

Mission for the month Tearfund

On **World AIDS Day** (Saturday 1st December) we especially remember the **36.7 million people** in our world living with HIV. Each one of these precious people has their own story and Tearfund is working with local churches, enabling them to support and encourage those affected.

It was early morning and Delphine saw no hope and no future as she made her way out of the village. Leaving the path and entering the trees she prepared to hang herself. But a sharp cry stopped her - beginning a journey of remarkable redemption.

In 2013 Delphine's husband died of AIDS, leaving her widowed at the age of 27 with two young children. She then found that she had HIV. *'When people knew, they started to reject me - starting with my own parents and in-laws. No one wanted to greet me.'*

The cry that stopped her in her tracks that fateful morning belonged to a Christian woman who took Delphine to her pastor. After praying for her and encouraging her, the pastor introduced her to a local project team from one of Tearfund's partners. *'The supervisor gave me a lot of attention and took time to explain everything about AIDS, and said that I can live several years with the disease,'* says Delphine. She began to receive treatment and counselling and her condition is regularly monitored.

As Delphine gained confidence and hope she became a member of the local association of people living with HIV and AIDS. *'I found myself in a new and a true family where human values are precious and lived out. The association has been a place for mutual support and exchange where each member has rights and duties without discrimination and without stigmatization.'*

- **Pray that** the stigma associated with HIV would continue to be reduced and that many more people can be helped to live full lives in spite of the disease.

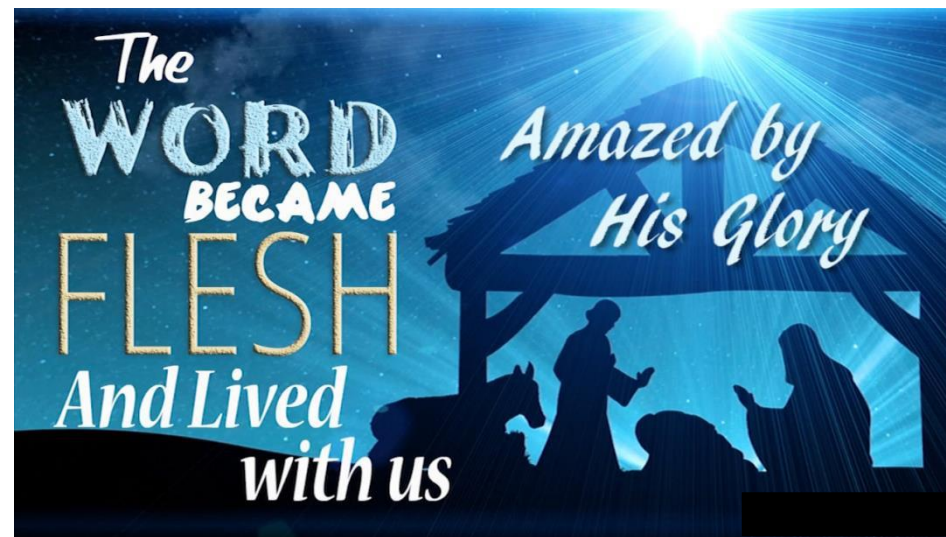
Vicar's Comment

'O come O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear'. This is my favourite carol (although I know some might want to say it's technically an Advent hymn not a carol!). The reason (aside from the beautiful melody) is that of all the songs that churches sing during Advent and Christmas, this is the only one which seems to me to have a sense of desperation about it. The desperation that feels something needs to happen in order to sort us all out, something needs to happen to restore what the human race has lost, something needs to happen to bring us home to God, something needs to happen to free us from the trap we've fallen into.

Christmas is about Jesus coming so that all of that could happen. No more desperation, but instead godly freedom, fulfilment and life. Praise the Lord this Christmas, because *'the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work'* - and that means the cycle of desperation is broken for all who trust in Him'

St Christopher's Church

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Memory Verse

'My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour' Luke 1: 46-47

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