

The Glory of Christmas

Advent 2024

Sermon Series
and Bible Studies



KIAMA ANGLICAN CHURCHES

The Glory of Christmas

December 2024

Sundays in Advent will see us preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus as we consider ‘The Glory of Christmas.’

Sunday Service	Sermon Title	Main Bible Reading
1 Dec	The Glory of the <u>King</u>	Luke 1:26-38
8 Dec	The Glory of the <u>Saviour</u>	Matt 1:18-25
15 Dec	The Glory of the <u>Good News</u>	Luke 2:8-20
22 Dec	The Glory of the <u>Gift(s)</u>	Matt 2:1-12
Christmas Day	The Glory of <u>Christmas</u>	John 1:1-18
27 Dec	The Glory <u>to be Revealed</u>	Rom 8:17-25

Things to note...

Sunday 1st is the **Christmas Carnival**, with Carols from 5:00pm. There is NO 6:00pm Service on that day.

Sunday 22nd is a **Combined Service** in Christ Church at 9:30am. That will be the only service that day.

On **Christmas Eve** we will have the Christmas Story with Carols and a Sausage Sizzle from 5:00–6:00pm. Sausages will be served right on 5:00, so arrive anytime from 4:30pm for pre-Carols fellowship.

Christmas Day Services are:

- 8:00am – Christ Church
- 8:30am – St Paul’s, Minnamurra
- **9:00am** – Church Point Centre (not 10:00am)

The **final 6:00pm service** for 2024 will be Sunday, 15th December, and services will resume on Sunday 12th January 2025.

What is Advent?

Advent is the lead up to Christmas, beginning four Sundays before Christmas and concluding on Christmas Eve. The word 'advent' comes from a Latin word meaning *coming* or *arrival*.

Traditionally Advent is a time for Christians to prepare to celebrate the advent (that is the *arrival*) of Jesus into this world in his birth in Bethlehem. During Advent we prepare for the celebrations of Christmas.

It is also a time to engage in self-examination and reflection as we await his second advent, his second *coming*, when he returns with the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the arch angel.

Advent can be a busy time with end of the year things, and with cards and presents and food and holidays to organise. Even as Christians we can get distracted from the 'reason for the season.' Take time this Advent to keep Jesus in the centre.

Three Advent Studies

As most groups will be concluding early in December these Advent Studies *do not* follow the sermon series.

Rather there are two studies which look at the accounts of the birth of Jesus in Luke and Matthew. The third study looks at a number of other passages. With the exception of the final in the series the 29th of December, these studies do cover the preaching passages, just in a different way.

Depending on your group's plans for December, you may just wish to use one or two of the studies or just bits and pieces from them.

Alternatively (or additionally) they could form part of your personal Advent reflections.

Study	Topic	Page
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Study 1 - Luke's Account of Christmas

Read Luke 1:26-38 – **The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

1. What do you learn about Jesus from Gabriel's description of the son that would be born? (1:31-33)
2. Why is the miraculous nature of Jesus' conception important? (1:34-35)
3. How does Mary's response in 1:38 challenge you?

Read Luke 1:39-56 – **Mary's Song**

4. Mary's Song warrants much study and meditation. At a time when we easily spend much on ourselves and our loved ones, how do verses 51 and 52 challenge you?
5. This Christmas, how can your soul glorify the Lord and your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour? (1:46-47)

Read Luke 2:1-20 – **The Birth of Jesus**

6. What were the three parts of the shepherd's response to the good news of great joy? (See 2:13-18, 20.) Have you, and are you, responding in a similar way?

7. We read that, Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart (2:19). How can that be part of your response?
Ponder again the wonder that a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord!

Read Luke 2:21-40 – **Jesus Presented in the Temple**

8. It wasn't just a grandfatherly instinct that drew Simeon to this baby at the temple, it was spiritual discernment. How does he describe Jesus? (2:29-35)

In closing, reflect on Luke's account of Christmas, giving thanks to God for the good news of great joy. If there were things that stood out or struck you freshly, turn those to prayer too.

Study 2 - Matthew's Account of Christmas

Read Matthew 1:18-25 - **Joseph Accepts Jesus as his Son**

1. What do you learn about Jesus from what is said...
 - by the angel? (1:20-21)
 - by the prophet? (1:22-23)
2. How does the way Joseph handled the situation challenge you?
 - initially in 1:19
 - after the dream in 1:24-25

Read Matthew 2:1-12 – **The Magi Visit the Messiah**

The magi, or 'wise men' are generally thought to be astrologer-priests from Persia.

3. When compared with the shepherds that Luke tells us about, how are the magi different?

What does this tell us about Jesus' mission?

4. Look at the responses of the Magi to the sighting of the star and then on their journey. (See 2:11-2, 9-12.) Is there anything in their response that you relate to? In what ways should our responses be similar or different?

Read Matthew 2:13-23 – **The Escape to Egypt and Return**

5. The angel in Luke 2 declares, ‘Peace on Earth.’ What do you make of the events of this section in Matthew 2? What do we learn about Jesus?

6. What might this mean for those who are followers of Jesus? See Luke 12:49-53 and John 15:18-23.

Optional Extra – **Fulfilment of Prophecy**

7. Go back through Matthew’s account and look at the five times that he refers to the fulfilment of prophecy. Why do you think Matthew emphasises this?

8. Have a look at the prophecies in their original setting. The footnotes in your Bible will give you the Old Testament passages quoted by Matthew so you can do this. For one of them, however, there isn’t a reference given. What’s going on with that?

In closing, reflect on Matthew’s account of Christmas, giving thanks to God for the coming of the King of the Jews who was also worshipped by Gentiles. Give thanks that by the end of his gospel, Matthew records Jesus commissioning his disciples to go to all nations!

If there were things that stood out or struck you freshly, turn those to prayer too.

Study 3 - Other Passages for Reflection

This study picks up a number of passages that are helpful to reflect on in the season of Advent.

a. John's Prologue (John 1:1-18)

John does not have an infancy narrative like Matthew and Luke, but his prologue is profound in the depth of the truth it conveys.

Read John 1:1-18 – The Word became Flesh

1. Why does John call Jesus 'the Word'? (1:1, 14)
2. What do we learn about Jesus in verses 1 to 5?
3. What were the two responses to Jesus? (1:9-13)
4. What does it mean to receive Jesus? (1:12)
What are the results of receiving Jesus? (1:12-13)
5. What aspects of God's character are particularly revealed in Jesus? (1:14-18)
6. Meditate on verse 14, giving thanks to God for his grace and truth revealed in and made available through Jesus.

b. God sent his Son... (Galatians 4:4)

Read Galatians 4:1-7

7. When did God send his Son? (4:4)

8. Why did God send his Son? (4:5)

c. John the Baptist's Witness (John 1)

Read John 1:6-7, 15, 19-28, 29-34

9. What do you learn about Jesus from what John says about him?

d. Paul's One-Liners (2 Corinthians 8-9)

In a section talking about financial giving, Paul throws in a couple of profound statements.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9

10. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:15

11. What gift is Paul talking about? How does it come to us? (See also Romans 5:15-17)

In closing, reflect on these passages and following Paul's lead in 2 Corinthians 9:15, give thanks to God for his indescribable gift! Give thanks for the wonder of the incarnation and all that it means for us.

If there were things that stood out or struck you freshly, turn those to prayer too.

