



St George's Anglican Church | Malvern

Fourth Sunday of Advent

20 December 2015

Sentence Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord. *Lk 1. 45*

Collect

Gracious God, you have visited and redeemed us in your Son:
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word,
and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works.
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,
whose Day draws near, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

A Reading from the book of the prophet Micah

Micah was a fierce champion of right worship and social justice, the two signs of Israel's right relationship with God. Today's passage was edited and expanded after the return from exile in Babylon to announce that the true shepherd/king of Israel will be born, like David, in Bethlehem among the insignificant people of Judah.

The Lord says to his people:

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the
LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

and he shall be the one of peace.

Micah 5. 2-5a 1

Reader For the word of the Lord
All Thanks be to God

Psalm Song of Mary at 8am APBA 425 at 10.00am TiS 161

The Magnificat (so named from the first word of the Latin translation) is largely based on Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2.1-10. Mary would have known this

prayer from the Hebrew Scriptures though it is more likely Luke portrays her as singing this to give readers insight into Jesus as the child of ancient promise. It is much loved, still part of the daily prayer of the Church and is also among the most radical songs of Christian faith since it challenges the existing unjust world order.

A Reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Hebrews is a lengthy book and is really a theological argument rather than a

letter. It asserts that Jesus Christ fulfills Israel's hopes and God's promises completely and forever. The writer (not Paul; possibly a woman theologian)

is confident that in Jesus Christ, the purpose of the former ways of worship is

fulfilled in the new covenant. The focus is on Jesus' coming to do the will of God.

When Christ came into the world, he said,
'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God"
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).'

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10.5-10

Reader May your word live in us.
ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Alleluia, alleluia.
Cantor The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of
the Most High will overshadow you
ALL Alleluia, alleluia.
Reader The Lord be with you
ALL And also with you
Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.
ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

In Luke's gospel the conception and birth of John the Baptist and Jesus are parallel stories. The image at the heart of these two stories is of the two mothers-to-be who embrace as they find themselves caught up in God's purposes, which in that moment are entirely entrusted to these two women and to their courage and readiness to do as God asked of them.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.' *Lk. 1.39-45*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord
ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Bible Readings next week 27 December 2015

First Sunday after Christmas

1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26 Ps 148 Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-52

Prayer for the Week

Holy God, you make us glad with the yearly expectation of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Pray for the Faithful Departed

We remember before God: Jessica Wakefield, Elgin Dahlenburg, Edward Lesh, Mary Monica Smith, Ron Plant, Judith Daish, Adam Walker, Derrick Osmond, Beryl Pringle and Renee Briggs
whose anniversaries occur this week.

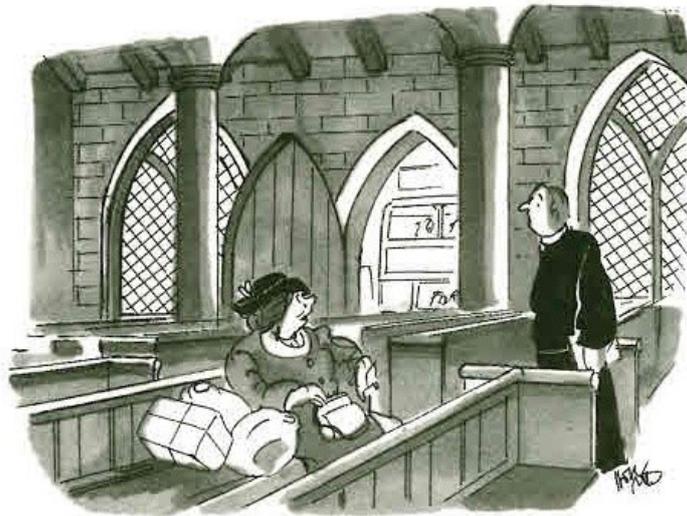
Commemorations of the week.

December 21 Thomas, apostle and martyr. Thomas is named in all four Gospels and in later life is especially associated with India. The Christians of the Malabar Coast consider him their founder. Thomas is best known because of his refusal to accept the resurrection of Christ without the experience of an encounter with the risen Lord (the so-called 'Doubting Thomas'). "Doubt leads to enquiry, and enquiry to truth" (Abelard, mediaeval theologian, 12th century)

December 25 The Birth of our Lord: Christmas Day.

December 26 Stephen, deacon and first martyr. His story is told in Acts. 6.1-8.1

CONGRATULATIONS to parishioner, Lay Canon Leigh Mackay who was the Project Manager for major renovations to the crypt and choir school at St Paul's Cathedral. The new gathering space, named in honour of the late Bishop Barbara Darling was blessed on Tuesday evening by the Archbishop. It provides a large space for meetings, Seminars and meals which can be used by the Cathedral congregations and the Diocese. It is a great achievement and we congratulate Leigh on her skilful leadership with the Dean and Chapter to complete it. Donations (tax deductible) may be still be made: go to www.stpaulscathedral.org.au/news/article/transforming_the_cathedral_buildings.



"You don't mind, do you, Vicar? It's the only place where you can escape from Christmas for a few minutes."