



~AT HOME WORSHIP~

20th December 2020



Advent Series: Extraordinary Women of the Bible

Mary

Preparation As we continue in the season of Advent we remember in anticipation the coming of Jesus who said:

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness , but will have the light of life” **JOHN. 8:12 ESV**

Hymn/Song: [Lauren Daigle - What Child Is This \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

Opening Prayer

Loving God, all worship and adoration belongs to you for you alone are Lord, you alone are the mighty God, Creator of all that is good.

And yet you are closer than our very breath.

You are closer than my breath and I thank you Lord that you are always with me, whether I know it or not, whether I recognise it or not, whether I delight in it or not.

You are always there to comfort and to challenge

Thank you for your saving presence.

Amen

Prayer for the Day

Eternal God,

as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,

so we wait for his coming in glory;

bring us through the birth pangs of this present age

to see, with her, our great salvation

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Saying Sorry

Living God, Love Incarnate, we confess that we are not perfect.
You who are everything, we acknowledge that we are lacking.
Child of the manger, we admit that we prefer to be sentimental rather than sacrificial.
Hear us now as we confess our faults and admit our frailties.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

Silence

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The truth of Advent is this: God is coming to us! We are not alone.

In Christ, we are accepted. We are set free of the past. We are given to the future.

Amen

BIBLE READING



Luke 1:26-56 (Mary)

The Birth of Jesus Is Announced

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. ²⁷ He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

²⁹ Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. ³¹ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, ³³ and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!"

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. ³⁷ For there is nothing that God cannot do."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. ⁴⁰ She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. ⁴⁵ How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!"

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ Mary said,

"My heart praises the Lord;

⁴⁷ my soul is glad because of God my Saviour,

⁴⁸ for he has remembered me, his lowly servant!

From now on all people will call me happy,

⁴⁹ because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.

His name is holy;

⁵⁰ from one generation to another

he shows mercy to those who honour him.

⁵¹ He has stretched out his mighty arm

and scattered the proud with all their plans.

⁵² He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away with empty hands.

⁵⁴ He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors,

and has come to the help of his servant Israel.

⁵⁵ He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham

and to all his descendants forever!"

⁵⁶ Mary stayed about three months with Elizabeth and then went back home.

REFLECTION TIME



Short Reflection by Revd Capt Clive Deverell

Children may choose to use the Activity and Colouring Sheet

Mary was brought up in Nazareth, and prob. was still in her teens when she was betrothed. The Biblical picture, of Joseph, suggests a young man entering marriage for the first time. Betrothal was in Jewish custom almost tantamount to marriage. A declaration was made to the prospective bride, and a small gift given her as a pledge, in the presence of witnesses; or else the declaration might be in writing. From this time the woman was called “wife”; if her betrothed should die before the marriage was consummated, she became a widow and the custom of levirate marriage might apply to her. She could not be dismissed from the betrothal relationship except through a writing of divorce, and any sexual relationship during the betrothal period was treated as adultery. In the case of a virgin, the betrothal lasted about a year.

During this period of betrothal the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and greeted her with the words, “Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!” The address, *κεχαριτωμενη*, means that Mary has received grace; not that she has grace to bestow. The following clause may be interpreted as a wish, “the Lord be with you” or as a statement defining the grace which Mary had received. The additional words in the KJV, “Blessed art thou among women”. Mary was puzzled by the greeting, and evidently frightened, for the angel continued, telling her not to be afraid, and that she would conceive and bear a son whom she would call Jesus. He would be called the Son of the Most High, and would, as David’s descendant, reign over Israel for ever. Mary made the natural inquiry, “How can this be, since I have no husband?” Her reply does not indicate doubt or disbelief of the message, as Zechariah’s had done ([Luke 1:18](#)), but rather perplexity as to the method of fulfilment.

Gabriel replied, “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 called holy, the Son of God,” thus confirming the virginal conception. Belief in the Virgin Birth of Christ is dependent almost entirely on the records of Matthew and Luke. There is no reference to it in the remainder of the NT.

The angel then told Mary that Elizabeth, in her old age, had conceived a son six months earlier, “for with God nothing will be impossible.” A great deal was implied by Mary’s words of meek acceptance, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” It was the humble acceptance of the embarrassment, suspicion and misunderstanding which would undoubtedly follow, by this lowly, devout maiden.

The visit to Elizabeth ([Luke 1:39-56](#)). Shortly after the angel’s departure Mary went to visit the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Luke states merely that this was in a city of Judah in the hill country. Tradition identifies the town as ‘Ain Karim, a village five m. W of Jerusalem. If so, Mary travelled some eighty m. from Nazareth. On entering the house she was surprised by Elizabeth’s greeting, “Blessed are you among women, and

blessed is the fruit of your womb!” and reference to her, not as kinswoman, but as “the mother of my Lord.” Doubtless the promises she had received through Zechariah would have filled Elizabeth with hopes for the early appearance of the Messiah; now there was the physical sign of the movement of the babe in her womb, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ([v. 41](#)) to grant recognition of the one who was to be born, and to pronounce blessing on the mother who believed God’s message.

The theme in general is of God’s gracious dealing with the humble and poor, while He shows His strong power against the rich and the mighty. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, in all probability up to the birth and circumcision of John ([Luke 1:57-79](#)).

We will hear more of the Birth narrative this Friday, for me this is incredibly important. So I won’t dwell on it today but what more do we know? well, After those early years in well Nazareth, we discover Mary was present at the marriage in Cana to which Jesus and His disciples were invited. She evidently bore some responsibility in the arrangements, perhaps as a close relative. When the supply of wine was exhausted, she informed Jesus of the fact. Perhaps she thought to hasten His public manifestation; this would explain the gentle rebuff in Jesus’ words, which prob. mean, “Woman, you have no right to determine my mission. This is not yet my hour for open manifestation.” Our Lord thus asserted His independence and sole authority in fulfilling His God-given task. Mary accepted this, retiring from the scene after she instructed the servants to obey His every command ([John 2:1-5](#))

Only John states that Mary was present at the crucifixion, and that Jesus gave her into the care of the beloved disciple with the words, “Woman, behold your son!,” “Behold, your mother!” ([John 19:26, 27](#)). Why did Jesus give Mary into the care of her nephew rather than one of her own sons? It may have been because they, as yet, did not believe in Him ([John 7:5](#)), or because they were married men ([1 Cor 9:5](#)), and John single. Or it may be that Jesus merely intended John to take her away from the harrowing scenes of the crucifixion, and he did so from that hour. However, traditions say that she lived the rest of her life with John.

Mary gave herself obediently for that, we should be for ever grateful. She was faithful, caring and loving towards her Son, she carried the one who was to change our lives and she gives us a model to follow ourselves.

A re-wording of the Magnificat from Luke’s Gospel.

My soul cries out in praise of the Lord

My heart is full of singing

My body and spirit dance in His presence

Because of what he has done for me.

He has raised me up.

In the eyes of the world, I was nothing,

A young woman from a poor town in an occupied land.

Yet in the eyes of God, I am special.

For he has chosen me to mother God,

To carry Holiness in my womb for nine months

And bear a child who will be called the Son of God

And from now on, all will call me blessed.

This is what the Lord has done

The One who created the earth with a word

Will speak his first word to me

The One who hovered over the deep before time itself

Will take his first steps into my arms

The One who said to the darkness "let there be light"

Will lie awake listening for the monsters under the bed.

The One who formed man and woman from the dust of the earth

Will play chase with his friends, fall over and cry.

And I will kiss him better.

For the Spirit, of God came to me

And turned my world upside down.

From 'Holy Darkness' by Proost



[O Holy Night by Chris Tomlin with Lyrics \(HD\) - YouTube](#)

Time for Prayer

We pray for the Church: that the Holy Spirit may breathe compassion and courage into the hearts of all her people. May she walk alongside all those who are vulnerable and respond in love to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may recognise that we are all part of a fragile balance. May we hear the earth's cry, and be moved to protect it for future generations. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for world leaders, that the Lord may move them to act with respect and urgency for the sake of the earth and the most vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those of us who are already struggling in the face of increasing droughts, floods and storms, and for all who are working to tackle the climate emergency. May God grant us all hope and strength for the future. Lord, in your mercy...

Hear our prayer.

We pray for our Partnership, and our local communities as we begin to rebuild following coronavirus. Through the grace of God may we choose lifestyles that do not negatively impact our vulnerable brothers and sisters or the earth. Lord, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask these prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all creation,

All: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn/Song <https://youtu.be/ckqZHioEe0c> In Dulci Jubilo

Extended version with Organ Voluntaries, at beginning and in the middle.

Closing Prayer

May the beauty of Christ be reflected in our eyes.

May the love of Christ be reflected in our hands.

May the wisdom of Christ be reflected in our words.

May the knowledge of Christ flow from our hearts.

May the peace of Christ rule our hearts.

So that all might see and in seeing believe. Amen

Dismissal

May you know the Lord with you each day of your life, may you answer the call to listen and the challenge to follow.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be with you as you go. Amen

Original Materials by Rev'd Anne Smith

God bless us as we



watch and wait