

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

LECTIONARY YEAR C

28 Nov 2021 - 2 Jan 2022



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Lectionary Year C (2021 - 2022)

Advent & Christmas

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| 1. First Sunday of Advent | 28 November 2021 | Signs of the end times – Rev Gavin |
| 2. Second Sunday of Advent | 5 December | John the Baptist prepares the way - Tony |
| 3. Third Sunday of Advent | 12 December | John proclaims the Good News - Yvonne |
| 4. Fourth Sunday of Advent | 19 December | Mary visits Elizabeth - Khanyiso |
| <i>Christmas Eve</i> | <i>24 December</i> | <i>The birth of Jesus - Lusi</i> |
| <i>Christmas</i> | <i>25 December</i> | <i>The Shepherds and the Angels - Thanbang</i> |
| 5. First Sunday after Christmas Day | 26 December | The boy Jesus in the temple – Rev Kamogelo |
| <i>New Year's Day</i> | <i>1 January 2022</i> | <i>The sheep and the goats - Keagile</i> |
| 6. Second Sunday after Christmas Day | 2 January | The word became flesh - Nangamso |

Epiphany (6 Jan – 27 Feb)

Ash Wednesday (2 March)

Lent (6 March -10 April) & *Holy Week* (11 April to 16 April)

Easter (17 April – 5 June: *Pentecost*)

Season after Pentecost (12 June: *Trinity Sunday* to Advent)

Topic or Bible book-based devotions





First Sunday of Advent 28 November 2021



First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Jeremiah 33:14-16	Psalm 25:1-10	I Thessalonians 3:9-13	Luke 21:25-36

Worship song: *Every Breath* – Hillsong - <https://youtu.be/3czt08B6EwA>

Gospel Reading: Luke 21:25-36 – Signs of the end times

²⁵ 'There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.' ²⁹ He told them this parable: 'Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁴ Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.'

Reflection: *By Rev Gavin Landers*

Advent always proclaims a Jesus difference to reality. The Jesus difference means that there is a whole new world for us to get our minds and hearts and hands and feet and speech and lives around. Luke 21:25-28 demonstrates this well. An initial read of this passage may result in a sense of despair caused by this end times vision (v25-26,34). However, even though Jesus speaks about these realities at the time of the coming of the Son of Man as a final event, note that He moves on to speak of other realities. Seeing and hearing both the despair of the world as well as the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus tells us to stand firm, hold our heads high because our liberation is near at hand. Do you hear the hope offered in this message? We don't have to faint in the presence of all the despair of the world, but we can stand straight and welcome the Lord with outstretched arms because our liberation is in the midst of these things.

To live by hope in Jesus is to have a confident expectation in God; that God is up ahead in the future not just waiting for us to reach him but moving towards us. By faith we attach our lives to the unseen but spiritually real Jesus Christ in our present, but by hope we live our lives today in expectation that the day is coming when we will see Jesus Christ fully and clearly. In faith we bind ourselves to our Saviour through the struggles of life in a world in revolt; in hope, we live our lives confident that the King of kings will return in victory and power.

Peter puts it like this, God "has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... God raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope is in Christ" (I Pet 1:3,21). As Christians we face life and death with a distinctive hope that even in the darkest hours, when all things seem to actively work against all hope... that that darkness marks only the dawn of a new and joyous morning.

Our hope is placed not in science, technology, evolution, progress, human nature, the nation or anything else... our hope is placed in God. This hope in God relativises this world and the present history. In I Pet 1:13 we are told to set our hope fully on the grace to be given us when Jesus Christ is revealed. Such a hope in God leads to freedom – it frees us from the present by binding us to the End.

While Christian hope relativises the present, it gives value to that relativity. Those who dream of a better future are not those who hate what is now, but who love the present enough to seek its transformation.

Has the reality of Jesus caused a hope filled perspective for the world? Has your life been reworked around the Jesus difference of hope? Do you see a world with hope because of Jesus or do you see the world how others who don't know Jesus see it? Have you the eyes of Jesus for you to see yourself and the world as He sees it?



MONDAY, November 29, 2021: Psalm 90; Numbers 17:1-11; 2 Peter 3:1-18

Memory Verse: "beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17-18).

Prayer: O Lord, have compassion on us, show your mercy that we may rejoice and be glad. **Amen.**

TUESDAY, November 30, 2021: Psalm 90; 2 Samuel 7:18-29; Revelation 22:12-16

Memory Verse: "be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight" (II Sam 7:29)

Prayer: Dear Lord, have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as we have been afflicted. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, December 1, 2021: Psalm 90; Isaiah 1:24-31; Luke 11:29-32

Memory Verse: "I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities." (Is 1:25)

Prayer: Lord, before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, you were. May we like all creation rest in you as our dwelling place. **Amen.**

THURSDAY, December 2, 2021: Luke 1:68-79; Malachi 3:5-12; Philippians 1:12-18a

Memory Verse: "all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land." (Malachi 3:12)

Prayer: Praise to you Lord, because you have shown mercy and redeemed us. **Amen**

FRIDAY, December 3, 2021: Luke 1:68-79; Malachi 3:13-18; Philippians 1:18b-26

Memory Verse: "Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance." (Phil 1:18-19).

Prayer: Lord, help us to live without fear in holiness and righteousness. **Amen.**

SATURDAY, December 4, 2021: Luke 1:68-79; Malachi 4:1-6; Luke 9:1-6

Memory Verse: "But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays." (Malachi 4:2).

Prayer: Jesus, save us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. **Amen**




Second Sunday of Advent 5 December 2021

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Malachi 3:1-4	Luke 1:68-79	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6

Worship song: Sing we the King who is coming to reign. MHB 116 <https://youtu.be/mva0xZkDlCY>

Gospel Reading: Luke 3:1-6 – John the Baptist prepares the way

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – ² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ⁵ Every valley shall be

filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.⁶ And all people will see God's salvation."

Reflection: *by Tony Matthee*

It would seem to the Israelites that the heavens were closed. No prophets had spoken to the Israelites for 400 years. They heard nothing from God. Then after this very long time we hear of angels speaking to individuals and in this case "The word of God came to John". This was in response to a prophesy made by Isaiah about 700 BC and by Malachi about 430 BC.

What is of great interest in the call of John the Baptist was that the people came to him. He didn't go to places where all the people were to preach, such as Jerusalem and other cities. He was in the wilderness, and it was here that he fulfilled his ministry. He was a Nazirite which meant that no razor touched his head and that he was set apart from birth to do God's will. He wore odd clothes and ate strange food and preached an unusual message. He was bold and fearless. He spoke truth to power. The Sadducees and Pharisees came out to see for themselves what John was doing, and he called them vipers! Now Satan had appeared to Eve in the Garden of Eden as a snake and here was John calling the religious order of his day snakes!!

But his message was poignant: Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand. After 400 years of silence this was exciting, invigorating and shattering news. He must have been an extremely powerful speaker because he was so successful in his ministry which was only about 6 months long. People from all over came to him and repented of their sins. However, what followed was even more interesting – he baptised them. The only baptism a Jew knew was when a non-Jew converted to Judaism. The people that came to John were Jews and they subjected themselves to baptism – a totally foreign concept to them.

The advent season is one of preparing for the coming Messiah. Jesus has already come and lived among us. So, our advent season could well be the second coming of Jesus. If we were sure that Jesus would come again this Christmas, how would you prepare? I think the expression, "Get your house in order" would be appropriate. To do this, heeding John's message would be very relevant. Repent!

Some of us may think that we don't need to repent. Unfortunately, the Bible tells us "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3: 23). We live in a world contaminated by sin, and we get tainted by sin. Because of this we can regard ourselves as "Sinners saved by Grace". We need to ask for forgiveness often. That's why confession should always be a part of our prayers in Church. That's why Jesus taught us to say, "Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass against us." Repentance involves doing 180-degree turn; going in the opposite direction to the one we were on. We ask God to forgive us for the sins we have committed, with the intent of not wanting to repeat those sins again. He does forgive us, and it is as if we had never sinned. We may still have to face the consequences of what we have done, but in the eyes of God we have a clean slate. Wouldn't that be the ideal state in which to greet our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ this Christmas?



DAILY DEVOTION

MONDAY, December 6, 2021: [Psalm 126; Isaiah 40:1-11; Romans 8:22-25](#)

Memory Verse: "And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it." Isa. 40: 5

Prayer: O Lord, may the real message of Christmas be revealed this Christmas and may it be seen and experienced by all. **Amen.**

TUESDAY, December 7, 2021: [Psalm 126; Isaiah 19:18-25; 2 Peter 1:2-15](#)

Memory Verse: "Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure." 2 Pet. 1: 10

Prayer: Gracious God, by your Holy Spirit in me, reveal your will for me and my life. I seek to be a clean vessel, fit for the master's use. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, December 8, 2021: [Psalm 126; Isaiah 35:3-7; Luke 7:18-30](#)

Memory Verse: "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy." Psa. 126: 5

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we believe that our night of turmoil and hardship will end. Please give us the strength and patience to hold fast to all your promises so that we too may sing songs of joy when the morning comes. **Amen.**

THURSDAY, December 9, 2021: [Isaiah 12:2-6](#); [Amos 6:1-8](#); [2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

Memory Verse: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." 2 Cor. 8: 9

Prayer: O God. Thank you for your grace operating in our lives which has made us rich with all the blessings you have bestowed on us. Your presence with us in our lives is our greatest treasure. **Amen**

FRIDAY, December 10, 2021: [Isaiah 12:2-6](#); [Amos 8:4-12](#); [2 Corinthians 9:1-15](#)

Memory Verse: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Cor. 9: 6

Prayer: Almighty God, your great love for us overwhelms us. We are so grateful and pray that we will not withhold any of our love to our neighbour. **Amen**

SATURDAY, December 11, 2021: [Isaiah 12:2-6](#); [Amos 9:8-15](#); [Luke 1:57-66](#)

Memory Verse: "Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world." Isa. 12: 5

Prayer: Dear Lord. Thank you for the many, many things you have done in my life – all the blessings, all the promises you give, all the strength and comfort you provide. Let me not be ashamed to sing your praises to the whole world. **Amen**



Third Sunday of Advent 12 December 2021



First reading	Psalms	Second reading	Gospel
Zephaniah 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18

Worship song: *Holy Spirit Rain down* https://youtu.be/d-SI_HRWooA

Gospel Reading: Luke 3:7-18 - John proclaims the Good News

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.' ¹⁰ 'What should we do then?' the crowd asked. ¹¹ John answered, 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.' ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptised. 'Teacher,' they asked, 'what should we do?' ¹³ 'Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them. ¹⁴ Then some soldiers asked him, 'And what should we do?' He replied, 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.' ¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, 'I baptise you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

Reflection: *by Yvonne Roberg*

John proclaimed the incredibly good news that Jesus would baptise believers with the Holy Spirit. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he tells his disciples in John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you". Jesus adds in John 14:16: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever" - (AMP).

The Holy Spirit is “another Helper” just like Jesus. Once we through faith accept Jesus as our personal savior we are baptised with the Holy Spirit. Zephaniah 3:14 calls for us to worship God and rejoice with all our hearts because the “King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst” (v.15). As we prepare for Christmas what a blessing Christ’s birth brings- not only salvation for our souls unto eternity but the very essence and presence of God the Holy Spirit, ever present and in our midst as a friend, a comforter, a counselor, our strengthener, our advocate.

John 20:22 notes: “And with that he (Jesus) breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’”. My invitation today- the third Sunday of Advent is to remind you that Christ’s gift of the Holy Spirit, is as present to us today as believers as it was to his disciples! “Receive the Holy Spirit”! Be forever blessed by his presence and friendship.



MONDAY, December 13, 2021: [Isaiah 11:1-9](#); [Numbers 16:1-19](#); [Hebrews 13:7-17](#)

Memory Verse: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” Hebrews 3:8

Prayer: Jesus, thank you my Lord and savior for your unchanging goodness and faithfulness to me. I worship you and rejoice in your birth this Christmas. Thank you for the wonderful gift of your life for us. **Amen**

TUESDAY, December 14, 2021: [Isaiah 11:1-9](#); [Numbers 16:20-35](#); [Acts 28:23-31](#)

Memory Verse: “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it!” Acts 28:28

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for coming into this world to save me and reconcile me to Father God. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, December 15, 2021: [Isaiah 11:1-9](#); [Micah 4:8-13](#); [Luke 7:31-35](#)

Memory Verse: “But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.” Micah 4:12

Prayer: Father I confess that I do not know your thoughts and sometimes I fail to understand your plans for me. Help me to grow in wisdom and understanding through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

THURSDAY, December 16, 2021: [Psalm 80:1-7](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#); [Hebrews 10:10-18](#)

Memory Verse: “Restore us, O God of Hosts, cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.” Psalm 80:7

Prayer: Father I pray for your everlasting favor upon me and all my loved ones. **Amen**

FRIDAY, December 17, 2021: [Psalm 80:1-7](#); [Isaiah 42:10-18](#); [Hebrews 10:32-39](#)

Memory Verse: “For yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not tarry”. Hebrews 10:37

Prayer: Come, Jesus Come! **Amen**

SATURDAY, December 18, 2021: [Psalm 80:1-7](#); [Isaiah 66:7-11](#); [Luke 13:31-35](#)

Memory Verse: “And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” Luke 13:32

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for all your miracles that you performed whilst here on earth. Thank you that after your death you ascended to heaven, you were perfected, and you are seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus in my life I pray for the miracle of..... **Amen!**




**Fourth Sunday of
Advent
19 December 2021**

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Micah 5:2-5a	Psalm 80:1-7	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

Worship song: *Blessed, Blessed, Blessed (Elizabeth's Song)* <https://youtu.be/720SrvSgZEO>

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:39-45 – Mary visits Elizabeth

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!'

Reflection: *by Khanyiso Njwabule*

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth who is six months into her pregnancy, and we read in the text earlier that Elizabeth had been in isolation from other people for about 5 months while in her pregnancy (Luke 1:24-25 NIV). It seems that the disgrace of being barren until she was well into her old age had still been weighing heavily on her. But the mood and atmosphere changed in Elizabeth's home when Mary who was herself three month pregnant with Jesus entered and Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby leaped in her womb and she exclaimed blessings to Mary with a joyful voice of hope, rejuvenation and conviction.

Perhaps like Elizabeth we have been harboring the disgrace of not being able to provide for ourselves and families due to a job loss or illness or loss of a loved one over the last 18 months of isolation from each other due to the COVID-19 pandemic but one thing we can be sure of as believers is that the Lord visits us in our time of need for, He is an ever-present help (Psalm 46:1 NIV). When the Lord visits us, the life and career aspirations including the family and personal plans that were put on hold while we were in a state of disgrace, hopelessness and despair will leap back to life and we too will be filled with the holy spirit. The holy spirit that is in us gives us the assurance and confidence that the Lord is with us and as a result we will have this joy unspeakable that St. Peter talks about in 1 Peter 1:8b which will always give us the strength (Nehemiah 8:10b) to face the uncertain and unpredictable times we live-in in this new normal. The holy spirit gives us the joy of being in the presence with the Lord and it is an unspeakable joy because even when we try to explain to others how this life-giving spirit in us, is strengthening and empowering us through our trials and tribulations they cannot comprehend it because from the outside all they see is our disgrace and suffering.

It is significant that Elizabeth's baby (John the Baptist) leapt in the womb: he was proclaiming the good news of Christ, (the Son of God who has come to save us) even though Jesus was yet to be born. This encourages us to continue to praise and glorify the name of our Lord and Savior even when our difficult circumstances and sufferings may not appear to have changed for the better on the outside. In His time the Lord always fulfills His promises to those who believe. Therefore, it is important to remember that with Lord's visit we are filled with the Holy Spirit which gives a guarantee that we are the sons and daughters of Most High God (Romans 8:16-17), meaning that as we share in Christ's sufferings through His life on earth we also share in His glory.



MONDAY, December 20, 2021: [Psalm 113](#); [Genesis 25:19-28](#); [Colossians 1:15-20](#)

Memory Verse: "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Colossians 1:17

Prayer: Heavenly father, even though my life may appear to be in tatters right now, but you hold all things together through your Son Jesus Christ in us. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

TUESDAY, December 21, 2021: [Psalm 113](#); [Genesis 30:1-24](#); [Romans 8:18-30](#)

Memory Verse: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" Romans 8:18

Prayer: Lord, may you grant us the strength to persevere and be patient in trusting that your glory continues to be revealed in us as we overcome the present sufferings. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

WEDNESDAY, December 22, 2021: [Luke 1:46b-55](#); [Micah 4:1-5](#); [Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

Memory Verse: "But now you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the blood of Christ that has brought me near to you, for in you there is abundant and everlasting life. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

THURSDAY, December 23, 2021: [Luke 1:46b-55; Micah 4:6-8; 2 Peter 1:16-21](#)

Memory Verse: "His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation." Luke 1:50

Prayer: Lord, may we have a single-minded focus to rather fear you than men because you extend your generous mercies and impart your unlimited wisdom on those who fear you. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**



Christmas Eve 24 December 2021



First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Worship song: *Away in a manger* <https://youtu.be/WisMfuTZva0>

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:1-14 – The birth of Jesus

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

Reflection: *by Lusi Badi*

Luke 2:7 "and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, **because there was no guest room available for them**"

Joseph and Mary journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Mary delivers her son in the lowliest of conditions. During these time Caesar Augustus (the first Roman emperor and one of the most successful) reigned. He decreed that everyone should be taxed, and each had to go to their own cities. Isn't it interesting how God uses this secular activity for the fulfillment of His promises: His hand was fully at play. It is God that gave the couple Mary and Joseph a child, it was the same God that planted a need for people to go for census God was at work and HIS work included giving us a source of salvation his Son Jesus Christ.

Bethlehem was over-crowded, and Mary and Joseph could not to find a place to rest. The inns were full and the only shelter that they could find was a stable. This Jesus also becomes a reference that we go from poverty (circumstances of Jesus's birth) to the miracle of redemption.

Baby Jesus didn't have a place to call home: this was an affirmation of prophecy "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Luke 9:58. Jesus's is place was at the cross to save us from sin, Surely, we can find space for our God in our hearts during this very busy Christmas season. Or are we people with over-crowded hearts? As we receive Baby Jesus may we open our hearts and house Jesus. No matter that the world is showing us that there is no room for Jesus, let us welcome him in our lives and hearts.



FRIDAY, December 24, 2021:

Memory verse: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned”. Isaiah 9:2

Prayer: Gracious and loving Parent who has never given up on us, we are thankful for your constant love and gift of your Son Jesus Christ. We welcome your light in our lives, Bless us during our dark and unwelcoming times. **Amen**



Christmas Day 25 December 2021



First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Isaiah 62:6-12	Psalm 97	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

Worship song: Angels We Have Heard on High <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRHuETZuLEo>

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:8-20 – The Shepherds and Angels

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.’ ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Reflection: by Thabang January

The gospel of Luke is the first volume of a two-volume work which includes the Acts of the Apostles. Both the volumes are dedicated to a man named Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Luke says that his books were about ‘all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning’. It is important to note that Luke presents Jesus as both the promised Saviour of Israel and as the Saviour of the whole human race.

The passage we are reflecting on, records a wonderful thing that God made the first announcement of the birth of Jesus through some shepherds. William Barclay in his commentary on the gospel of Luke says that shepherds were despised by the orthodox good people of the day because they were unable to keep the details of the ceremonial laws; they could not observe all meticulous hand-washings and rules and regulations. So, we see God using ordinary simple men to deliver a message of hope and salvation to the world.

Temple sacrifices required an unblemished lamb for sacrifices to God, because of this fact, scholars of the bible conclude that it was likely that the shepherds were charged with the responsibility by the authorities to take care the flocks from which the temple offering flock was chosen from. We also noted that the flocks were pastured near Bethlehem.

It is interesting to note that the shepherds who were taking care of the Temple lambs were the first ones to see the Lamb of God that take away the sin of the world. As the angels said in verse 10 “Do not be afraid, I bring you good

news that will bring joy for all the people". So, friends the news from the angels and shepherds are good news for us all, that will bring eternal joy.

May the news from the shepherds and angels remain in your heart and through them: may your joy be renewed, may your faith be renewed, may your heart be strangely warmed. Love, Peace & Grace!



SATURDAY, December 25, 2021:

Memory Verse: "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5

Prayer: Loving Gracious God, thank you for saving us from the bondage of sin and condemnation through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May we experience life in its fullness through Jesus Christ. **Amen**



**First Sunday after Christmas Day
26 December 2021**



First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
I Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Psalm 148	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52

Worship song: Hymns Medley "Amazing Grace / Be Thou My Vision / Come Thou Fount - Anthem Lights"

<https://youtu.be/oUHcofVltLo>

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:41-52 – The boy Jesus at the temple

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' ⁴⁹ 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Reflection: *by Rev Kamogelo Monoametsi*

There are very few incidents in scripture where authors of synoptic gospels explicitly share the various areas of interest pertaining Jesus's youthfulness, participation in activities as a young boy, playing with other young boys and being naughty like dare I say it many of us. That side of Jesus is often hidden in scripture, and if it does appear, we do not get to hear coherent details. History narrates stories from other traditions where young influential boys tell more about their youthfulness, and how they were formed into great teachers and leaders. Josephus's egotistic description of his cleverness as a youth has been cited as a remote analogy in Jewish literature to Luke's story "While still a young boy, about fourteen years old, I won universal applause for my love of letters, insomuch that the chief priests and the leading men of the city used constantly to come to me for precise information on some particular in our ordinances". On the one hand another reference is made to a twelve-year-old grandson of Rmases II "The boy grew and became strong...He surpassed the scribe who had to instruct him. The boy began to talk to the scribes in the school (in the temple of path, all who heard him) were much amazed" (Eric Klosterman Jewish source).

Formation is one of the indispensable processes in our lives, particularly that no one is an island. Human beings are part of a community and products of societies with different cultural nuances and norms. Jesus allowed himself to be shaped by the culture of the temple, the teachings that were manifested in the temple, the community identity of the temple, the customs and traditions of the temple. It is worth noting that human values, principles and human standards are taught and caught, inculcated and drilled in people's lives. It is incumbent upon parents to ensure that our children are taught proper Christian values, norms, standards, principles and way of life to ensure that their characters are properly shaped and formed.

Talmudic traditions assert that even boys at tender years were required to make their appearance in the temple at festivals. It was understood as process of growing their interpersonal skills, socialization but most importantly exposure into the cultural practices and acclimatisation with Jewish customs. Jesus was not exempted from these practices, like any Jewish boy he was expected to attend. As a result, his parents allowed a measure of independence. This passage challenges parents in our time to rediscover one of the lost practices of bringing children to church, to Sunday school, to be offered Christian education and spiritual formation. This is how many people learned Ten Commandments, biblical stories, and a life of a Christian. In today's world temples, church's synagogues, chapels are replaced by Shopping Malls and other social activities. Where will children learn moral behavior, ethical standard and living? How will they know that life is not worth living without Jesus? Like the boy Jesus let us allow children to exercise their instinctive intuition of the spirit and attitude of winsome respect for those who are believed to be interpreters of the truth of God, preachers, youth pastors, and the community of faith. This is a clarion call to rediscover lost life-giving traditions and practices.



MONDAY, December 27, 2021: [Psalm 148](#); [Proverbs 8:32-36](#); [John 21:19b-24](#)

Memory Verse: *"For those who find me find life and receive favour from the Lord. But those who fail to find me harm themselves all who hate me love death."* Proverbs 8: 35-36

Prayer: Christ, giver of life and sustainer of our being, bestow upon us your spirit to awaken in us the reality of our need for your presence in our lives. Forgive us when we reject you. **Amen**

TUESDAY, December 28, 2021: [Psalm 148](#); [Isaiah 54:1-13](#); [Revelation 21:1-7](#)

Memory Verse: *"Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood."* Isaiah 54:4

Prayer: Loving and gracious Lord, Master and King of our lives you came down to earth to show the way. Although we rejected you, you became patient with us. Save us from the shamefulfulness of our ignorance and blindness. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, December 29, 2021: [Psalm 147:12-20](#); [1 Chronicles 28:1-10](#); [1 Corinthians 3:10-17](#)

Memory Verse: *"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"* 1 Corinthians 3: 16

Prayer: Almighty God creator of heaven and earth you breathed in us your spirit of life. We became the dwelling place of holiness, peace, love, grace and compassion. Forgive us lord for participating in self destructive patterns. **Amen**

THURSDAY, December 30, 2021: [Psalm 147:12-20](#); [2 Chronicles 1:7-13](#); [Mark 13:32-37](#)

Memory Verse: *"Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, possessions or honour, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you."* 2 Chronicles 1: 11-12

Prayer: God of all wisdom and knowledge endue on us your sacredness from which we will acquire wisdom and Christ centered knowledge. We have been trapped in our self-centeredness and egocentric attitudes. **Amen**

FRIDAY, December 31, 2021: [Psalm 147:12-20](#); [1 Kings 3:5-14](#); [John 8:12-19](#)

Memory Verse: *"I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."* John 8: 18

Prayer: God of all creation, our loving parent and caregiver we pray unto you to reconcile us to you so that we can be your witnesses in this world. Bless us with courage to be your witnesses in the time of greater apostasy and crisis of faith. **Amen**



New Year's Day
1 January 2022



First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Psalm 8	Revelation 21:1-6a	Matthew 25:31-46

Worship song: *Lean on Me* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALTi-Ow4rwM>

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:31-46 – The sheep and the goats

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?” ⁴⁰ The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” ⁴¹ Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me.” ⁴⁴ They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison, and did not help you?” ⁴⁵ He will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” ⁴⁶ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’

Reflection: *by Keagile Moloabi*

In this gospel of Matthew, we come across Jesus talking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives and telling them of His second coming. Here He paints a picture of a King in His glory, surrounded by His angels and sitting on His glorious throne. On this day He will not be that meek and silent lamb that was mocked, sworn at, spat on and hit and just kept quiet when persecuted and then crucified.

Jesus says, *“He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”* He will be separating the righteous from the unrighteous, the good from the bad, which should tell us brethren that even though we may seem like we’re the same, part of one flock, one congregation, one church, we are not! Matthew 22: 14 says; *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

It is the beginning of a New Year, a new journey, and a new chapter in our lives. It is a time for reflection and introspection as you prepare yourself to embark on a new walk with Christ in 2022, you need to determine whether you want to be a sheep or goat, you need to think about what kind of Christian you would like to be.

In 2022 we are called to be a Caring, Compassionate, Gentle, Kind and Loving community of Christ. We are called to remember what Jesus said is the second biggest commandment in Matthew 22: 39; *“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* We are being called to be a community of Christ with faith that has deeds, for as James 2:14-26 says, *“faith without deeds is dead.”*

Let us therefore my brothers and Sisters in Christ, in 2022, strive to make a difference in other people’s lives, to take an active part in being there for and supporting each other, carrying each other’s loads and most importantly,

Praying for each other. Let us strive to be those who Jesus says are “blessed by my Father”, so we can take our inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for us since the creation of the world. **Happy New Year!!!**

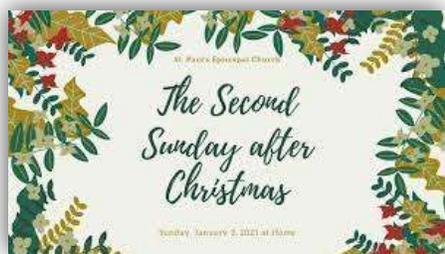


SATURDAY, January 1, 2022:

Memory Verse: “I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives” Ecclesiastes 3: 12

Prayer: Father God, thank you for your words that seek to bring us closer to and into a meaningful walk with You. Let us always remember the Love you showed us through your

Son Jesus Christ, and not be selfish but extend that love to others. The psalmist asks; “What is man that You are so mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honour.” Dear God, let us also be mindful of each other, help and guide us to always remember the glory and honour you crowned each and every one of us with and treat each other with respect, gentleness, compassion and Love. In 2022 let us be true and good ambassadors of your Kingdom here on earth and always do what is good and pleasing to you. In Jesus’ Mighty Name, **Amen.**



**Second Sunday after Christmas Day
2 January 2022**

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalm 147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Worship songs: Your Word <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9NEYy71lcU> & Lizwi Linamandla https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lejPZDj_18

Gospel Reading: John 1:10-18 - The word became flesh

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, ‘This is the one I spoke about when I said, “He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.”’) ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Reflection: by Nangamso Mankai

John’s writings are different to the other Gospels. John writes in a way that would seem to suggest that he wants to remind us that Jesus existed in the spirit even before He was born. The book of John starts with the words “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God”. Unlike the other 3 Gospels which seem to want to share a little about Jesus’ physical traits or genealogy, John focuses on the spiritual side of who Jesus is. John’s focus is on the signs and works of Jesus’ ministry.

John speaks of the character of God but with his main focus is mainly on “Grace”. Grace is offered as a free and undeserved gift by God to His people. You see we don’t need to do anything to earn God’s grace, all we need to choose to be is “His people”. In order to understand how we choose to be God’s people; I would like us to fixate our meditation on verse 14 “The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us”. God brought Jesus into the world so that He could reflect God in such a way that we could relate to how God wanted us to live the Word. You see it is one thing to recite Scripture, that is not what God wants: He wants the Word to be flesh and to live within us. This reminds me of the words in the book of James wherein he says, “Faith without works is dead”.

The Word is God's manuscript for us to live by in order to access His grace. I came across an interesting explanation of "Logos", the Greek equivalent of "Word". This particular definition described "Logos" as "divine wisdom". It went further to say that this wisdom would manifest in the creation, government and redemption of the world. Looking at all the social ills, we see in our world, I could not help but feel that clearly the world was operating from anything but "divine wisdom". Could it be that we are seeing all the ills we see in our world because we have not "allowed the Word to become flesh and dwell in us"?

Could it be that as the body of Christ we are struggling to draw people to God like Jesus did with the Samaritan woman because we have not "allowed the Word to become flesh and dwell in us"? Could it be that as Christians we are so easily shaken by various things in the world and that perhaps our spiritual foundations are not strong enough to withstand evil because we have not "allowed the Word to become flesh and dwell in us"?

Jesus was able to do a plethora of "miracles" and could be empathic to all of God's people because the Word dwelt in Him. As we start the year, challenge yourself. If John had to write about your life, would he be able to say that "the Word became flesh and dwelt in you"? Would you epitomise the Word? Be blessed.



DAILY DEVOTION

MONDAY, January 3, 2022: [Psalm 72](#); [Job 42:10-17](#); [Luke 8:16-21](#)

Memory Verse: "And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends" Job 42:10

Prayer: Holy Spirit, create a selflessness in us and cause us to have empathy on others, especially the poor. **Amen**

TUESDAY, January 4, 2022: [Psalm 72](#); [Isaiah 6:1-5](#); [Acts 7:44-53](#)

Memory Verse: "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." Isaiah 6:5

Prayer: Holy Spirit, reveal to us our sinful ways so that we may repent and experience your greatness. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, January 5, 2022: [Psalm 72](#); [Jeremiah 31:7-14](#); [John 1:10-18](#)

Memory Verse: "And the Word became flesh" John 1:14

Prayer: Holy Spirit, we pray that your Word may dwell in us and be engrained in who we are. **Amen**

Epiphany of the Lord NEXT: New Devotions Series