



Fourth Sunday of Advent
22 December 2024

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country

Entry Hymn

Christmas is coming [TIS 289]

The Invocation

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

The Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Advent Wreath

Today we light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first three candles represented HOPE, PEACE and JOY. Today's candle represents LOVE.

The fourth candle is lit.

Jesus said to them, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:34

Loving God, your mercy and compassion endure forever. Open our hearts, that we may receive your love; and following the example of your Son, spread that love to a love-starved world. Through Jesus Christ, who loved us to the end. **Amen.**

Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy)

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Confession

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness,
and disclosing the purposes of the heart.

Silence may be kept

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our
sins in penitence and faith.

**Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Absolution

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith,
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of 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**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Micah 5:2–5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Hear the word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.

Song of Mary

Luke 1:47–55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:

my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

Who has looked with favour on his lowly servant:

from this day all generations will call me blessed;

The Almighty has done great things for me:

and holy is his name.

God has mercy on those who fear him:

from generation to generation.

The Lord has shown strength with his arm:

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones:

and lifting up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things:

and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel:

to remember the promise of mercy,

The promise made to our forebears:

to Abraham and his children for ever.

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5–10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hear the word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Luke 1:39–45

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke.

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

This is the Gospel of the Lord,

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

The celebrant introduces the prayers with these words:

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

A minister continues

God whom we await,
we pray for your world;
for leaders who, like Mary, say yes to your radical call
to bring justice and fairness,
and compassion for your vulnerable ones.
We pray for God-bearers who, with great courage,
bring hope in places of despair
and light in places of darkness:
help us to be such people, answering your call, walking your way,
trusting you no matter where our journeys take us.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

God whom we await,
we pray for your church
that it will be a place of hope, love and courage:
that we will be attentive to your call.
We pray for this church:
help us to reach out to our parish
so people will come to know your love,
find friendship and hope,
and to follow you
who calls each of your children to new life.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

God of hope,
we pray for all whose hope is wavering,
for all who live in darkness and despair,

for all who look at the coming Christmas season with dread.
We pray that you will sustain the hope of those who are frail and ill:
that you will breathe hope into those who are dying
and give hope for the future
to those who are bereaved.

Bless us – you who are the source of all blessings.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

As Christmas draws near,
we give thanks for the many ways in which you bless us:
for family and friends,
for Christmas lights shining in the darkness,
for the carols we love to sing,
the food we will share together,
and, most of all,
for the gift of Jesus who showed us the way to live
and lived and died out of love for us.

Give us hearts to rejoice this Christmas.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

God of new beginnings,
bless our Ipswich Anglican community
with a fresh vision for the future,
with generous hearts to love one another,
and with courage for the changes we now embrace.

Draw us more deeply into the mystery of Christ,
so that we draw closer to you and to each other.

Make us a blessing to the city of Ipswich
as we walk together

into the future you have prepared for us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The celebrant concludes the prayers with these words.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

**Grant that what we have asked in faith
we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE GREETING OF PEACE

God will speak peace to his people,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Offertory Hymn

Hail to the Lord's anointed [TIS 275]

The gifts of the people are brought to the Lord's Table.

As this bread was scattered
and then gathered and made one,
so may your Church be gathered into your kingdom.

Glory to you, O God, for ever.

Wisdom has built her a house;
she has mixed her wine; she has set her table.

Glory to you, O God, for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who was looked for by the prophets,
heralded by the Baptist
announced by an angel,
born of the Virgin Mary,
and revealed at last to men and women of every race.

By his death on the cross
and rising to new life,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation,
this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Therefore, we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

**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 for ever. Amen.**

The celebrant breaks the bread.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.

***Agnus dei* (Lamb of God)**

Jesus, lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

The celebrant says

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Holy things for holy people.

Broken things for broken people.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Notices

Mission Hymn

Joy to the world! [TIS 268]

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prayer after Communion

God for whom we wait,
we thank you that you have fed us with the bread of life
and the cup of salvation.
As we joyfully await your Son,
keep us ever watchful
that we may be ready to stand before him
on the day of his coming.

Most loving God,
you send us into the world you love.
Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage
in the power of your Spirit.

Blessing and Dismissal

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Week 5: 22 December 2024 • Author: Dr Peter Stuart

BIBLE READINGS

First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55
or Psalm 80:1-7

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

CALL TO WORSHIP

My soul magnifies the Lord:
My spirit rejoices in
God my Saviour.

God's mercy is on those
who see him with awe:
In this and all generations.

Today we will hear about Mary.
She travelled to a town in the
hills when she needed solace and
support. She experienced joy and
hope in the time she spent with
Elizabeth, her elderly relative.

Three months later she returned
to her home in Nazareth.

Across the globe there are
millions of people who leave
their homes during a crisis.
They need considerable help to
sustain their lives. They too look
for blessing and hope. For some
there is a time when they can
safely return home. Often, they
must rebuild their lives again.

Today we think of the people
forced to leave Sri Lanka over a
decade ago because of violent
conflict. We thank God for the
way they have been uplifted and
filled with good things. We pray
for all refugees returning to their
home countries, that they will
receive mercy, love and care.

With hearts attuned to
expecting God will keep His
promises we hear – Blessed
is she who believed that there
would be a fulfilment of what
was spoken to her by the Lord.
(Luke 1:45)

The Lord be with you:
And also with you.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

In this Advent season we have
been lighting candles with the
hope of seeing the Lord and
preparing for Christmas.
Our hearts are filled with
expectation that God will
show great love for us.

God of light: **Come to us.**
God of joy: **Come to us.**
God of hope: **Come to us.**
God of love: **Come to us.**

God, faithful and true, make
us eager with expectation,
as we look for the fulfilment
of Your promise in Jesus our
Saviour. Hear this prayer for
Your love's sake.

Amen.

PRAYERS

*(After each set of biddings
there should be a time of silent
prayer which concludes with
the response – Lord, hear us:
Lord hear our prayer.)*

For the world

Let us call to mind the people
across the globe who live in fear
of oppression and violence. Let
us pray for women and children
subjected to abuse and assault.
Let us seek inspiration for all
who govern and administer
the law, that they may pursue
peace, mercy and justice.

For the church

Let us give thanks for the various
expressions of Christ's church.
Let us pray for church leaders and
for all ministries undertaken in
Jesus' name. Let us seek blessing

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

Our primary hope and joy as Christians comes from the fact that Jesus Christ gave himself for us. Jesus liberates us from our sin and makes us holy (Hebrews 10:10). In him we find security and peace (Micah 5: 4 & 5). Like Mary, we learn that God has looked with favour upon us (Luke 1:48).

As Christians, we know that we do not need to spend our lives trying to earn a reward from God. God does not need sacrifices and offerings from us. They give him no pleasure (Hebrews 10:6). God's love has been fully extended towards us with all creation and for all time. Jesus assures of this.

Our lives change when we glimpse the breadth of God's love for us. We discover that we are no longer lowly but blessed. Our hearts and souls fill with joy. We offer praise with our lips and with our lives.

One of the experiences of being loved is the desire to share that love with others. We want the best for them. Christians devote themselves to works of justice, mercy, and care not for reward but to serve. This work is an expression of love. The same is true for the choices Christians make about their money. They give generously to make a positive difference in the world. Many people have chosen the Christmas Bowl for 75 years as their way of demonstrating God's love for refugees and people in need at Christmas.

Today, we are invited to celebrate God's love for us in Jesus. To look forward to living more fully in him and to find ways of expressing our joy in that love wherever we may be.



Advent and Christmas at St Paul's Church, Ipswich



NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
Sunday, 22 December @ 5.30pm



FAMILY SERVICE
Christmas Eve @ 6.00pm

MIDNIGHT SERVICE
Christmas Eve @ 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY
Wednesday, 25 December @ 8.30am



CHRISTMAS @ HOME
Visit our **faith@HOME** page for ideas for celebrating Advent and Christmas within your home.



**Christmas
Bowl**

CHRISTMAS BOWL
Make a difference in someone's life with your gift to the annual Christmas Bowl Appeal.

www.stpaulsips.org.au/christmas-worship

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The Advent Wreath liturgy was prepared by the Revd Matthew Kozlowski:

<https://buildfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Advent-Wreath-Liturgy.pdf>