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The Birthkeeper of Bethlehem: A Midwife's Tale

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The Birthkeeper of Bethlehem: A Midwife's Tale

By Bridget Supple

Published by Bridget Supple, 2021

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Paperback, 165 pages

At time of writing, this book is £9.99 on Amazon

Please note that a revised version of the book is also available from Womancraft Publishing.

Reviewed for AIMS by Mary Newburn

How did Mary end up giving birth in a stable? Was it simply that the inn was full, or was it something else? What are the parallels between this much-celebrated birth and contemporary issues around birth and the maternity services?

In this book, antenatal teacher Bridget Supple uses her knowledge of birth to retell the familiar story in cultural context. Bridget's wonderful storytelling skills offer a highly credible retelling from a fictional midwife's perspective, transporting the reader back in time to witness the events as they unfold.

There is much in this book to excite one's interest. The physiology of birth, birth as women's space, and community and neighbourhood support for birth. Bridget weaves these important and sometimes overlooked themes into a well-paced narrative.

A great Christmas read for anyone interested in childbirth. Food for thought for anyone grappling with what makes for safe and personalised maternity care, 2000 years later.

Reviewer Bio: Mary Newburn is a service user researcher and activist, co-founder of the Midwifery Unit Network, and former Head of NCT Research and Information.