



24th December 2023
Fourth Sunday of Advent



Hymns: 290 302 323 294

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)

The Collect

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

A reading from the second book of Samuel, chapter 7, beginning at verse 1.

After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.' Nathan replied to the king, 'Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.' But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: 'Go and tell my servant David, "This is what the Lord says: are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" 'Now then, tell my servant David, "This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people shall not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel.

I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.”

Hear the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The Song of Mary

R: The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

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. The Almighty has done great things for me: and holy is his name. **R...**

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. **R...**

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. **R...**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 16, beginning at verse 25. Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith – to the only wise God be glory for ever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Hear the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Here I am, the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word.

Alleluia!

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, chapter 1, beginning at the twenty-sixth verse.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.' 'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.' 'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her.

For the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Prayers of the People

Heavenly Father, at a time when we look towards the coming of your Son with great joy and anticipation, we uphold those who struggle to find any joy or meaning in the season, or in their life in general.

For those who walk in the darkness of depression and anxiety, weighed down by intrusive thoughts and narratives of self-deprecation. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For those in financial jeopardy, who have to make difficult decisions about how to feed, house and protect their family. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For those grappling with questions of purpose, identity and faith, who are at risk from spiritual attack and the influences of secular doctrine. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For those in ministry who are overworked and burnt out, such that they have lost sight of the joy in welcoming the Christ child into the world. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For children and young people who are ignored at home, and who do not know the love, acceptance and stability that is their basic human right. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For the elderly, frail and housebound, and those who find this time of year to be one of sadness, loneliness or uncertainty. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For the sick and suffering, and those who have asked for our prayers: *Donna Baker, Maryann Leonard, Jonathan and Limor Rose, Jeanne Jones, Bill Edge, Sharon and John Simpson, Anni Grimwade, Madeline Allen, Elaine Haddock, Belinda Shannon, Jim Chatz, Barry and Val Watts, Gwen Bushell, Debbie Chilcott, Beryl and Geoff Kirby, Fiona Mctier, David Valentine, Peg and Ken Raeburn, Bishop John Parkes, Edie Simpson, Bruce Seaman, Thomas De Sousa, Mary Cassar, Vince Fazio, and Adeline Bickley.* Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For those we have known and loved who have died; for those recently gone to their rest...and those whose year's mind occurs at this time: *Edna Moore, Kathy Hincks, John Kirby, Christine Marshall, Alan Tomlinson, Wilby Milburn, Alice Hughes, John Dixon, Ronald Hawker, Elise Stock, Derrick Davies, William Sherwood, Marguerite Fagg, and Lillian McLachlan.* Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers. **Grant that what we have asked in faith, we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Notices

Christmas Service Times

Sunday 24th December: 5pm Family Nativity Service, Christ Church Kilmore

11pm Midnight Mass, St Matthew's Broadford

Monday 25th December: 9am Parish Christmas Day Mass, Christ Church Kilmore

Notice of Annual Leave

Fr. David will be away on leave from the 8th to the 25th of January 2024. Services will be lay-led during this time, and any issues, please refer to the Wardens of members of parish council.

Op Shop

A reminder that the parish op shop will be closed until Thursday January 4th.

New Year's Eve

There will be one combined Parish Mass on Sunday December 31st, as it is the fifth Sunday of the month, held at Christ Church at 10am. We will mark the feast of the Epiphany. All are welcome.

Thursdays at St Matthew's

There will be a Mass at St Matthew's on this Thursday 28th December for Holy Innocents. There will be a Mass on Thursday January 4th 2024 before Fr. David goes on leave, but no other masses until January 25th 2024.

Aged Care

Aged care services are paused until the first week of February 2024.

Direct Debit /EFT Offerings – Account details: BENDIGO BANK – Account Name 'Anglican Parish of Kilmore;' BSB 633-000; Account Number 158946921.

Reference: Offertory. An EFTPOS machine is available at Kilmore.

Next Sunday: The Epiphany of Our Lord 31st December: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12		
Christ Church, Kilmore	10.00am	Parish Eucharist
St Matthew's, Broadford	---	---
St Stephen's, Tallarook	---	---
Transfiguration, Pyalong	---	---

Weekly Scripture Readings

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Monday 25th December	Ps 132:10-18	Ps 138
<i>Birth of Our Lord</i>	Micah 4:1-8	Micah 5:2-5
	Matthew 1:18-2:6	John 4:7-21
Tuesday 26th December	Ps 130	Ps 139

<i>St Stephen</i>	Jeremiah 26:1-16	Isaiah 28:1-13
	Acts 6:1-7; 7:1-49	Titus 1
Wednesday 27th December	Ps 45	Ps 141; 142
<i>St John</i>	Wisdom 7:3-14	Isaiah 28:14-29
	John 1:1-18	1 John 5:1-12
Thursday 28th December	Ps 34	92
<i>Holy Innocents</i>	Ps 2; 36	Ps 119:153-176
	1 Peter 4:12-19	John 1:19-34
Friday 29th December	Ps 145	Ps 147
<i>Thomas Becket</i>	Isaiah 62	Isaiah 29:13-24
	Ephesians 1:1-14	John 1:35-51
Saturday 30th December	Ps 148; 149	Ps 19
<i>Josephine Butler</i>	Isaiah 63:1-9	2 Samuel 22:47-51
	Ephesians 1:15-23	Romans 15:8-21

Parish Contacts

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Facebook page link: <https://www.facebook.com/AnglicanKilmore/>

or you can type in Anglican Parish of Kilmore Facebook into the search bar and it should come up. It's also on the link Services Online on the website.

Thoughts for the Week

A ghost is haunting us, like the ghosts haunting Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. This ghost, I have chosen to call 'The Flake'. It is a spirit of apathy, of indifference. A pungent and pervasive fear of commitment. Whatever we sign up for in life, we always want an escape clause. We always want express permission to go into 'goblin mode', forgetting or shying from our responsibilities. We want to just rock up when we want, regardless of the time, effort, energy, and yes sometimes money, put into events that we feel entitled to rock up to. The Flake has possessed our children and grandchildren, whose only commitment in life seems to be decorating themselves and their space like a Christmas tree with rewards for deeds they deem completed. Although these days, it's more like rewarding just getting out of bed. Perhaps another commitment, of course, is plugging themselves into whatever passes for cyberspace these days (remember when the digital world was a thing of wonder and not horror and contempt?), and surprise surprise, removing themselves further from the realm of responsibility. It's not visions of sugarplums that dance in their heads, it's visions of themselves. Like they walk around with headphones in, playing the sound of their own voice. No attempts made to read the room, or digest any jot of data more than they absolutely have to. And as for common sense, well the spectre of the Flake has well and truly drowned that long ago. I bring up such thoughts this week in light of our focus on Mary, the Mother of Our Lord. Can you imagine what it would be like if the angel came to a girl today and said, 'you're going to bear the Son of God'? No, that's too much effort, too much riding on it. No, that's an invasion of my personal space. No, the planets aren't right, it'll ruin my aura. No, I'm divinity intolerant. No, I haven't got time. The Flake's list is longer than Santa's. It would be a very different world indeed if Mary had lived in the 21st century. There may not have been the Birth of Christ at all. Which begs the question: what the heck has happened to us, that we can't be bothered to observe, let alone emulate, the guts it took to say YES to God instead of no, followed hastily by a weak excuse? Say no the Flake, not to God. Like Mary, your life might actually improve.