Jesus walks with us through our troubles, New Year’s Eve online service to hear
Jesus accompanies those experiencing grief, loneliness and sadness, the Church of England’s national online service will hear this weekend as the nation prepares to mark New Year’s Eve.

A service to be led on New Year’s Eve by Rev Sharon Grenham-Thompson will speak of how the Christmas season ‘isn’t straightforward for many’ in the ‘complicated, conflicted world’ in which we live.

But she will say that Jesus accompanies us through our grief and sadness and walks with us through our difficulties.

In a sermon recorded at St Nicholas Church in Rattlesden, Suffolk, where she is Rector, Rev Grenham-Thompson will speak of her grief for her teenage son Leo, who died in 2021, and how New Year does not feel for her like a cause for celebration.

“We celebrate Christmas, the birth of this child, as a time of unbridled joy,” she says.

“But just as Mary experienced unsettling moments, this festive season isn’t straightforward for many. In fact, more generally, how could it be straightforward in the complicated, conflicted world in which we live?

“So as the year turns, many hearts may not be in full party mode.

“The confidence of many hymns and readings may feel dissonant. Even the wonder of the Christmas story may evade our grasp, as if we are trying to hold onto mist.”

Rev Grenham-Thompson will say that Jesus, who was born as a helpless baby, hears our cries and understands how weak and helpless we can feel.

Jesus the Good Shepherd, knows us ‘behind the outer masks we wear’ and calls our name and will never cease to call for us.

She says: “Jesus the man who died in pain and loneliness upon the cross – and who understands our isolation and grief.

“This Jesus speaks to me at the threshold of the year.

“This Jesus doesn't trivialise or deny my tribulations – he takes my hand and walks with me through them. This Jesus, Mary's Jesus, my Jesus, your Jesus.

“As I ponder, in this Jesus I place my trust and my hope. Can you do the same?”

A Service for the First Sunday of Christmas, with music by Andrew Earis and St Martin’s Voices, the musicians of Holy Trinity Platt Church in Manchester and soloist Kate Ritson, will be broadcast at 09:00 on New Year’s Eve on the Church of England’s Facebook and YouTube channels.
You can access the Church of England’s mental health resources or make a space to pray by lighting a virtual candle.

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