

- ST PAUL'S LADY CHAPEL -



unexpected

NOT THE KING WE THOUGHT YOU'D BE

A journey Through Advent



Welcome

As we journey towards Advent as a church whānau, we're considering the unexpected nature of Christ's arrival, life, and reign. We're dwelling in the mystery and beauty of the incarnation. Jesus is coming to make his home among us; humble, unassuming, ushering in an upside-down kingdom.

He's not the King we thought he'd be.

We invite you to enter this sacred place of prayer, devotion, reflection, and intercession, drawing aside to slow down and be present to the unfolding of Advent. To anticipate Christ's arrival, suspend your expectations of this familiar story, and take a closer look. The stained-glass windows, statue, and architecture of this space remind us of the way Mary brings Jesus into the world, and of intimate relationship with him.

As you linger here, feel free to engage with the stations as you are led, and use this booklet as a guide as you do. You may choose to engage with all of them, or none of them. Take a moment to still your spirit, to gather your scattered senses, and enter this space with your whole self, remaining open to how God may want to meet with you this Advent season.

Christ isn't the King we thought he'd be. But he is the King we need.

If you need assistance for any reason, feel free to call +64 9 373 3268



prayer Wall

Laid on the floor below the three stained-glass windows to the left, you will find paper and pens. This is a space to offer written prayers, or to take note of what you feel the Spirit is saying. This could be in drawings, colours, or writing, and is a beautiful way to creatively capture this season of Advent prayer in our church whānau.

Pinned on the corkboards against the wall, you will find a series of Scriptures that speak to the unexpected nature of Christ's arrival, life and reign. (If you're praying from home, you can find these in the 'Scripture Booklet' on the Prayer Room page of the website). You may choose to dwell in these Scriptures and allow them to shape your time of prayer.

You may also choose to dwell in any of the three moments from the Advent story captured in the stained-glass windows (see the prompts below) or join your prayers with those of others on the paper laid out below.



Stained Glass Windows

You may choose to spend time in contemplation of the three stained-glass windows and the moments of the Advent story they depict.

I. The first window shows the Magi bringing their gifts before Christ.

The Magi Visit the Messiah

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

*6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."*

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."



9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.
- Matthew 2:1-12

As you read this passage, what stands out to you? Is there a particular word or phrase the Holy Spirit may be highlighting to you? Do you find anything surprising or unexpected?

You may choose to return to the passage and linger in the story. You may like to contemplate the stained-glass window. Bring your reflection before God and enjoy being with him.

II. The second window shows the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary, announcing God's plan to fill her with the Holy Spirit, that she may bear the Son of God.

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."



29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.”

38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her. - Luke 1:26-38

As you read this passage, what stands out to you? Is there a particular word or phrase the Holy Spirit may be highlighting to you? Do you find anything surprising or unexpected?

You may choose to return to the passage and linger in the story. You may like to contemplate the stained-glass window. Bring your reflection before God and enjoy being with him.



III. The third window shows Simeon blessing Jesus in the temple as an infant. Here, Simeon saw God's promise to him fulfilled, that he would see the Messiah in his lifetime.

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

*29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."*

33 The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him.



34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36 There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. - Luke 22-40

As you read this passage, what stands out to you? Is there a particular word or phrase the Holy Spirit may be highlighting to you? Do you find anything surprising or unexpected?

You may choose to return to the passage and linger in the story. You may like to contemplate the stained-glass window. Bring your reflection before God and enjoy being with him.



Statue of Mary and Jesus

You may choose to spend time in contemplation of the statue of Mary and Jesus.

Notice what feelings are stirred within you as you do.

What might this statue reveal about Christ's nature as our unexpected King? What might be his invitation to you?

Bring these things before the Lord in prayer.



A candle as you go

Before you leave this space, take a moment to sit with the prayers you have offered, and the ways in which God has met with you.

We invite you to take a tea light with you as you go, as a reminder that Christ is coming, that the Light of The World is breaking in.

*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*

Let this candle continue to prompt you to prayer as you light it at home and continue to journey the Advent season. May it remind you of the unexpected light of Christ.

This Lady Chapel will continue to be a place of prayer, reflection, and intercession. Feel free to return to this space in the weeks, months, and years ahead, as we continue to respond to Jesus' invitation to prayer.





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