



## Team Parish of Christ the King St Aidan's, Brunton Park

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

As a former midwife I have been moved to tears at the images coming from Gaza. Babies dying because their hospital has been bombed, or the anguish of parents when their premature babies were transferred to a hospital in Egypt.

For the fear that pregnant women must be living with, wondering where on earth they may end up giving birth, when their homes and hospitals are becoming piles of rubble.

Luke doesn't go into much detail about how Mary felt to be told that she was going to have a baby and that he would be the Son of God. She was told not to be afraid.

But that doesn't quite seem enough to reassure a young girl in the circumstances. A young girl living in a culture where women were stoned to death. Nor does Luke go into detail about how long it took to get Mary to the point of believing and trusting. It must have been a terrifying experience. Did the angel have to come back more than once? It's so easy to read the story and oversimplify it. However, there is nothing simple about Mary and her response to God's call.

And yet, Mary is often portrayed as calm, accepting and passive. Her character is one I have often wrestled with, you can't just take her at face value, she, demands further investigation.

Following on from today's Gospel reading known as 'The Annunciation' is Mary's Song the Magnificat.

These two passages read together as a whole, provide a way of seeing the world of Mary, along with the reality of Advent and Christmas, and the potential for our own spiritual lives.

The Annunciation is the call of God. The Magnificat is the human response. Advent and Christmas are not meant to be romantic and sentimental. The coming of Christ had a larger purpose which extends all the way to Good Friday and Easter. Jesus is being born to be crucified and redeem sinful humanity.

It's no accident that Mary takes centre stage here. Mary venerated by some Christians, ignored by others, and misunderstood by many. Mary the mother of God is the first disciple, and she displays a radical faith and trust in God. She stands in awe of God. Mary hears the call of God and she responds. She models faith, obedience, servanthood, discipleship, and hospitality. Mary is a distinctive role model for us all, male and female. When we look at Mary, don't magnify her, but recognise that Mary magnified God.

## **2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16**

Now when David, the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.'

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: 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, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

## **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.

## TODAY

- 9.30am: **Advent 4** Rev'd Gerard presides and Rev'd Canon Jean Skinner preaches.  
4:00pm: **Nativity**  
11:30pm: **Midnight Mass**

## MONDAY

9.30am: **Christmas Morning Eucharist**

## THE WEEK AHEAD

- Wed** 10.00am, Church: **BCP Midweek Eucharist**  
**Sat** 10am, Community Room: **Saturday Café**  
**Sun** 9.30am: **Christmas 1** Rev'd Ben Pullan presides and preaches with readings from Galatians 4.4-7 and Luke 2.15-21

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2:00pm: **Prayer and Praise**, Community Room  
8:00pm: **Men's Group – Rory's Quiz**, Community Room  
Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm: **Film Club**, Community Room  
Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm: **Chat and Craft**, Community Room

## NOTICES

**There will be no newsletter next week**

**SUNDAY SERVICE** – the link for today's service is <https://bit.ly/StAidanAdvent4> and for Christmas morning is <https://bit.ly/StAidanChristmas2023> and for 31st December is <https://bit.ly/StAidanChristmas1>

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES** – this evening we have our Nativity at 4:00pm where children are encouraged to join in and come along dressed in their Nativity costume (we have a few if you don't have one). Later at 11:30pm we have our Midnight Mass as we celebrate the birth of Christ, and tomorrow our Christmas Eucharist service is at 9:30am.

**CAROLS ON THE GREEN** – with the Salvation Army raised £212. Thank you for your support.

**PAULINE PEARSON** – has given notice that following a significant birthday next year, she will be retiring from St Columba's at the beginning of March.

**CHILDREN'S SOCIETY** – the boxes have raised £520 and the coffee morning £360 so at total of £880 has been sent to the children's society.

**CHRISTMAS APPEAL** – the Festival of Carols raised £277 towards our Christmas charities, which this year are Children North East and the Christian Aid Palestine and Israeli appeal.

**ZOOM CODES** – all our Zoom sessions will use only the following details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7573778713?pwd=NGVjcTRLQjBEaStqYjFDSm1KOURtQT09>

Meeting ID: 757 377 8713 Passcode: StAidan

**BOOKING ZOOM MEETINGS:** if you would like to use the St Aidan's Zoom account for a church meeting, please contact Janice

**FOOD BANK** – any items placed in the box at the back of church will be donated to Kenton Foodbank.

**PLANNED GIVING** - If you would like to set up a regular financial gift to support St Aidan's please click on the following link

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/brunton-park-st-aidan-newcastle-upon-tyne>

### ***For Our Prayers: St Aidan's Cycle of Prayer***

**For the church** – Sacred Heart RC and St John's URC, our Retired clergy: Ben Pullan, Christine Crompton, Ray Devenney and Jean Skinner. Our Bishop Mark, Archdeacon Rachel Wood, Pauline Pearson, Acting Area Dean. Those who assist in our worship: lesson readers, intercessors, servers, Eucharistic assistants and sacristans.

**For the community** – Christian Aid, the Children's Society, and other charities supported by the church and the Saturday café. Catherine McKinnell, our MP, Newcastle City Councillors, North Gosforth Parish Council

**For the world** – all countries facing hardship and conflict. For our own national and political life

**For those in need** - Gladys Johnston, Esther Wooler, Alan Gregg, Martin Seaton, Bruce Smith, Shirley Pentland

**For those who have died** – William Gilchrist, Margaret Pitkethly, Robert Michael Tiffin, Alice Bottomly, Hiram Williams, John Ward, Lily Seargeant, Hazel Nicholls, Sheena MacLeod, Eleanor Swan, Alice Vout, Joyce Russell, Minnie Browne, Doris Bartle, Charlotte Holmes, Robert Smith, Gavin Pitkethly, Martin Orde, Arnold Venus, Dorothy Elsie Lithgow, Emily Thain, Irene Sunderland, Liz Hepplewhite, Pat Page, Doris Wilmot, Moira Osborne, Jean Carson, Pam Cooper

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