



# BALLINA & LENNOX HEAD ANGLICANS

An inclusive Christ-centred community, growing in our  
relationship with God and the wider community

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bundjalung nation,  
and pay respects to their elders past and present.

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 20 DECEMBER 2020

### Pastoral message from the Rector

When I was at school, I used to watch a television show called 'Mission Impossible'. It subsequently became a series of very successful movies by the same name. I loved the way they took something that seemed impossible and made it possible. The show was filled with intrigue and guesswork that kept the viewer on the edge of their seat until the last suspense filled moment. Even the music was suspenseful and stirring. I loved it.

The story of Mary's pregnancy could be seen by some to be a bit like a script for a Mission Impossible show. A young virgin woman becomes pregnant by the Holy Spirit and she gives birth to a baby boy. Her cousin Elizabeth, considered by many to be 'barren', i.e. well past childbearing age, also becomes pregnant, and the angel simply says, "Nothing will be impossible with God."

The Christmas story starts with the announcement by the angel to Mary that she has been chosen for this special 'mission'. She is never forced and after questioning and pondering, she gives her consent in the words, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." At any time, Mary could have said no, but she chose to say yes. This is an amazing moment in history and one that could easily be overlooked in the hype of Christmas festivities. A young woman agreed to be the vessel for God to use to bring God's son into the world. Her 'yes' allowed God to do something that many would call impossible.

I could not imagine what it would have felt like for Mary to consider such a request from God. I have never had anything of that magnitude to consider, and I sort of hope and pray that I never will. However, if God does require something of me, even if it seems impossible, I pray that I may have the grace, and the strength of faith, to be like Mary and say 'yes' to God. As our Prayer of the Day reminds us, Mary placed her life at the service of God's will. May we also be able to say 'yes' to God and accept God's will above our own, even if it seems impossible.

Advent blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew', written in a cursive style.

Matthew

**Birthdays (20/12/2020 – 02/01/2021):** Cedric Stedman, Ken Bourne, Judy Fogarty, Joan Swinbourne, Gordon Jarrett, Audrey Fisher, and Lorna Ewing.

**Anniversary (20/12/2020 – 02/01/2021):** Richard & Carol Brown

**Christmas Services:** Carols Service Wednesday 23 December 7.00pm at St Mary's Ballina; Blue Christmas Thursday 24 December 6.00pm at St Mary's Ballina; Christmas Day Holy Communion 8.00am at St John the Baptist Lennox Head and 9.30am at St Mary's Ballina. **No church services Sunday 27 December at Lennox Head or Ballina.** Parish Council made the difficult decision to not hold church services on Sunday 27 December because they felt they could not arrange appropriate COVIDsafe cleaning between the Christmas services and Sunday 27 December. Thank you for your understanding.

**The Every Day With Jesus** books have arrived and are available for \$9.50 in each of the centres or from the Parish Office.

**One of the requirements for the COVID-19 Safety Plan** for a service in the church is to have a team of volunteers. Could you do any of these jobs in St Mary's?:

Registration

Supervising Hand Sanitising

Pewsheets and Order of Service handout

Ushering

Reading/Prayers

We would love to hear from you - Kerry 0407 257 129 or Cathie Guest 6686 2094.

**Ballina Anglican Op Shop** is seeking volunteers to assist in the transfer of donations from 2.30pm – 4.00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. The task involves transferring new donations from the front veranda to the shed and moving the donations from the shed to the sorting room to be sorted the next day. You will be working with experienced staff so no experience necessary. Interested persons can contact Ann Emery 0417259290 or Julie Harwood 0408653283 for more information.

**Annual Reports** for inclusion at the AGM are due to be received by the office by 29 January at the latest, sooner if at all possible. If you are responsible for preparation of a report from one of our groups can you please be giving consideration to that report at this time. If you have any questions, or wonder if you are on that list, please email Cathie at [office@anglicanballina.com.au](mailto:office@anglicanballina.com.au).

**Ballina Christian Education Committee (BCEC) and Ritchies IGA** If you want to support BCEC here is one very simple way to do it. Ritchies IGA has recently launched its new IGA Card to celebrate 150 years of service to the community. Now is the time to sign up with their online app. and nominate BCEC (formerly BSREA) as the Beneficiary. They give 0.5% of sales to nominated community groups. Every little bit helps - consider making BCEC your choice!

Also available is the BCEC Who's Who of Ballina Shire Ultimate Puzzle Book. The book is available at both of our centres at a cost of \$15 and would make a great Christmas present.

**Do you have photos** of some of the things that have been different about this year? We are hoping to have a vision of the strange year that was for this year's Annual Report, so if you have anything that reflects Parish life since January can you please send it to Cathie at [office@anglicanballina.com.au](mailto:office@anglicanballina.com.au), or if you bring it in she can scan it and return it to you?

**Wearing of Face Masks** It is recommended as per the Public Health Order Number 7 to wear masks when singing and when vulnerable people are in attendance to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.

## **Financial Giving to the Parish**

Whilst the Op Shop with successful trading during the COVID pandemic has been able to catch up on its budgeted transfers to the Parish funds there is still a shortfall in offertory giving, a major source of funds required to run the Parish.

You are encouraged to support the Parish through regular giving in one of the following ways:

**Direct deposits through AfGD (Anglican funds Grafton Diocese) known as Parish Provider:** Application Form is available from the Parish Administration Office. Complete and post it to: PO Box 4, Grafton NSW 2460; alternatively scan or photo the completed form and send it as an attachment to AfGD email address: [office@afgd.com.au](mailto:office@afgd.com.au); or

**Direct deposit to the Parish of Ballina Working Account:** this method enables you to use your bank to electronically direct transfer funds into the following account.

*Account:* Parish of Ballina Working Account: *BSB:* 705-077 *Account Number:* 00040134.  
*Use Reference:* Offering; or

**At Sunday Services:** there is a box set aside for giving at St Mary's and St John the Baptist if you are attending Sunday worship and wish to give this way; or

**At the Admin Office:** giving by cash or EFTPOS can also be processed at the Admin Office during the week from 9.00am to 3:00pm.

Thank you.

Hugh McIntosh - Parish Treasurer

**Special COVID-19 Appeal** To help maintain Parish ministry and the jobs of paid churchworkers through this crisis, the Diocese has opened a special appeal. Contributions to this fund will go first to maintaining paid roles of churchworkers across the Diocese, whether located in Parishes, the Registry or special ministries such as chaplaincies. Click here to find out more and learn about ways to donate: [The Anglican Diocese of Grafton COVID-19 Support Fund](#)

**PACT** Loving and gracious Lord, as we prepare to celebrate the wonderful birth of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, help us to be people of peace and compassion in this uneasy world. We thank you for all the blessings in our lives. Draw us closer to yourself, and help us to bring Jesus' message of love and hope to the people we meet, especially those who find this special time difficult. Fill us with the spirit and love Jesus' birth has given us. **Amen.**



## **Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia**

Nativity

Wise men they called them, earnest astrologers,  
Watching for meaning in the moving stars,  
Science or fantasy, learned or laughable,  
Theirs was a vision that was brought to pass.  
Sing all you wise men, dance all the scientists,  
Whether your theories are false or true,  
God uses knowledge, God uses ignorance,  
God on his birthday had a need of you.

Michael Hewlett TiS 281; AHB 214.

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. Luke 2: 6-7



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**CONTACT US**

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Ballina and Lennox Head Anglicans

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# “COUCH CHURCH”: WORSHIPPING GOD AT HOME

20 DECEMBER 2020

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Don't forget to click on the link in your email to watch this service online.*

### **Call to Worship**

God chose a home,  
not of steel, or brick, or glass, or magnificence,  
but a body, of flesh, of blood, of breath,  
with consent, with courtesy, with courage.  
Come, let us worship our incarnated God  
born among us, now and always  
in this blessed season.

**Amen.**

### **Hymn: The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came**

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady, *Gloria!*

'for known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,  
thy Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;  
most highly favoured lady, *Gloria!*

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,  
'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy name':  
most highly favoured lady, *Gloria!*

Public Domain  
TiS 302

### **Gathering Prayer:**

In this holy season of Advent  
we light the final candle,  
trusting that you will always bring  
your covenant of love to completion.  
God, among us, in hope and expectation,  
in fulfilment and flourishing.

**Amen.**

### **Confession:**

Today, days before we celebrate your self-giving  
in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage,  
we turn to you  
knowing how often we fall short  
in life, in conversation, in generosity and in courage.

Forgive us, and make us more like you,  
not because it will make you love us more,  
but because it is for our sake,  
and for the sake of the people you love so much,  
that you came among us.

**Amen.**

### *Absolution*

*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

### **Prayer of the Day:**

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.**

### **Readings:**

#### **Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-27**

*Choir: My peace be upon you forever, my love be within your heart,  
my Spirit will keep you safe all my days.*

**All: My peace be upon you forever, my love be within your heart,  
my Spirit will keep you safe all my days.**

1 Lord I will sing forever of your loving-kindness:  
my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness  
through out all generations.

2 I have said of your loving-kindness that it is built forever:  
you have established your faithfulness in the heavens.

3 The Lord said 'I have made a covenant with my chosen:  
I have sworn an oath to my servant David.

4 'I will establish your line for ever:  
and will build up your throne for all generations.'

**All: My peace be upon you forever, my love be within your heart,  
my Spirit will keep you safe all my days.**

19 You spoke once in a vision:  
and said to your faithful one.

20 'I have set a youth above a warrior:  
I have exalted a young man out of the people.

21 'I have found my servant David:  
and anointed him with my holy oil.

22 'My hand shall uphold him:  
and my arm shall strengthen him.

- 23 ‘No enemy shall deceive him:  
nor shall the wicked hurt him.
- 24 ‘I will crush his adversaries before him:  
and strike down those that hate him.
- 25 ‘My faithfulness and loving-kindness shall be with him:  
and through my name his head shall be lifted high.
- 26 ‘I will set the hand of his dominion upon the Western Sea:  
and his right hand shall stretch  
to the streams of Mesopotamia.
- 27 ‘He will call to me “You are my Father:  
my God and the Rock of my salvation.”

***All: My peace be upon you forever, my love be within your heart,  
my Spirit will keep you safe all my days.***

A.P Watt, London  
TiS 46

### **Hymn: Thanks to God Whose Word Was Spoken**

Thanks to God whose Word was spoken  
in the deed that made the earth.  
His the voice that called a nation,  
his the fires that tried its worth.  
*God has spoken, God has spoken:  
praise him for his open Word.*

Thanks to God whose Word incarnate  
human flesh has glorified,  
who by life and death and rising  
grace abundant has supplied.  
*God has spoken, God has spoken:  
praise him for his open Word.*

Thanks to God whose Word is answered  
by the Spirit’s voice within.  
Here we drink of joy unmeasured,  
life redeemed from death and sin.  
*God has spoken, God has spoken:  
praise him for his open Word.*

R.T. Brooks (1918 – 85)  
TiS 431

### **Gospel Acclamation:**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

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

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

TiS 431

### **The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according Luke.**

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 forever, 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 (NRSV)

## *Sermon*

### **Advent Creed:**

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.

The one who is full of patience, who is not afraid of silence, who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.

The one who is beyond bluster and flurry, and who does not jostle for attention.

We believe in God the Son, Saviour of creation, who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed, who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry, who frequently took time alone with his patient Father,

who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant, who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers, whose silence overpowered their words, who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes, sometimes arriving with obvious power, sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.

We believe in one God who patiently waits for us, and who longs for us to do the same. Amen.

### **Intercessions:**

As Mary waited to give birth, so we wait for you Lord Jesus.

We pray for your world, in the grip of fear, as COVID-19 brings death and despair to millions of people. We give thanks for our scientists who have produced vaccines that may halt the spread of this cruel virus. We pray for all who have lost their employment, business or home due to the effects of COVID-19. So we wait for your return to renew the world.

Jesus, son of Mary, **dwell in us.**

We pray for your church: inspire us through your Spirit to tell out the wonderful good news that salvation is at hand. May your Spirit encourage each one of us to live out our Parish's mission to welcome the stranger through both word and deed into our midst.

Jesus, son of Mary, **dwell in us.**

As our thoughts turn towards our families and the approaching Christmas activities, both spiritual and family activities, may we not forget those who are living rough, lonely and feeling marginalised because of different circumstances, so that we may bring acceptance and reconciliation in the name of Christ our Lord.

Jesus, son of Mary, **dwell in us.**

Father we pray for all in need, the sick, both in mind or body, those who grieve the loss of loved ones, loss of employment and for all who wait to hear from loved ones who have left without notifying their whereabouts. We pray especially for those who have asked for prayer for healing: Ria Mars, Joy Swinbourne, Malcolm Streher, Josh Stanley, Margaret Waller, Lynda Garde, Rachael Hampton, Alton Rowe, Karen and Ben Shaw, Ron Roder, Rose Fox, Alex Arrighi, Gerri White's granddaughter, Phil Ross, and Milton Colburt. Father, may we be bearers of good news to those who need your love and wholeness.

Jesus, son of Mary, **dwel in us.**

We give you thanks for all your faithful people, whose lives have borne the fruit of your Spirit, especially Mary of Nazareth, those of this parish and all whom we hold dear.

May we, with Mary and all the saints, rejoice in our Saviour, who delights to dwell with us.

Jesus, son of Mary, **dwel in us.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

### **Hymn: Long Ago, Prophets Knew**

Long ago, prophets knew

Christ would come, born a Jew,

come to make all things new,

bear his people's burden,

freely love and pardon.

*Refrain: Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!*

*Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!*

*When he comes,*

*when he comes,*

*who will make him welcome?*

God in time, God in man,

this is God's timeless plan:

he will come, as a man,

born himself of woman,

God divinely human.

*Refrain: Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!*

*Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!*

*When he comes,*

*when he comes,*

*who will make him welcome?*

Mary, hail! Though afraid,

she believed she obeyed.

In her womb God is laid:  
till the time expected,  
nurtured and protected.

*Refrain: Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
when he comes,  
who will make him welcome?*

Journey ends: where afar  
Bethlehem shines, like a star,  
stable door stands ajar.  
Unborn Son of Mary,  
Saviour, do not tarry.

*Refrain: Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
Jesus comes,  
Jesus comes,  
we will make him welcome.*

Frederick Pratt Green (1903 - )  
TiS 283

### **Sending Out Prayer:**

God of surprises,  
you chose Mary to be the God-bearer  
and with her 'Yes',  
you entered our world.  
Nurtured by you,  
we look for surprise  
and wonder  
all around us.

**Amen.**

### *Blessing*

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