

Dear Beloved,

This week is the week of Peace for advent, not the absence of war but Peace beyond understanding in our own heart and lives. May that peace extend to all our relationships and bring Peace to our families and our communities.



Please keep praying for me, I had another blow this week when Phil's brother died on Thursday. I will go to Perth for the funeral but hope that I will not need to miss any Sundays.

Pray for his widow Gillian and his daughters and the two remaining siblings and family who are just devastated to lose two brothers in such a short time.

Blessings

Wendy

Next Sunday

following the service

Morning tea in the hall

featuring a "treat tree for Nita" our Childfund sponsor child

you will need a Gold coin!

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Wendy is working on Christmas and would like some help.

If you passed kindergarten

and are free on Tuesday morning please come and to the rectory.

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Christmas Services

12.00 18th December - Nimmitabel
4.00 18th December - Adaminaby
TBA 23rd December - Numerella
4.00 24th December - Bredbo
7.00 24th December - Jerangle
10.30 24th December - Cooma
10.00 25th December - Cooma

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Please volunteer
for the roster, well in advance.

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Prayer and Praise
Wendy as she navigates this difficult time

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Edith and Colin Mayhew as they serve in Adaminaby
Glenn Fletcher .. for his recovery
our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts
in Yallambie.

Leanne Lowery

--

Mary Mitchell .. recovering

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

--

all congregations in Jerangle

Father Mick McAndrew
as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

--

for each other
that we may become
a living reflection
of who Christ is within us

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People everywhere
who are living
through war or disasters
of every kind.

4th December 2022

Sing Light one candle (2 verses)

Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope, remembering the hope which comes in Christ. (Light Candle).

Today we light the second candle of Advent, the candle of Peace.

God has a peaceful dream for the world, and we dream it too. We dream of peaceful world full of wolves and leopards and lions eating and sleeping and dancing with lambs, kids, and calves. We dream of a peaceful world where nations come together, where war is a memory, and we eat at one table. We light this candle in Peace.

Hymn On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

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.

Sentence

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news. Mark 1.15

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.

Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, whose servant John came baptising and calling for repentance: help us to hear his voice of judgement, that we may also rejoice in his word of promise, and be found pure and blameless in that glorious Day when Christ comes to rule the earth as Prince of Peace; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Isaiah 11.1-10

¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord – ³ and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash round his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den; the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

Psalm 72.1-7, 72.18-21

¹ Give the king your judgement, O God: and your righteousness to the son of a king,

² That he may judge your people rightly: and the poor of the land with equity.

³ Let the mountains be laden with peace because of his righteousness: and the hills also with prosperity for his people.

⁴ May he give justice to the poor among the people: and rescue the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

⁵ May he live while the sun endures: and while the moon gives light, throughout all generations.

⁶ May he come down like rain upon the new-mown fields: and as showers that water the earth.

⁷ In his time shall righteousness flourish: and abundance of peace, till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ Let his name live for ever: and endure as long as the sun.

¹⁹ Let all peoples use his name in blessing: and all nations call him blessed.

²⁰ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel: who alone does great wonders.

²¹ Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, Amen.

Romans 15.4-13

⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. ⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed ⁹ and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.' ¹⁰ Again, it says, 'Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.' ¹¹ And again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.' ¹² And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.' ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3.1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" ⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ 'I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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.

Let us pray for all people and for the Church throughout the world.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us 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.

Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and who ever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Confession

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

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.

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn There's a light upon the mountain

OFFERTORY

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.**

Thanksgiving 4

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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 by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. 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.

We thank you that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence stand before him who redeems us from sin and death and makes us heirs of everlasting life.

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.

Holy God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that we who eat and drink them in obedience to our Saviour Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may be partakers of his body and blood, and be made one with him and with each other in peace and love.

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.

As we eat and drink this holy sacrament, renew us by your Spirit that we may be united in the body of your Son and serve you as a royal priesthood in the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Receive our praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:

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

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: **so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

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. Amen

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn Lord your mighty word

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, give you his peace 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.**

Dismissal

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



On the second week of Advent, the week of peace, our gospel reading is all about judgement and denunciation from John the Baptist. But Advent is, like Lent, supposed to be a time when we examine ourselves to make sure that we are ready, during Advent, for the arrival of our Lord.

In Jesus' time John was a significant figure in his own right, a Jewish prophet with his own message and disciples, his movement continued right through to the early days of the church. Matthew very much identifies John as the Elijah figure which was prophesied by Malachi and expected by the Jews, and his clothing and food are deliberately included to emphasise this identification and to separate him from elegant society.

His location is also significant as the wilderness is the expected site of the final renewal. He calls in the wilderness: "prepare the way of the Lord". I hear that King Charles will visit Australia in 2024 and you can be sure that a lot of civil works will be



undertaken in all the places he will visit between now and then. In biblical times as well, roads were rebuilt - straightened and flattened to make a visiting King's journey more comfortable, which is a wonderful metaphor for the work we must do in our own lives to prepare for the coming of the king this Christmas.

We don't know whether the representatives of the Jewish leadership came to be baptised or to inspect but John saw them as poisonous snakes, who had harmed the people with their false teaching and were now fleeing from the coming judgement; just like snakes fleeing from a fire.

In those days Jews believed that Abraham had acquired so much merit in his lifetime that it flowed down to all his descendants, so just by being a Jew you had a guaranteed place in Paradise, which made what John said highly provocative.

Matthew understands John's teaching in a Christian sense: inclusion in the holy people of God is based not on descent from Abraham, but on the response to the call, the decision to follow Jesus, to baptism and the fruit of the spirit which flows from that relationship.



Perhaps the Jews had carried this idea way beyond anything reasonable, but we also need to remember that no one can live on the spiritual capital of the past, we cannot live on the merits of our forbears or even our own merits from the past: we only can live on the values of our present continuous relationship with God. We do good stuff to thank, and honour, to give glory to our saviour but it is only in our relationship with him that we are saved. Nothing from the past except our experience of love which builds our trust in him makes any difference. That is the only way we can have Peace.



John's message is both a threat and a promise; the threat is the coming judgement, but the promise is the 'one to come' whom John sees as vastly greater than himself. The job of carrying sandals is the job of a slave and the one to come is the expected representative of Yahweh who would come at the end of the age: the Messiah, the prince of Peace. Our reading from Isaiah is yet another of those predictions about the coming saviour. Jesse was King David's father, which is why both Luke and Matthew trace Jesus' genealogy at the beginning of their gospels back to David, because Jesus is the fulfilment of all those prophecies.

As Paul said to the Romans: *Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed⁹ and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. So that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed, he became a servant of the Jews and so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. What a God we worship, what a saviour we praise.*



Notice what Isaiah had to say about him: *The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord.* Jesus himself had the spirit resting on him which gave him the ability to do all the things his father asked him to do, that same spirit rests on us and enables us to do all that the Father ask us to do.

The word for spirit is 'ruach' and it means not only spirit but also breath, Breath is what we need for life, the spirit is life. When the spirit of God rests on us the tired, lack lustre, crushed feeling of life is gone and we begin to live life in peace and joy but this is also the word for wind, strong wind. Wind means power, power to sweep a ship before it or uproot a tree. The spirit comes to us in power and our weakness are clad with the power of God. Power to control ourselves and to live in peace.



Fire also gives warmth Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Why fire, what does fire do? Fire gives light, a little fire on top of a candle or in a lamp can illuminate the darkest corners or a bigger fire can be a beacon that calls the sailor or weary traveller home. Fire can be light or guidance. Jesus is the light of the world, he is the beacon to lead us into truth and to guide us home to God.

Fire also gives warmth. When Jesus comes into our lives, he kindles our heart with warmth towards God and other people, he teaches us to love. Someone with a cold heart cannot give love to others or to God but if they admit Jesus then his love warms their heart and teaches them to love.



Fire is also used for purification. Fire burns away the false and leaves the true. The flame tempers and strengthens and purifies metal. Christ comes into our lives and evil is purged away. Sometimes this happens through pain, but we trust God through the pain and emerge cleansed and purified. When we go through tough times it is not always to burn away dross sometimes it is to temper and strengthen our souls so that we can help other through the same process. It is not a pleasant experience, but we can trust God and he will bring us through.

John's message was always 'repent', when we heed his warning when we give up our rebellion and live in love and obedience then Jesus can work through us in the name of the father via the holy Spirit. We all have our weaknesses some of us do not like authority, some of us love acquiring things, some of us have trouble resisting food, some of us are sexually tempted, some of us would rather let someone else do the work, and some of us cannot control our tempers but all of us can repent and ask our Lord to work in us to heal and correct us. Our amazing saviour loves us and will gradually or perhaps suddenly purify us and bring us to himself.



Peace on earth does not mean merely a lack of war, and a dearth of disagreements, it means that families live together without strife, friends are loving and kind because everyone is looking to Jesus the Prince of Peace who rules their lives.

Our Psalm was a beautiful picture of Peace where God's judgement is the only rule and he bring justice to the poor, righteousness flourishes and the earth is filled with his glory.



Our passage from Isaiah is glorious I am very tempted to read it to you again, but I'll finish just with his picture of peace: *The wolf with the lamb, the leopard with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow with the bear, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den, the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.* That is peace, at last, that is how our God wants to see the world, all his creation living together without harm. That is how it will be one day.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. And peace on earth.