

Sunday 20 December 2020

Fourth Sunday in Advent



Order of Service



Worshipping at Home with family and friends
of the Wesley UCA, Wagga Wagga

Welcome and Introduction to Worship

Prelude - Christmas is coming

Call to Worship

An ancient promise is coming true.
A secret mystery is being revealed.
A little child will soon be born.

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness
to all generations.

Psalm 89: 1

Let us joyfully praise and worship
our incarnated God born among us,
now and always in this blessed season!

Praise my soul the king of heaven

Advent Candle Lighting

We light the fourth Advent candle
as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

We light this candle for all God-bearers.
saying 'yes' to God's challenge,
accepting the pain and joy of an unknown future.

God, as we wait for your promise,
give light, give hope. Amen.

Psalm for Today Psalm 89: 2-4, 26-28

I declare that your steadfast love
is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen
one, I have sworn to my servant David:

'I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"

He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'

I will make him the firstborn,
the highest of the kings of the earth.

Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him,
and my covenant with him will stand firm.

Prayer for Forgiveness and The Lord's Prayer

Eternal God, we come to you in our waiting.

We wait with our fears,
our anxieties and frustrations,
our pains and regrets,
our shame and confusion.

God, forgive us, help us to wait in peace.

We wait with impatience:
we rush around, preparing for the festivities,
not leaving space to prepare our hearts.

God, forgive us, help us to wait in faith.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come.
Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

We wait in thanksgiving:

We are forgiven and able to celebrate.

We are able to wonder in the marvel of your gift.

Doxology - Glory be to God the Father

Prayer before the scripture readings

And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a
Father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reading from 2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³ Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."⁴ But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: ⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in?

I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I

have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

A reading from the gospel of Luke 1: 26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."^[b] ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant

of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the gospel of the Lord.
Glory to God. Amen!

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace
thank you for showing favour to Mary and to us.
Help us to trust in you as the Son of God. Amen.

Musical Interlude

Short Reflection

Rev'd Janice McWhinney

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came

Jesus comes to us

Rev'd Dr Roger Webb

At Advent we reflect on Jesus' coming into our world and His being involved in our lives and living. There are at least 4 major occasions when this will happen.

At Bethlehem: Jesus came into the world, wholly God and wholly man, to demonstrate the nature and character of God to us; to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom and to demonstrate what life in it will be like as a result of God's forgiveness of the world's sin and the establishment of a new way

of life and living after Satan is finally defeated and all sin and evil is destroyed through His resurrection from the dead.

In our daily living: Jesus walks with us day by day: He goes before us as the Good Shepherd, who seeks fresh fields and cool waters to refresh us, and who looks ahead for possible dangers in our life's pilgrimage.

He follows us to protect our rear.

He is close to us in our most intimate thoughts and prayers.

He comes to us in our worship and as we read the Scriptures.

He gives us strength, comfort, and refreshment as we seek to cope with life's stresses, problems, challenges and hurts.

At the time of our death

"There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you.

If this were not so I would tell you plainly.

When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am"

John 14:2-3: NLT

At the time of their death, Jesus will come to take true believers in Him to the heavenly place He has prepared for them.

At the end of the world as we know it:

From the very earliest days of the church believers expected Jesus to return immediately and establish His Kingdom on earth. Many Christian believers still expect His return, at any time soon. However, Jesus said that no one knows the time of His return - not even He Himself (see, for example, *Matthew 24 v. 36*). One day Jesus will come again, gather up His people, and finally defeat Satan, and destroy all evil. We are called on by Jesus to be found faithfully serving Him if He comes in our lifetime.

Prayers for Advent

*Let us pray to our Father in heaven,
confident that he will hear our prayers and act
in his loving mercy.*

Almighty and eternal God,
keep the teaching of the gospel pure in your
church throughout the world.

May all pastors, ministers and lay-leaders
preach your word with boldness and power.

Help your church to invest its time and resources
in building the true temple- your people.

Help those in government and positions
of responsibility to maintain honesty and truth,
justice and peace.

Watch over and protect all expecting mothers
and fathers.

Comfort those parents who have lost children
and those couples who want a child
but have not been able to have one.

We give thanks for the work of adoption agencies
and orphanages and all who care for children
without parents, may they each find a loving home
this christmas.

Graciously protect us from war and disease,
famine, political instability and natural disasters.

Watch over those who travel, especially those
visiting family and friends at this time.

Help those who are sick and in need. And comfort those who are lonely and in trouble.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Offering Prayer

Lord, as Mary accepted your will, may we also accept your will and rejoice in Christ our Saviour.

Let your good news change our lives, and make us trusting and obedient, always ready to serve you with all we are and all we have. Amen.

O Jesus, I have promised

BEING SENT ON GOD'S MISSION

Call to Service and Discipleship

We have heard the words of prophets.
May we recognise God's truth.

We have heard the words of angels.
May we recognise God's joy.

We have heard the words of promise.
May we recognise God's love.

We wait in excitement: we are ready to celebrate!
We know the story with its humbleness, simplicity,
and wonder. God, help us to nurture our joy!

And so may God bless us,
mystery of creation, Child in the manger,
Holy Spirit of glory,
and may we welcome and walk
in the promises of God. Amen.

We go refreshed and renewed
in faith, hope and love to serve our Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen! Amen! Amen!

Postlude - Long ago prophet's knew

Please join us
for face-to-face worship

Christmas Eve at 7pm
and
Christmas Day at 9.30am



PLEASE NOTE ANNUAL LEAVE

I shall be taking a few weeks annual leave, from 11 January until 7 February 2021 inclusive.

The Rev'd Nigel Hawken, Presbytery Minister, will be available for pastoral care/support, and to conduct funerals during my absence.

If you need pastoral support please contact Nigel direct on his mobile number **0437 899 252**.

Thank you!

Janice

