

Christmas Services in the Cluster 2023

Christmas Eve -

Sunday, 24th December

8.00am - Eucharist (Holy Trinity)

5.30pm - Eucharist (St Ambrose)

7.00pm - Eucharist (St Charles)

11.30pm - Carols & Eucharist

(Holy Trinity)

Christmas Day -

Monday, 25th December

8.00am - Eucharist (Holy Trinity)

next
Combined Service

at

Holy Trinity

**Sunday - 31st December
at 8.00am**

Come celebrate together
Share in the worship and fellowship.
**Join us to farewell and thank
Archdeacon Rosemary for
her service to our community.**
Bring a plate of food to share.



CLUSTER OFFICE

will be closed from
23rd December 2023 and will
reopen 10th January 2024

Please contact your church warden
for urgent matters.



MY OFFERING TO GOD

Regular giving
is an important part of
Christian discipleship.

There is a way to give regularly either:

Cluster Direct through WESTPAC
(CDSNQ Mackay Anglican Cluster—BSB
034 195 Acct # 893499) or
the **“My Offering” Envelope** system
(available now).



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MACKAY ANGLICAN CLUSTER



CONTACT INFORMATION

<https://mackayanglicans.org.au>

Mackay Anglican Cluster

Archdeacon - Ven Dr Rosemary Dunn

☎ 0431 562 680

archdeacon@mackayanglicans.org.au

Assistant Clergy

Fr Henry Kennell

Rev'd Canon Ann Dittmar-McCollim

Rev'd Keith McCollim

Rev'd Niki Vella Power

Rev'd Robyn Husband (Deacon)

Mackay Anglican Cluster Office

Office Hours: 9am-3pm

Monday - Friday

39 Gordon Street, Mackay

☎ 07 4957 3341 | 0409 573 348

✉ admin@mackayanglicans.org.au

Holy Trinity, Mackay

39 Gordon Street, Mackay

St Charles', West Mackay

37 McGinn Street, West Mackay

St Ambrose, North Mackay

28 Glenpark Street, North Mackay



THE BEACON

The Mackay Anglican Cluster

Advent 4

24 December 2023

Welcome to Worship

Advent 4 focuses on Mary's response to God's incarnate (i.e. make flesh, live out) will in us. Mary is often portrayed as an impossible ideal. But Scripture makes clear she doesn't glide through life unperturbed. She was 'much perplexed'; and Simeon prophesied that 'a sword would pierce her heart'. Mary lived with uncertainty, was separated from family at the birth, fled to Egypt, saw splits in the family about Jesus, and the awfulness of the Crucifixion; there's nothing 'ideal' about her life.

She's a lot more like us and the girl pictured here outside an ordinary home, nothing special, overlooked by the world. That's the Gospel message: God comes to the ordinary, the weak and vulnerable. But the angel honours the human because humanity has a special spot in God's kingdom- to join Jesus at God's right hand forever and share in his work of redeeming creation.

We do nothing by ourselves. Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit. We, too, must invite the Holy Spirit to live in us. The spiritual journey is bringing Christ to life in actions, words and thoughts. Christmas prepares for our new, revolutionary, life in Christ. Mary's radical song, the Magnificat, celebrates God's plan for her to help God overthrow the ways of the world: injustice, inequality, racism, sexism, violence. Isn't that too grand for us? Well, no! Mary reminds us every human is of value to God, has a place in God's plan and is part of His redemption when we say: 'not my will but yours be done'

Incarnating God is as simple- and as hard – as saying that. I'll bear life with grace and love for God and others. I'll keep seeking God in the uncertainty, stop focusing on me and try to build something of God's world. Too hard? Well, the glory of the Incarnation is that, when we surrender our will to God, we become immensely and gloriously free. God holds us in his arms as we hold him in our hearts. This Christmas, how are you honouring God's plan, honouring your true humanity, and opening up yourself to God's plan for you for next year?



BEING LIGHT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION OF MACKAY

LECTIONARY READINGS – Advent 4 - YEAR B

FIRST READING - Luke 1.26-38

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.

Hear the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God**

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Sentence for today

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

Prayer of the day [Collect - APBA]

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**
Advent Candle Prayer - Love
Love is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings love, new life, delight in the possibilities of different

ways of doing things, freedom from the bondage fear and negativity. Help us dear Lord, to open our hearts to your presence, as Mary did, so that we can bring forth your love in the words, acts and relationships of our lives.

Our World - for changed hearts to honour, care and support those suffering from continuing conflict in Armenia and Azerbaijan in Sudan in Haiti, in the Ukraine, in Myanmar, in Gaza and the West Bank. For those affected by natural disasters, and for those in the Far North of Queensland.

Our Community - those who are homeless at Christmas, and all those who are alone, those who are grieving, those for whom Christmas is a time of turmoil; pray for peace in homes.

Our Wider Church - for the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

SECOND READING - Romans 16.25-27

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.

Hear the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God**

THE GOSPEL - Luke 2.1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord - **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Showing Love to the most vulnerable



Sisters Srinidhi* and Mahira* are Sri Lankan refugees who have been living in refugee camps in India for decades and aren't able to access medical care outside the camps. OfERR, a refugee-run organisation supported by Act for Peace, has been providing crucial support in the camps for over 40 years. Through the Christmas Bowl you can help send health workers into the camps and provide medical care to those who need it. **Please give today.**

*Names changed for safety reasons

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188