

**PARISH NEWSLETTER & HOME WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

*Dear Parishioners,*

What a joy it was to have the Nambucca District Band entertain many of the Holy Trinity congregation, and some visitors, with Christmas Carols last Sunday. And so good to be able to sing the carols a little.

A further blessing and delight for myself and Sue Noble this last week was to be able to present a short concert of Carols and the Christmas story to many pupils from the Macksville Public School SRE classes on Tuesday. We were able to do this despite COVID-19 preventing us from having SRE classes during most of 2020.

Traditional Christmas carols are a way of expressing what otherwise is a great mystery to us through doxology – a liturgical praise of God. At this time of year, we join the ‘multitude of the heavenly host’ singing “glory to God in the Highest”. Glorifying God is the point of proclamation and the basis of Christian spirituality.



Mary resorted to doxology as she rejoiced after her visit to Elizabeth. She understands that her child will play a key role in God’s redemption. Pauls ends his letter to the

Romans with a summary of salvation history and doxology. I look forward to Lesle’s homily in Holy Trinity this Sunday and trust that equally uplifting homilies/reflections will be spoken in St Johns and St James’.

Today is the beginning of a historic period in the life of the Anglican Parish in our Valley. This weekly message is the last that I write as Rector of the Parish of Macksville. On 31 December, the Anglican Parish of Macksville and the Anglican Parish of Nambucca Heads will cease to exist. On 1 January 2021, the Anglican Parish of Nambucca Valley will come into being.

An Interim Parish Council consisting of the current Wardens and Treasurers from both parishes will administer the new Parish until the AGM scheduled for 21 February 2021.

We are in a good position administratively for the amalgamation of the two parishes and I expect the transition to go relatively smoothly. Undoubtedly, there will be issues to resolve as we then commence setting up the new model of ministry (Model 1) and in implementing change throughout all worship centres. Nevertheless, along with Mary and Paul, and those faithful parishioners who worshipped in this Valley before us, we can look to the future with confidence and anticipation for what God has for the Anglican Church in the Nambucca Valley.

Most worshippers have now returned to Sunday or Wednesday worship in all of the Valley centres. I believe that the COVID-19 situation has eased to the point that we will be able to commence using a common pew sheet in all worship centres in 2021. Therefore, I anticipate that this will be the last of the Sunday Supplements emailed to Macksville parishioners.

I will still need to keep you well informed on the developments in establishing the new Parish and the new Model, so the pew sheet may contain much more information – like a newsletter. However, it will not contain home worship material.

We will continue, upon request, to email a copy of the pew sheet to parishioners who are unable to join with us on Sundays or Wednesday. We will also email home worship material upon request – however this may change from the form that each parish had during the COVID-19 restrictions. Please contact Sam or Jenny in the Parish office if you wish to receive this material.

After some leave, I will look forward to joining with you again on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as the first Rector of the Anglican Parish of Nambucca Valley. Meanwhile, our able team of LLMs will care for the Parish and Rev Ron Spindler will join us part time commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> January. While in the Parish Ron (and his wife Crystal when she is able to visit) will reside in the Nambucca Heads Rectory.

It is appropriate on our last Sunday service for 2020, and the last Sunday service for the Parishes of Macksville and Nambucca Heads that I end with the doxology that is the second reading for today:

Now to God who is able to establish you by (his) gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages, but now revealed, and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him — to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Rom 16:25-27, NIV)

I wish you a blessed and merry Christmas and a happy new year.

*Be encouraged, be blessed – God is at work in our Parish!*  
*Rev Clyde*



## Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the  
greatness of the Lord:  
my spirit rejoices in God my  
Saviour,

Who has looked with favour  
on his lowly servant:  
from this day all generations  
will call me blessed;

The Almighty has done great things for me:  
and holy is his name.

God has mercy on those who fear him:  
from generation to generation.

The Lord has shown strength with his arm:  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones:  
and lifting up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things:  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel:  
to remember the promise of mercy,

The promise made to our forebears:  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;  
as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

## Bible Reading

*Please take your bible and read:*

**Luke 1:26-38**



## Reflection on Luke 1:26-38 – Thanks Lesle Cropp

### Attitude of Discipleship: Trust

#### Key Verse:

*“Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word”*

Luke 1.38

#### Where have you placed your trust this morning?

Confidence that your car will get you to your destination safely?  
Trust that your family are all okay no matter how distant they are from you? Faith that the worship this morning will honour God and draw you into his love?

But would you “trust” the appearance of God's angelic messenger Gabriel with news of a world-changing request?

Over the four weeks of Advent, we have been exploring attitudes of disciples – hopefulness, preparedness, expectancy and today, we examine trust.

#### What does it mean to trust God as a faithful disciple?

Trust is a journey – a journey of faith.

Adopting a trusting demeanour is a direct pathway to God. In trust, those very human behaviours that undermine our dependence on God are deliberately buffeted away in favour of

greater faith-filled actions.

The Trust Journey is like coming out of darkness into the Light.

To counter fear, we are hopeful;

to balance boastful knowledge, we are prepared and repentant;

to apportion life experience, we remain expectant of God's grace;

to rely totally on God, we are trusting and obedient.

Before being able to confidently declare,

*“Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”* Luke 1.38

Mary traversed each of these steps in her encounter with God's messenger, Gabriel.

## **Fear**

Fear is Mary's initial response. She is greatly troubled by Gabriel's greeting. This encounter is a most uncommon occurrence and causes much trepidation within her. God acknowledged Mary's fear. He spoke her name and offered her reassurance through Gabriel's encouraging words,

*“Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God.”* (v30)

Fear can rise up within us also when we are confronted by the unfamiliar and seemingly impossible. Yet God knows us by name – he understands our fears and insecurities and pours his compassion over us.

## **Knowledge**

Knowledge then rules Mary's reaction to the news. Once God's will has been made known to Mary, she questions out of her knowledge of pregnancy and birth -

*“How will this be since I am a virgin?”* (v34)

Acknowledgement of *God's* all-knowing superiority will balance Mary's incredulity and prepare her for this amazing event.

At times, our understanding can limit rather than expand, the response we make to God's call and the trust we offer him. We can become boastful and blind to alternative perceptions and blinker our view of the way forward. God has the Creator's oversight, the Maker's mindset. The Trust Journey is progressed when we submit to his understandings.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3.5-6*

Then, trust will become a quiet certainty.

### **Life Experience**

Life experience enters next into Mary's Trust Journey as Gabriel shares the news of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Mary's relative is going to have a child in her old age and she was said to be barren. Life circumstances now tell Mary that these foretold events are actually happening. The two women became expectant and confident, trusting God's plan for their lives.

By focussing on God's faithfulness in the past, we too can face crises with confidence rather than with fear and disbelief. Trust involves giving God our future plans.

### **Finally,**

having been guided through these steps of the Trust Journey by Gabriel, and reassured that there is nothing impossible with God, Mary embraces the call, hands over her complete confidence and dependency on her Lord and arrives at the end destination of her Trust Journey – she wholeheartedly submits to the will of God.

We too can learn from the twists and turns in Mary's journey towards total trust in God. Whenever we are faced with a crisis or a difficult dilemma that threatens to overwhelm us or to cause us to turn away from Jesus, the steps that Mary took can encourage us.

Trust is a gift of God's Spirit. It swells within us as we increase our reliance upon God. It brings us a new perspective to life's problems and challenges. It is essential to our service in God's plan for the world.

At times, our trust in God is offered only up to a certain point. Then we go back to the worry spiral and the panic prayers of those who don't truly know God. We get to our wits' end, showing that we have not the slightest confidence in God and his authority over the world.

*Trust in God means oneness with God – not breaking away when a crisis arises; not relying on our own understanding but on God's provision and grace.*

Oswald Chambers p225

The Trust Journey involves patience and courage. We place our heartfelt confidence in God, standing firmly on the promises of God. Our journey's end is hopeful, humble anticipation.

Listen deeply to the trust that permeates Mary's prayer, as she says,

*“Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Luke 1.38*

### **Closing Prayer**

Come, Lord Jesus. Help us to make Mary's prayer our own so that we go out into your world with an enduring trust in your will for our lives.

**Amen**



## Collect

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.

### Prayers for 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – Thanks David Jones

Wisdom and word of God, you dwelt in the highest heavens, yet  
 you chose to make your resting place with the children of  
 humanity: we bring to you our prayers for your world and its  
 people.

throughout the ages you have delivered your people from  
 oppression: liberate today all who are in bondage and give voice to  
 the silenced peoples of the world, that all your people may be led  
 to freedom. Word of God, dwell in us, that we may grow into your  
 likeness.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Word of God, in the beginning with God, you chose us before time  
 to be your holy people: we bring to you our prayers for your  
 church.

We pray for the leaders of our church, Bishop Murray,  
 Archdeacon Tiffany, Rev'd Clyde and our LLM's as we go  
 through trying times as two parishes become one. Help us  
 overcome the many difficulties that we may face under the new  
 structure. Unite us today as brothers and sisters of one family, and  
 let love and harmony prevail, that by our lives we may better  
 proclaim your love to all the world.

Word of God, dwell in us, that we may grow into your likeness.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Word of God, in the beginning with God, through you all things were brought to life, we bring to you our prayers for all in special need of your live-giving presence.

You share the pains of your people and you come to turn sorrow to gladness: comfort and heal all who suffer, and strengthen those who minister to them, that we may find courage to embrace the future in trust and hope. Word of God, dwell in us, that we may grow into your likeness, Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We praise you for all your servants whose lives have honoured Christ. Encourage us by their example, so that we may run with perseverance the race that lies before us, and share with them the fullness of joy in your kingdom. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Christmas Service times:**

**10am Wed 23rd Dec Holy Communion @ St Johns,  
Nambucca Heads**

**5pm Christmas Eve @ All Saints Stuarts Point**

**11.30pm Midnight Mass, Holy Trinity Macksville**

**7pm Christmas Eve Holy Communion Bowraville  
Church Hall**

**8am Christmas Day Holy Communion St Johns,  
NHeads & St James, Bowraville**

**9.30am Christmas Day Holy Communion Holy  
Trinity Macksville**

**No Services 27th & 30th Dec.**



## OUR NEW SOCIALS

to be officially ready by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021

Follow us on Facebook to be kept up to date on information (if you were already following the Macksville Facebook, no need to do anything – I have just changed the details):

Anglican Parish of Nambucca Valley  
@anglicanparishofnambuccavalley

Macksville Anglican Op Shop  
@macksvilleanglicanopshop



🔍 Search Facebook

The Website is being upgraded as quickly as it can with the combining of both Parish's. Keep an eye out for all the information to be available on here also.

[www.nambuccavalleyanglicans.com](http://www.nambuccavalleyanglicans.com)