

NOW TO GOD WHO IS ABLE TO STRENGTHEN YOU  
ACCORDING TO THE PROCLAMATION OF JESUS  
CHRIST, THE MYSTERY THAT WAS KEPT SECRET  
FOR LONG AGES BUT IS NOW DISCLOSED,  
TO THE ONLY WISE GOD,  
BE THE GLORY FOR EVER! AMEN.



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ROMANS 16:25-27

24th December 2023

ADVENT 4B

8.30AM - COMBINED EUCHARIST

ST JOHN  
THE BAPTIST  
EST. 1888  
ANGLICAN CHURCH  
IN THE HEART OF BULIMBA



**FORTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - REFLECTION BY MARY COLE PBVM**

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. In this beautiful and much painted scene the miracle is announced. God is entering our history by becoming one of us. This is the quite extraordinary claim of Christianity. The great divine mystery behind and beyond our world has become a human being. No other religion dares to make so bold a claim. Even as we listen to this announcement

today, it is important to realise that it was only possible to make such a claim in the light of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It was the life of this man, culminating in the Easter events that led a group of Jewish men and women to say 'we have seen God with us'. As we ponder the Gospel scene, it is worth considering how we can present this as more than a children's story and speak to adults in their faith. Sometimes I hear people in my parish talking, and even writing about 'baby Jesus' and I shudder. While this may speak of a rich piety, it also suggests an image of Jesus located in the past, not only for Jesus but also for the speaker. To live our faith in this century requires a robust adult faith, and I just don't think 'baby Jesus' is the best image for nourishing such adult faith. One approach is to present the Christmas scenes to adults as a rich, theological tapestry proclaiming who Jesus is, by the power of God, even from his birth. If you look at the first Gospel — Mark 70 CE — it has no infancy narrative. Mark presents Jesus as 'Son of God' from his baptism as an adult. This possibly reflects an early stage in Christian thinking and making sense of who Jesus was. The next two Gospels, Matthew and Luke, written in the 80's, take Jesus' origins back further and they both introduce the narrative of Jesus' adult life with two, very different, infancy narratives that introduce Jesus to the reader, before they meet the adult Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke proclaim Jesus is 'son of God' even before his baptism, in fact from the moment of his conception, he is to be called 'son of the most high' (Luke 1:32). In this we see a gradual development of the early understanding of Jesus' identity. Finally, the Gospel of John, written towards the end of the first century, pushes Jesus' divine origins back — 'in the beginning was the Word'. And in John, we have two clear declarations of Jesus' divine status, 'the Word was with God and the Word was God' (1:1), and Thomas' declaration, 'My Lord and my God' (20: 28). Returning to Luke's Gospel, the mention of Gabriel is a major clue to Luke's theology since Gabriel is the angel found in the book of Daniel who announces to Daniel the coming of the end-times. While I was speaking and praying the angel Gabriel came to me at the time of the evening sacrifice... Seventy weeks of years (490 years) are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring everlasting righteousness so seal both vision and prophet and to anoint a most holy place. There shall be seven weeks from the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the anointed one, a prince. Then sixty two weeks in a troubled time. And after 62 weeks an anointed one [christos] shall be cut off and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with war and desolation and for half a week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator (Daniel 9:20-27). In trying to make sense of who Jesus is, Luke looks back to the scriptures of Israel. By the time he is writing his Gospel, the city of Jerusalem and its Temple has been destroyed by the Romans (70 CE). By just mentioning Gabriel, the entire prophecy would be recalled. As an example, if I say to my students 'Go ahead,' they know the end of this, 'make my day,' from the Dirty Harry films. Or if I say, 'Frankly my dear,' the older students complete the phrase with, 'I don't give a damn,' from Gone with the Wind. Similarly, in the first century people know their Scriptures and so a brief phrase or even a word would recall the whole context. So Luke presents the birth of Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel. Jesus brings to fulfillment Israel's scriptures. He is not presenting a description of an historical event; he is providing his readers with something even more important — how can we understand the event, what does the birth of Jesus mean? In Luke's theology Jesus comes to us as the fulfillment of Israel's longings, and as the one to usher in the new reign of God. This is the importance of Christmas — that God has entered into our history, and remains with us, to be a liberating power in our lives. Gabriel's announcement in today's Gospel brings heaven and earth together in the womb of a young girl, Mary.

Source: mn.catholic.org.au

**Locum**

Reverend Lindsay Locum until 31st Dec 2023

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Locum from 1st Jan to 20th Jan 2024

Rev'd Quinn Humphreys Mobile 0403 531 538 Email: quinn.humphreys@anglicanchurchsq.org.au

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**Church Contact. Office closed 23 December to 9th January 2024**

**Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am to 1.30 pm**

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Telephone: 3399 1508 Email: office@stjohnsbulimba.org

**Website: www.stjohnsbulimba.org Follow us on Facebook**

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**OUR RECTOR ELECT THE REV'D  
CANON PAUL MITCHELL**

His Commissioning date among us here at St John's is **2pm on Saturday the 20th January 2024**. He and his wife, Reverend Sharon are very much looking forward to ministering amongst us, and getting to know us in the new year. We look forward to welcoming Fr Paul and Reverend Sharon here amongst us in late January 2024.

To arrange direct debit for your regular giving,  
 please use the account details:  
 BSB 704 901 Account number 00014573.  
 Account name Bulimba Anglican Parish

**READINGS AND PRAYERS FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**SENTENCE FOR THE DAY:**

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.

*Luke 1.32-33*

**THE COLLECT FOR 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 lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**FIRST READING: 2 SAMUEL 7.1-11, 7.16**

LINDA PHILLIPS

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 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.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord : Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 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. 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?' 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; 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. 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, 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

**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.**

*(continued over page)*

**THIS COMING WEEK IN THE PARISH**

<b>MONDAY CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	25th	7.30am 9.00am	Eucharist Eucharist
<b>FRIDAY</b>	29th	<b>No Service</b>	
<b>SUNDAY ONE SERVICE ONLY</b>	31st	8.30am	Eucharist

<b>ROSTERED DUTIES 25/12</b>	<b>7.30AM</b>	<b>9.00AM</b>
<b>L.A.'s</b>	Ros/Allan	Donovan
<b>MUSIC</b>	Howard	Howard
<b>READERS</b>	Ros/Allan	Renee/Donovan
<b>INTERCESSOR</b>	Ros	Donovan
<b>MORNING TEA</b>		
<b>WELCOMERS</b>	Volunteer	Volunteer
<b>AUDIO VISUAL</b>	Volunteer	Volunteer
<b>FLOWERS</b>	<b>CHURCH CLEANING</b> Wendy/Sara	

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## Parish Prayers

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: ROMANS 16.25–27

ALAN SWANSON

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 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— to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

### GOSPEL: LUKE 1.26–38

#### Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.' 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.

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

### The Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

#### In The World: -

- ◇ The Episcopal Church in the Philippines
- ◇ The Diocese of Tasmania: †Richard Condie; Assistant Bishop - †Chris Jones; Clergy and People

#### In The Diocese:

- ◇ The Parish of St John's Cathedral: Peter Catt, Julia Van Den Bos, Ann Solari, Gemma Dashwood, Jamee-lee Callard, John Morgan, Bruce Henzell, Bruce Maughan, Mary Roberts, Mary Florence, Alwyn Hayes, Alan Sandaver, Terry Booth, Libbie Crossman, Linda McWilliam, Bruce Boase, Cheryl Selvage, Graham Dorman, Nicole Colledge, Ann McGuinness, Paul Mitchell, Stewart Perry, Sarah Plowman, George Markotsis, †Bill Ray, †Doug Stevens, Eleanor Mancini, Ros Clifton, Marian Free, Ron Bundy, Ross Burnett, Greg Jenks, Gary Harch, Richard Tutin, Daniel Hobbs, Brian Hughes
- ◇ Abri Residential Aged Care – Gold Coast
- ◇ Anglican Schools Australia Management Committee and Member Schools: President - Peter Laurence

#### Pray for those in need:

Bronwyn, Duncan Family, Kerrie, Douglas, Helena, Roy, Williamson Family, Helen, Rev Paul Bland, Joan, Pam, Dorothy, Gary, Rev Karen, Samantha, Ian, Brian, Karen S., Lisa.

#### Prayer for our new Rector Elect Paul Mitchell

Gracious God, giver of all that is good, by your Holy Spirit you have appointed various orders of ministry in your Church. Bless Fr Paul now called to be our next Rector. So fill him with your truth, and clothe him with holiness, that he may faithfully minister here among us, to the glory of your name and the benefit of your Church. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, until the ages of ages. Amen.

#### In Memory

**25th December—31st December**

*Bertha Weir Robinson (2011)*

*Mavis Elsie McCormack (2005)*





**ADVENT STUDY 4**  
**MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTION**  
**- DWELLING WITH GOD IN**  
**AN ARTWORK**

*Let's be still and know God more deeply as we encounter him present with us in art.*

**1. Reflection:** Encounter with Christ in the beauty of art...

**2. Recollection:** What do you see? *An invitation to focus on the work and notice the detail. What story is the work telling? What elements have been used to create the work, co/our,*

*line, shapes, tones, textures? What symbols or gestures might there be within the elements? What is happening?*

**3. Reflection:** What captured your attention? What moved your heart? What is God revealing to you? How does this relate to your life? *An invitation to be attentive to Christ present in the encounter and to share what you notice.*

**4. Faith sharing:** How is this work leading us into the Mystery and teaching us about God, Christ, Church, liturgy, and Christian life? *An invitation to connect your experience and the meaning you have found in the artwork, with what Christ is revealing in the living tradition of our Anglican faith.*

**5. Connection:** Why does what Christ is revealing in the work matter to us now? What's happening in our world and neighbourhood right now? *An invitation to consider how the work can encourage us in our faith.*

**6. Conversion:** How is your encounter with Christ in the work inviting you to change, to live the mystery?

*What is dying? What is being raised up?*

*Contemplate — rest in the presence of God. Conclude your gathering with the blessing.*

**Blessing:** We have heard the words of prophets. May we recognise God's truth. We have heard the words of angels. May we recognise God's joy. We have heard the words of promise. May we recognise God's love. And so may God bless us, Mystery of creation, Child in the manger, Holy Spirit of glory, and may we welcome and walk in the promises of God. Amen.

Source: mn.catholic.org.au

**MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTION - DWELLING WITH GOD IN THE SUNDAY GOSPEL**

*The person guiding the group invites people into the process based on the following invitation.*

Listen to God say to you ... Be still and know that / am God (Ps 46:10)

Moved by the Holy Spirit in response we pray... Open my/our ears to the Word of God...

Open my/our heart(s) to the love of God... Open my/our mind(s) to the wisdom of God...

Let us listen for the words of everlasting life...

*Each step finishes in silence before the guide invites the group into the next step ...*

**1. Encounter** with Christ in the Word proclaimed ... Listen (Gospel: Luke 1:26-38)

*Proclaimed without the liturgical dialogue that usually introduces and concludes it.*

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

**2. Recollection:** What happened? *An Invitation to recall what happened in the text. The detail is*

*important — characters, scenery, actions. No interpretation, just what happened.*

**3. Reflection:** What word or phrase captures your attention? What did you experience/feel? What is God revealing to you? How is this relevant to your life? *An invitation to be attentive to Christ present in the encounter and to share what you notice.*

**4. Faith sharing:** How is the meaning found in your encounter with Christ in the scripture connecting with the season of Advent? *An invitation to connect your experience and the meaning you have found in it, with what Christ is revealing in the living tradition of our Anglican faith.*

**5. Connection:** Why does what Christ is revealing matter to us now? What's happening in our world and neighbourhood right now? *An invitation to explore the essential connection between liturgy, faith and life.*

**6. Conversion:** How is your encounter with Christ inviting you to change — to become more and more Christ like? *What is dying? What is being raised up?*

*Contemplate — rest in the presence of God. Conclude your gathering with the blessing*

**Blessing:** We have heard the words of prophets. May we recognise God's truth. We have heard the words of angels. May we recognise God's joy. We have heard the words of promise. May we recognise God's love. And so may God bless us, Mystery of creation, Child in the manger, Holy Spirit of glory, and may we welcome and walk in the promises of God. Amen.

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