



Southside Worship Online

www.ssuc.org.au

20 December 2020

with Rev. Jock Dunbar



Advent 4: HOPE for God's New World

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Luke 1:52-53

Gathering with God

The young woman is with child, and shall bear a son

and shall name him Immanuel.

[Isaiah 7:14b](#)

which means 'God is with us'.

[Matthew 1:23c](#)

Turning towards each other
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.

Song

Shout to the Lord

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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.

Preparing for worship...

Before you watch the online service, or work through this liturgy provided, spend a few minutes to settle yourself into a comfortable space. Close your eyes. Slow your breathing. Become aware of what you can feel in and around your body – what you can hear, or feel, or smell. You may like to light a candle to help centre your thoughts toward the love and presence of the living God. There is no expectation other than to become present to The Presence.

Families with children are encouraged to use family faith materials Ps Richard Moors has made available.

<https://ssuc.org.au/ministries/children-youth-and-families>

Bible Reading

Luke 1:46-55

Homily

The image of Mary receiving this word/Word from God through the angel a few verses earlier sets up her song in the passage today. She offers us a unique insight into discipleship from a feminine perspective. Her example is one to honour and esteem, a deep contrast with that of Peter or James and John. Her willingness to say 'yes' ('Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word') is followed by willingness to praise and prophesy of God's goodness and faithful promises.

Within this song, Mary looks to the future of what God will do but using words that present God's promises as past action.

Re-read the passage from Luke 1:46-55 and notice the repetition of 'He has'.

God will do because God has done. God will do in the future, just as God has done in the past.

This assurance is inspired by God's present action in Mary's life (and in the life of her cousin, Elizabeth – see Luke 1:5-25, and vv39-44).

As we look with hope to God's world that God is bringing into existence (that is, God's kingdom), what can you look back on in your life where God has acted, or you felt God had acted, on your behalf? Have you experienced the presence and life of God 'intervening' in your life in some way? Have you had any God-moments?

God-moments can sometimes be easily forgotten in the ocean of life's concerns and worries. Record them. Put them in an easily found place to remind yourself of God's goodness.

We all need hope for the future. Sometimes we can find it as we look back and remember that the God who will be with us was the One who has always been with us. God will see us into God's preferred and promised future. Let us walk with God into that future, with a renewed sense of hope. Amen.



What is God waiting for
you to say 'yes' to?

Offering

We are a gift of God given for God's glory and the good of the world; we offer ourselves and what we have to share with and for others.

Prayers of Intercession

Prayer concerns can be shared with the congregation by emailing to prayer@ssuc.org.au or ringing the church office on 3848 0793.

We pray today for those who feel far from themselves and others. We pray that this Advent season might, in the midst of demand, provide soft nights and ease, so that people can return to themselves, knowing you, too, are always in the heart, and always wait for us with kindness.

We ask this, in the name of all that is good.

We remember today all who have not given their consent, but whose lives and bodies and integrity are taken for granted. For them, we pray for justice, reparation and truth.

We ask this, in the name of all that is good.

Today we remember that God surprised us by coming among us through the 'Yes' of Mary. Let us always be open to the surprise of finding God in unexpected places.

**We ask this, in the name of all that is good.
Amen.**

Song

Tell out my soul

A Sending Out Prayer

God of surprises,
you chose Mary as the ark of your covenant with us.

And with her 'Yes',
you entered the world of body and blood.

Nurtured by your body and blood,

we go out,

to look for surprise

and wonder

all around us.

Amen.