

## Sunday Worship at Home, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

### **Opening Prayers:**

O Lord, open our lips

**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Reveal among us the light of your presence

**that we may behold your power and glory.**

### **A Prayer of Confession:**

When the Lord comes, He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in and peace with all:

**God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners. We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do. For the sake of Jesus, who died for us, forgive us for all that is past, and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **A Collect for the 4th Sunday of Advent**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Gospel 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.'

### **Reflection on the reading:**

Today, in Church, on the fourth Sunday, we light the final Advent Candle which represents the love of God. We also reflect on Mary's part in the Christmas story in being the one who would bring the infant Jesus into the world. In our Gospel reading we heard the Angel greet Mary with the words "The Lord is with you" before he told her she would bear a child who would be called the Son of God. She was to be the bearer of the incarnation of God. God would be physically within her as well as with her. What was required of Mary to make this happen was both simple and life-changing. She was required to put aside her own desires, and risk everything by saying. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Our Old Testament reading for today relates how King David planned to build a temple for God, a place for him to live and where he could be worshipped. But Nathan the Prophet would give him this message from God: "'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.'" About 1,000 years later Jesus would tell a Samaritan woman, that he met by a well, that the time would come when people would neither worship God in the Jewish temple nor on the Samaritan mountain top, but in their hearts. Revd Eddie concluded his sermon in last week with words from a Christmas Carol: "Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in. What is required for God to be both with us and within us is the same for us today as it was for Mary 2,000 years ago. It is for us also to say, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." **Amen.**

### **The Creed**

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.**  
**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**  
**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.**  
**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Be still and pray:** In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for:

The Church as its leaders prepare for COVID safe celebrations of Christmas; For national and local governments as they struggle to control COVID-19 and put into place vaccination programmes; For our Government and the EU as the final stages of BREXIT are upon us; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died and comfort for those who are mourning their loss.

***Finish with The Lord's Prayer:***

### **Conclusion**

May Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain with you always. **Amen.**

Remain forever in the light and peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

*Reverend Eddie*