



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**24 December 2017**

**Sentence** 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*

**Collect**

God of impossible love, who needed Mary to give consent,  
to bear the scandal and to carry your Word within herself:  
may her courage give hope to women and men  
who yearn to sing new songs of justice  
and to find the world a dwelling place for God,  
through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

**A reading from the book of the prophet Samuel**

*God had been present with the people of Israel in the portable symbol of the ark or tabernacle and God did not want David to change this. David wanted to build a permanent house for God but was forbidden to do so. Eventually his son, Solomon, built the first Temple. David was assured that his name and kingdom would last for ever - finally coming, though David could not know this, with the Messiah, Jesus.*

When David 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

## **Song of Mary APBA, 425**

*The Magnificat (so called 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. 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.*

## **A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians**

*This is Paul's earliest letter, written to a church in Macedonia. In this passage towards the letter's close, Paul urges Christians to remain faithful, as God is faithful, and to live God's call upon their lives as a present reality each day. Paul may have expected the Lord Jesus to return in his lifetime; there have been numerous interpretations of 'the second coming' since and this teaching remains both a mystery and disputed among Christians.*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

*1 Thessalonians 5.16-24*

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

## **Gospel Acclamation**

All           **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Cantor       I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done.

All           **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

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.

*2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16*

Reader For the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

Reader     The Lord be with you

**ALL        And also with you**

Reader     A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Luke

**ALL        Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Stories of announcements by God's messengers are common in the scriptures. Isaac, Samson and Samuel were all born following such announcements, as was John the Baptist. The meaning of the event lies in the significance of the child to be born. Jesus does not emerge only from the stream of human history but by the direct intention of God to enter that history! It is a profoundly beautiful story and portrayed by artists over and over again as the mystery of Mary's response still unfolds in our world and in our lives.*

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. *Luke 1.26-38*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

**ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

**Prayer for the Week.** O Lord, raise up your power and come among us, and with great might succour us, that, whereas through our sins and wickedness we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Bible Readings for next Sunday Epiphany** *transferred*

Is. 60.1-6 Ps. 72.1-7,10-14 Eph. 3.1-12 Matt. 2.1-12

**Pray for the Faithful Departed.**

We remember before God, Adam Walker, Derrick Osmond, Beryl Pringle, Renee Briggs, Simonette Guest, Archelaus Richards, Ellen (Nellie) Richards, Augusta Lesh, Margaret Stokes, Midlred Budds, Norman Estaugh *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

**Commemorations of the week**

**December 27 John, apostle and evangelist.** Son of Zebedee and brother of James; both, with Peter formed an inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. Traditionally, held to be the author of John's Gospel and to have died in old age on the Greek Island of Patmos.

**December 28 Holy Innocents.** The slaughter of the innocent children described in Matthew 2.16-18.

**December 29 Thomas Becket** (1118-1170), Archbishop of Canterbury. Murdered in the Cathedral at Canterbury, his shrine became of place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages.

**December 30 Josephine Butler** (1828-1906) social reformer, especially her work amongst prostitutes. She was a woman of prayer, taking as her model, St. Catherine of Sienna

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