

# Sunday Worship at Home, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Fourth 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.

**Amen.**

## A Prayer of Confession:

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say.

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call. Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus 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

## The Collect

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**

## Reading: Luke 1:39-55 Mary Visits Elizabeth & Mary's Song of Praise

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be <sup>[e]</sup> a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

## **Reflection on the reading:**

Mary was probably barely a teenager, but even so, she knew that having a baby any baby at any age is a big thing to do, scary as well as exciting, and before the days of the medical care we have now, also a dangerous thing to do. On top of this, being an unmarried mother at that time was dangerous by itself. So there was another problem as well... Joseph! I sometimes wonder if the real reason that Mary went to stay with Elizabeth was to see Elizabeth or to get away from Joseph, because she was afraid of HIS reaction to the news that she was going to have a baby that was not his! But then, when Mary went to see Elizabeth, Elizabeth said "Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me"? The Christmas we celebrate is not just the birth of baby Jesus, not just the birth of Mary's son, but the birth of the Saviour of the world, and the birth of our Lord. Elizabeth knew, and Mary knew, that Mary's baby Jesus was coming to change the world and as scary as it was, Mary knew that God was with her and she was able to praise God in the song that we now call the Magnificat. So today we remember Mary, who God asked to do a most difficult thing, probably more difficult than anything he will ever ask us to do, and Mary said YES. As we go through life God often asks us to make difficult choices, he asks us to difficult things. He constantly asks us to live the way he wants us to which is not the same as the way our friends want us to live, and could get us into trouble. And he doesn't promise us that it will be easy only that he will be with us if we walk the same way HE is walking. So next time God asks you to do a difficult thing, what will you say? I wonder, will you remember Mary and her great song of praise. **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: Areas of the world affected by War, natural disasters and man-made disasters, especially; for peace to prevail in areas of rising international tension. and for our own nation and other nations dealing with rising COVID infection rates and the combination of the delta and new omicron variants; for healing and peace for those who are ill; for the souls of those who have recently died, and comfort for those who are mourning their loss; and for those who, for whatever reason, will be separated from those they love this Christmas. ***Finish with The Lord's Prayer:***

## **Conclusion**

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you, this day and always. **Amen**

*Reverend Eddie*