

## SUNDAY TABLE SERVICE

20th December 2020  
Fourth Sunday in Advent



**Let us watch Songs of Praise together on the ABC and then set the table for our shared meal.**

- **Setting our table for our Sunday lunch service.**

Sometimes we eat, in front of the TV either together or alone; we eat on the run; we eat out in in restaurants or even in our car; but today we sit at a table that we have set for our Sunday lunch meal. It is our everyday altar of life-giving food.

As we celebrate on this, the first Sunday in Advent, let us define the occasion by adding something special to our table that bring us Joy.

- **Prayerful and intentional preparation for a meal**



Let us set our meal for this day. Give some thought to the presentation of our meal as a meditation on the importance of the time we are setting aside for worship.

They  
be will  
done

And Mary said, Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. What if Mary had of been like Abraham's wife Sara who laughed at the possibility of having a baby. To Sara's surprise, when God makes his promises, He keeps them. Just think in many ways in God's creation including humanity, we have mucked up a lot of good things He has given us. Yet He chose to enter into this mess so that, for us, His promises could be fulfilled. God first promised Abraham a land of promise long before Egypt. Then the Israelites

took 40 years to come to the promised land, yet the Lord remained with them all that time. There are many blessings He has for us that bring us His kind of living. The Bible shows us these never ending promises as they continue to unfold as we read His word and let it live within our souls. The Bible is His word to us, just as we say to a friend 'I give you my word.' And everything about Jesus is the fulfilment of every promise our Father has made. We should pray 'Let it be done according to your word', or as Jesus taught us we should be confident to pray, 'Your Kingdom Come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.'

- **opening prayer — consciously drawing together in our mind our Parish community around our table.**

Be still and silent. Visualise in your mind, those whom you invited to share with you. Pray:

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Here, and throughout the world,  
We adore you O Christ, and we bless you,  
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world. Amen**

**Bless this food, both physical and spiritual.  
Bless all who gather at your table, both seen and unseen, In Jesus' name  
we pray. Amen**



- **Let us read and reflect on our cycle of readings**

## A reading from the second book of Samuel, Chapter 61 beginning at Verse 1

<sup>1</sup> Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."



<sup>4</sup> But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup> Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup> I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" <sup>8</sup> Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. [NRSV 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16]

Hear the word of the Lord,

**thanks be to God**

### Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:

My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

For you, Lord, have looked with favour on your lowly servant:

From this day all generations will call me blessed.

You, the Almighty, have done great things for me:

and holy is your name.

You have mercy on those who fear you:

from generation to generation.

You have shown strength with your arm:

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones:

and lifting up the lowly.

You have filled the hungry with good things:

and sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the aid of your servant Israel:

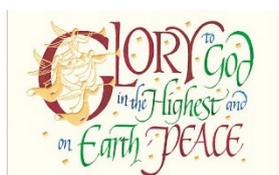
to remember the promise of mercy,

The promise made to our forebears:

to Abraham and his children for ever.



## A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 16 beginning at Verse 25



<sup>25</sup> Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith - <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen. [NRSV Romans 16:25-27]

Hear the word of the Lord,

**thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, Chapter 1 beginning at verse 26

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> 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. [NRSV Luke 1:26-38]



This is the Gospel of the Lord,

***praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.***

Sentence

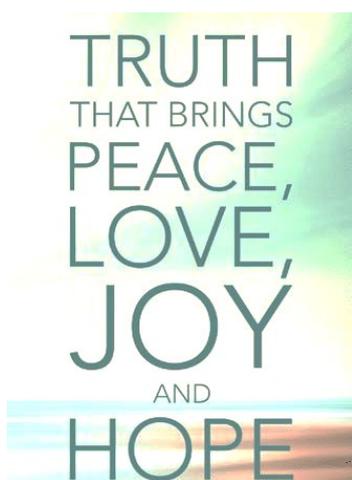
**This child will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.**

• ***eating reflectively and responding to the passage***

Let us now engage in some quiet reflection, or conversation and sharing, responding to the Gospel passage. We may like to write down some key thoughts for further reflection.

**And I have been with you wherever you went**

**You are my Father, my God and the rock of my Salvation.**



In Advent we wait in preparation for what is promised. The readings today are about promises that were yet to be fulfilled. Today we live in the literal fulfilment of them. Luke 1:33a says He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever. This declares God's restoration not just to Israel but to all of humanity through Christ amongst us on earth. His birth, life, death and resurrection made that way possible for us. Then in 33b says, of His Kingdom there shall be no end; kings and kingdoms have all passed away but the Kingdom Jesus has made for us to live in lasts forever and ever. Paul declares in Romans 16 'But now this mystery is disclosed.' Just think how awestruck Mary was knowing that the child she bore was to change the whole world restoring to us the Love of our Father in Heaven. It is this gift of Love that gives freely so we can share with others. This is why in Luke 1:48b Mary says, surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed. •

***prayer-time*** Now let us continue to offer our prayers for healing of the world; for those affected by coronavirus; for family; for members of the parish and wider community, for the life and ministry of the Church, for encouragement in our journey of faith.



**Please pray alongside those in our parish asking for prayer.**

We pray for Kathy Squire who passed away peacefully on Wednesday. We give thanks for her life work and mission amongst us and the Mothers Union. Please pray for her family and friends at this time. May she rest in peace and rise in Glory. We continue to pray with, Lynn Hann in hospital having tests, David, Ron & Ann; Kathy; Pat ;Izabelle; Peta ; Mariette; Joanne; Peter G, Peter C; Nicholas B; Samantha; Fiona; Brenton; Sue; Brenda;

Pat; Brendon; Fr Peter; Fr Percy & Betty; Bp David; Bill; David H; Marjorie; Diane; Jean; Mitchell and family; Carolyn;; Angela; Carol; Shirley; Lucy Ann; Margaret, Lyn; Ted & Joyce; Irene; Linda; Tina; Wendy; Chris; Trevor; Liz; Tristan & Trish S; Lainie and Nicholas; John Carroll; Jac Bishop, Joan; Joanie; Andrew; Kerrie; Mary, Kate, Colin, Cathy, Carol, Allison, Ann, Jean and Betty *and any others we wish to say either silently or aloud.*

**Let us say the Lord's Prayer Together. Our Father .....**

**Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God,  
whose eternal Word took flesh among us  
when Mary placed her life at the service of your will:  
prepare our hearts for his coming again  
and keep us steadfast in hope,  
that we may be ready for the coming of his kingdom;  
for his sake, who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**



**Conclude the meal with the following prayer together.**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be amongst us and remain with us always.  
Amen.**

**Intentional connection beyond your home**

After our Table Service, make contact via phone, email, letter, Messenger, Skype, Zoom, etc with a person who is on your heart and mind at this time. It might be one of the people you invited to your meal, or a member of your family, or someone who doesn't have family, or a friend, Let God guide you to the person or people with whom you connect. Contact the person.

Start a conversation: 'I was thinking of you.....' Or What did you think of..... in songs of praise etc.

