

Dear Beloved,

This week is the week of Advent when we celebrate joy, the true joy that comes from knowing Jesus and knowing that he is the Lord who loves us and directs all our paths.



Today
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 are free on Tuesday 20th morning please come to the rectory after 10.00

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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

--

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

11 December 2022

Sing Light one candle (3 verses)

Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope, remembering the hope which comes in Christ, and we lit the candle of Peace, remembering God's dream of a peaceful world. Today we light the third candle of Advent, the candle of Joy.

In Advent, we are in a time of waiting. Like the Israelites who wandered through the Wilderness, waiting to come into the Promised Land, we wait for the coming of the Joy of Ages. We wait for the day where we can join our voices with the angels to sing "Joy to the World, the Lord is come!" We wait for the day when everlasting joy will be on each of us.

We light this candle in Joy. (Light Candle)

On this day, we remember the Spirit who breathes joy into our lives.

Hymn TIS 274 The people that in darkness walked

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

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.' Isaiah 35.3-4

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

Sustain us, O God, with the power of your love on our journey to meet the One who is coming: strengthen our weak hands, make firm our feeble knees, and open blind eyes to the dawning of your kingdom, so that our hearts may rejoice as we behold the majesty of our God. We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Isaiah 35.1-10

¹ The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God. ³ Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; ⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.' ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. ⁷ The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. ⁸ And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. ⁹ No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰ and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Psalm The Song of Mary

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.
Glory to God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

James 5.7-10

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11.2-11

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' ⁴ Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.' ⁷ As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'" ¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Response Lord of Joy, hear our prayer.

The 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. 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: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28

Prayer of Approach [Let us pray.]

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.

Invitation to 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.

Peace

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 597 **Master speak Thy servant heareth**

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

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.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

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.

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 Tis 596 Master speak Thy servant heareth

Blessing

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.**

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



Here we are in the third week of Advent the week when we celebrate Joy, Christmas decorations are going up all over the place, and we have another Gospel reading about John the Baptist. We tend to think about Advent as a joyous time, a time to get presents for our nearest and dearest, to plan the family get together and get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus but it is supposed to be a time to prepare ourselves for the coming of the King.

What sort of King were the Jews expecting? As we read last week, Isaiah had predicted that one day there would be a new king in the line of David: the stump of Jesse. Perhaps at the time of writing Isaiah had hopes that a new king would arise in his day, and/or maybe he was looking towards the time when God would send his Messiah.



By the time that John was calling the people to repentance to prepare for the coming King, the king they were expecting was not like the prophecies, The prophets had foretold a king of peace and justice, but the people had turned those messages around and they were expecting a military leader, a man who would overthrow the Romans and set them free from their current oppression.

As an aside, if the Messiah had defeated the Romans and set the Jewish nation free how long do you think that could have lasted? The leader would die and even if his sons took over, dynasties fade away. A generation or two? Wars continue to happen; nations defeat and oppress nations throughout history. Within a few generations the Jew would have been oppressed again.



Our gospel reading is near the end of John's life, he is in prison and there is not much hope or joy in his life. He even begins to wonder if he was right about Jesus after all. Have you ever been at a place in your life where everything is going wrong, and you begin to doubt even the things that have been the foundation of your life. There is no sin in feeling like that but that is the time you need to hold on tight, ask those you trust to walk with you and help you hang on. In time the Lord speaks to you, things begin to go right again, and faith returns. Or in John's case he found himself with his God receiving his reward.

In that state John sends his disciples to ask Jesus if he really is the one and Jesus sends back a message of assurance: *the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.* ⁶ *Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.* That list is like a quote from one of the prophecies, giving John hope and surety that his life had not been in vain.



John had spent his life preaching that God's kingdom and God's true king were on their way. Herod wasn't the real king; God would replace him. No wonder Herod put him in prison. But John was expecting a fiery prophet, like in the Old Testament, like Elijah, who would sweep away the false teaching confront Herod and bring in the true Kingdom.

John knew the prophecies but had forgotten them in his expectations of the warrior king, who don't know but we can hope that in his last days he remembered them, and God showed him his plan. Jesus was not thinking of himself in terms of Elijah, calling down fire from heaven. He was thinking of passages like our reading from Isaiah today, the great prophecies of what would happen when Israel was not so much judged and condemned but restored to the true worship of Yahweh. Spiritual exile as well physical exile would be over, the blind and the lame would be healed, God's people would be set free at last and forever. *As Isaiah said: and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*



Jesus is actually a jump ahead of John. John was looking for judgement and Jesus will bring judgement, but Jesus also comes with mercy, the mercy that comes after judgement, the healing that comes after the time of sorrow, is breaking in and it is Jesus job to bring it. This Jesus knows is the Messiah's main task.

Wicked people don't like the message of judgement because they think (rightly) that its aimed at them, so sometimes good people don't like the message of mercy, because they think (wrongly) that they don't need it and that people are going to get away with wickedness. Mercy was at the heart of Jesus messianic mission, just as it remains at the heart of the church's work today.



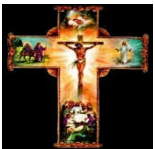
Mary got it right in her song of Praise which was in part a prophecy itself and in many ways quotes from Old Testament prophecies, she starts by praising God that he has seen fit to use her in his plan to save humanity but then goes on to praise him for his mercy on those who fear (worship) him in every generation. She talks of his judgement: *Casting down the mighty from their thrones: and lifting up the lowly.* But returns to his fulfilment of his prophecies and his promise of mercy which she knew her son was going to fulfill. *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.* Mary's song is a perfect summary of everything that Jesus came to earth to do: bring judgement but also a way to receive mercy so that we are saved from the judgement.



We keep our houses clean and reasonable tidy but if we were notified that King Charles was coming for morning tea at our house in a few weeks' time there would be a frantic scramble to clean out the back of cupboards, get rid of all the weeds, do a little pruning, paint anything which was looking a touch worn and get everything as perfect as possible.

In our lives we live each day just doing the maintenance on our hearts that obviously needs to be done but there are things tucked in the back corners that we would not want anyone else to see, let alone our Lord. There are a few things that could do with a bit of a freshen up, a few weeds growing, things we have gotten used to and don't see any more. Those habits that we have slipped into which truthfully, we are not really so comfortable about, or perhaps should not be so comfortable about.

Our Lord is coming.



Jesus came to earth as a baby, then he lived a life of love and mercy bringing joy to many and eventually died to save his people and give us real joy for ever more. One day he will return and a bit like the Jews waiting his first appearance, we know he will come back but we don't tend to think he will not come back in our lifetime, but we might be wrong, Jesus could come at any time and we always need to be ready.

Even in the time of James people had begun to think that he was taking his time and were beginning to wonder if and when he would return, and James told them to be patient. Just as a farmer is patient while he waits for his crop to grow, just as the prophets of old were patient as they waited for the messiah's first coming so we must be patient while we wait for Jesus' return. So many times in my life I have had to wait, I waited for my soul mate, I waited to be ordained, I waited for a parish, I waited for our house to be built and now I'm waiting for the Lord to show me his plan for the rest of my life. You would have thought I would have learnt patience by now but I still struggle.



So, this advent season take some time to think about how really ready you are to receive the king with joy and do whatever you need to do to have a clean heart and be ready for him. Think about God's message throughout the centuries and prepare again to receive the culmination of history: Jesus Christ our King our Lord.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

