of appreciating a shared spirit, a deep connection. Emmanuel - God with us.

Thanks be to God.