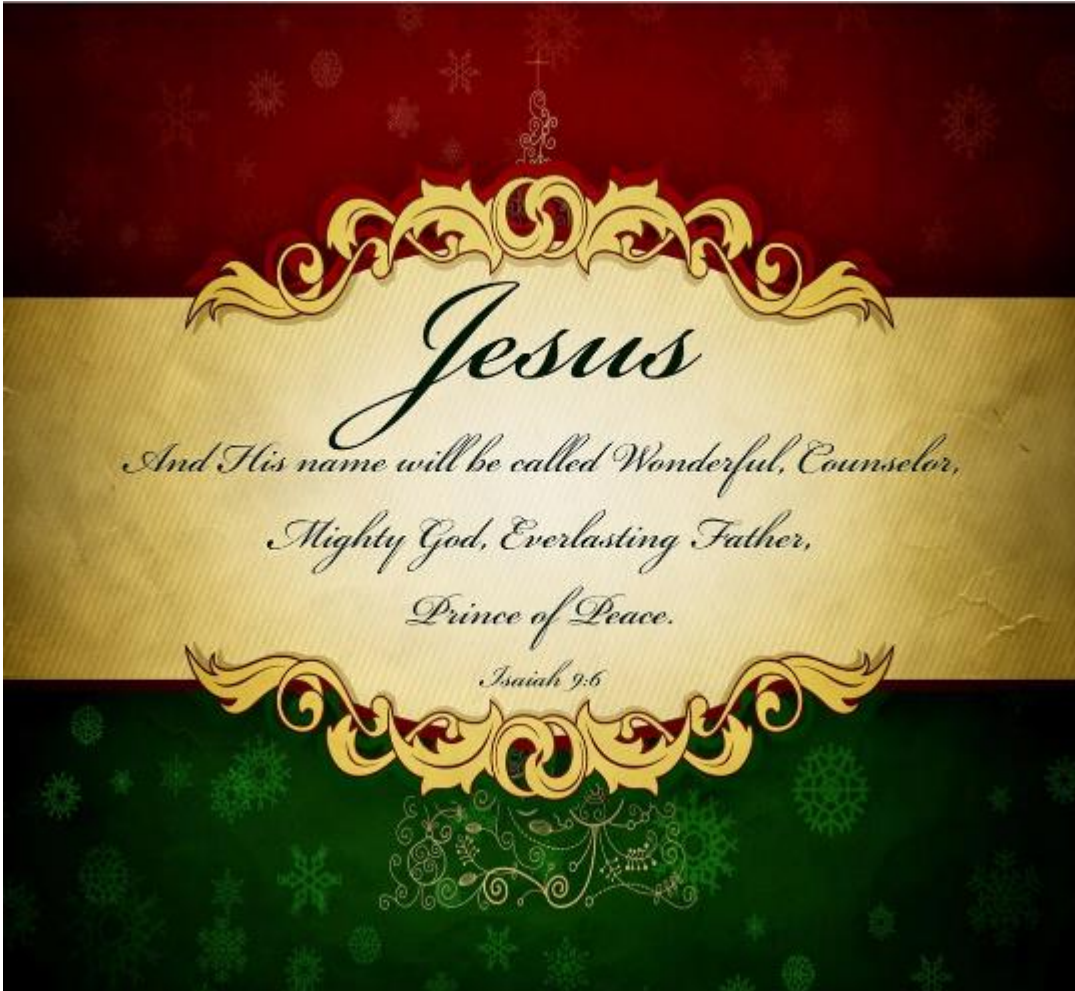


Dear Beloved,

May you and those you love have a most blessed Christmas whether you are able to be together or not.

My daughters and their families have come to Cooma this weekend to make sure I am not alone, which is very lovely of them.



Wendy will be away
for the first two Sundays
in January
services continue
10.00 am Sundays

--

Wednesday Services
will recommence
on Wednesday
1st February

--

Please volunteer
for the roster, well in advance.

--

Prayer and Praise
Wendy as she navigates this difficult time

--

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 Jindabyne

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.

25 12 2022 The Holy Communion - THIRD ORDER

Hymn TIS 301 The first Nowell

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

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.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22.37–40, Mark 12.30–31

Sentence

I bring you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Christ the Lord. Luke 2.10–11

Let us pray.

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

All glory to you, gracious God, for the gift of your Son, whom you sent to save us.

With the angels, let us praise your name, and tell the earth his story, that all may believe, rejoice, and proclaim your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Psalm 96

¹ O sing to the Lord a new song: **sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

² Sing to the Lord and bless his holy name: **proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**

³ Declare his glory among the nations: **and his wonders among all peoples.**

⁴ For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: **he is more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are mere idols: **it is the Lord who made the heavens.**

⁶ Majesty and glory are before him: **beauty and power are in his sanctuary.**

⁷ Render to the Lord, you families of the nations: **render to the Lord glory and might.**

⁸ Render to the Lord the honour due to his name: **bring offerings and come into his courts.**

⁹ O worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness: **let the whole earth stand in awe of him.**

¹⁰ Say among the nations that the Lord is king: **he has made the world so firm that it can never be moved;**
and he shall judge the peoples with equity.

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad: **let the sea roar, and all that fills it:**

¹² Let the fields rejoice, and everything in them:

then shall all the trees of the wood shout with joy before the Lord;

¹³ For he comes, he comes to judge the earth:

he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Titus 2.11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Hymn Tis 316 O little town of Bethlehem

Luke 2.1-14

¹ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

The Sermon

The 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Response:

Lord In your mercy
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.

CONFESSION

Christ the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.

Let us bring our weaknesses and infirmities to him, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done. We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. Amen.

THE GREETING OF 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 TIS As with gladness Men of Old

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.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat. This is my body which is 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 which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.**

We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by your Holy Spirit and united in the body of your Son.

Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise:

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power 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 of heaven, dwelling among us, we thank you for feeding us with this holy food.

By your grace keep us ever faithful to your Word made flesh

that as his body in the world we may bring your presence to all people

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. Amen.

Hymn Tis O come all ye faithful

Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.



Sometime when you are pointing to something a baby, or an animal will look at your finger instead of what you are pointing at. God sent his son Jesus, as a little baby, as a sign to us to see the incredible thing that He was doing in our world not so that we can worship the baby but to show us his great love. The events of Jesus' birth are full of hints about his life and its purpose. Its not that we shouldn't celebrate Christmas or shouldn't have nativity scenes in our houses or churches but that we should never forget what Christmas is telling us and what nativities are pointing to.



In nativity plays we often see the scene where Joseph is knocking at the inn door being told that the inn is full and being offered a rustic stable out the back with the animals. Truthfully, in those days there was nothing like an inn as we would understand it, but the word actually means 'guest room'. Any house beyond a hovel had an extra room which was kept as a guest room or could easily be converted to a guest room, much the same as we would have nowadays. Jewish culture had a big emphasis on hospitality and any relatives or even strangers who came to your door were welcomed.



What was different was that the house had a ground floor which was used for storage and animals to live, much like many rural English houses a few generations ago. A part of the ground floor could be quickly swept out for extra guests, and this is what was done when Mary and Joseph arrived. When Mary had the baby, the other women of the family helped with the birth and the nearby manger quickly made suitable for the new baby.

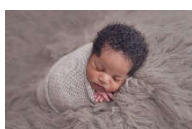


The manger is mentioned 3 times not because it is itself is significant but because it was a sign to the shepherds to show them that the angel had been telling the truth. The shepherds were told about the baby, why? This child is the saviour, the Messiah, the Lord.

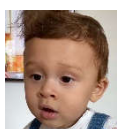
The shepherds were summoned in from the fields, privy to the news, so that Mary and Joseph, perhaps feeling a bit underwhelmed by the welcome God had arranged for them, hearing of the angels from this unexpected source, will have extra confirmation of what up until now been their secret.



Caesar Augustus had become the sole ruler of the Roman world after defeating all rival claimants. He turned the Roman Republic into an empire, with himself as the head; and proclaimed that he had brought justice and peace to the whole world; and, declaring his late father to be divine, styled himself as 'son of God'. Poets wrote poems, history was said to climax in his rule, and people said he was a saviour, the king and Lord, and people even worshipped him. Some of those terms sound a little familiar don't they but Augustus died, and his empire is long gone.



At the height of Augustus' reign far away from the capital on the eastern frontier of the empire a Jewish boy was born who would within a generation be hailed as; son of God; whose followers would recognise him as saviour and lord, whose arrival had brought true justice and peace to the world. Augustus thought he ruled the world, but God used him to bring Jesus to be born in the town which was linked to King David himself. Jesus was the true prince of Peace, Lord of Lords and saviour of the world and he lives on and his Kingdom continues to this day.



The point Luke wants us to understand is the birth of this little boy is the beginning of a confrontation between the kingdom of God - in all its apparent weakness, seeming insignificance and vulnerability - and the kingdoms of the world. The actual birth of Jesus was actually fairly normal, no bright lights, no angels chorus in the stable, just an apparently normal birth to a normal family. Augustus never heard of Jesus of Nazareth, but within a century or so his successors were trying to obliterate his followers and in just over 3 centuries the emperor himself became a Christian.



When you see a manger, don't just see a rustic crib for a baby born so long ago. See what it is pointing to. It is pointing to the explosive truth that the baby lying there is already being spoken of as the true king of the world. The kingdom of God continues to appear weak, seemingly insignificant and vulnerable but it continues to make huge differences in people's lives and hearts and give us a reason to continue to live and follow our lord. One day everyone will see his Glory.



The Christmas story tells of the birth of a new king. This child would be given the throne of his ancestor David. The world was moving according to the orders of Caesar Augustus but although he was hailed as a great bringer of peace, real peace on earth can be realised only through the sovereignty of the child born in Bethlehem. This is the story of the birth of a new kind of king. This birth reveals a new world order, a world not under Caesar but under the direction of God's design for the redemption of all peoples. In this world, God's word is heard by the humble. There is a place even for the shepherds. There is hope for the oppressed and those who hear what God is doing are filled with joy. God has not forgotten us or abandoned us to the brokenness we have created. The story of Christmas is both an announcement of hope and peace and a call to humility.



Jesus is the best gift ever given, let us accept him with Joy.