

# ADVENT REFLECTIONS



## 6 Reflections

Journey with us from Christ the King Sunday to Christmas Day

**ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF BUNBURY  
2022**

## INTRODUCTION BY BISHOP IAN

I am indebted to Revd Vicki Webb and Mrs Verity Murray and the other contributors for compiling and writing these reflections, which begin with Christ the King Sunday and go through Advent to Christmas Day.

The idea for this series of Advent Reflections comes from our 2nd Strategy as a diocese: Learning more about Jesus Christ\*. We wanted to add further to the resources for this Strategy. All of these resources are intended for use as individuals, or as parishes or organisations.

## HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

The resources provide an opportunity for prayer and reflection for each week of Advent and in addition, Christ the King Sunday and Christmas Day. Each resource includes a Bible reading selected from the lectionary for the Sunday of that week, a short reflection, an image and a prayer. Christ the King has two readings and two reflections. You may wish to use the reflections in the week preceding or following each particular Sunday. We suggest you begin and end your times of reflection with prayer, perhaps beginning with the prayer provided and closing with a prayer formed in your own words in response to your reflection. There is no set time to spend on these reflections. Sometimes it can take a while to settle your spirit and relax enough to enter into the reflection time. Be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

You may like to listen to some music as part of your reflection time. Rev Vicki Webb recommends "O Come, O Come Emanuel" from the CD "Winter Came" by Eyna, which can also be found on You Tube.

Each reflection has been provided by a clergy member, each from a different geographical area of the Bunbury Diocese. Although following a set format, each reflection has its own flavour. We hope you will enjoy the variety and a window into different parts of the diocese. A short biography of each contributor can be found at the end of the resource.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Christ the King - Bishop Ian Coutts (Bunbury)

Advent Week 1 - Rev Genevieve Milnes (Kendenup)

Advent Week 2 - Rev Paul Bartley (Williams)

Advent Week 3 - Rev John Jones (Albany)

Advent Week 4 - Rev Sally Buckley (Denmark)

Christmas Day - Rev Vicki Webb (Kojonup)

\*For more information see the August and October Vision and Strategy Newsletters, and the Learn Christ Resources Brochure, which are all under the 'Diocesan Vision and Strategy' button on our website: [www.bunburyanglican.org](http://www.bunburyanglican.org)

# WEEK BEGINNING OR ENDING SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2022

## CHRIST THE KING

### OPENING PRAYER (COLLECT FOR CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY)

Eternal God,  
you exalted Jesus Christ to rule over all things,  
and have made us instruments of his kingdom:  
by your Spirit empower us to love the unloved,  
and to minister to all in need,  
then at the last bring us to your eternal realm  
where we may be welcomed into your everlasting joy  
and may worship and adore you for ever;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

### 1ST SCRIPTURE READING – LUKE 23 V 33–43

**33** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

**35** The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

**36** The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar **37** and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

**38** There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews.

**39** One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

**40** But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? **41** We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

**42** Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

**43** Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

### REFLECTION 1

The stained-glass window overleaf is typical of many windows and paintings depicting the crucifixion with the letters INRI above. This is a short form of the inscription placed, on Pilate’s orders, above Jesus’ cross. The letters denote the Latin: “Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum” – “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”. John’s gospel, chp.19, says that the Chief Priests quibbled with Pilate, wishing to change the inscription to “This man said I am the King of the Jews” which Pilate refused to do with the famous line: “What I have written, I have written.” In the Luke gospel reading, the cross and being crucified do not seem to be an appropriate place for a King, or the way for a King to die.



What do you learn about Jesus Christ in this passage (Luke 23.33-43)?  
 What surprises you or moves you?  
 Please take time to reflect on these questions and your answers

## 2ND SCRIPTURE READING – COLOSSIANS 1 V 11-20

... being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

## REFLECTION 2

Peter O'Brien's commentary on Colossians notes: "Paul believed God had effected a mighty change in their lives: he had reconciled them to himself in an earthshattering event, namely Christ's physical death on the cross." When I think of Colossians 1.15-20 they bring to mind a tapestry that hangs in Coventry Cathedral designed by Graham Sutherland. It is called 'Christ in Glory' and shows Christ seated on a throne with the nail marks in his feet and hands still visible. The tapestry itself is the size of a regulation tennis court and the human person at the bottom is life-size, to give you an idea of scale. The tapestry dominates the chancel and the nave and the eyes of Christ look as if they are looking straight at you wherever you are in the Cathedral (see overleaf).





What do you learn about Jesus Christ in this passage (Colossians 1 v 11-20)?

What surprises you or moves you?

Please take time to reflect on these questions and your answers

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Write or speak out a prayer in response to your reflection.

# WEEK BEGINNING OR ENDING SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2022

## FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

### ADVENT PRAYER

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past. You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel. You have challenged us in the words of the prophets. You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like. Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now. You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us. You come to us through men and women who need our help. You come to us as we worship you with your people. Lord, God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end. You will be with us at the hour of our death. You will still be God when our history has run its course. We welcome you, the God who comes. Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### ISAIAH 2 V 3

**“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that God may teach us God’s ways and that we may walk in God’s paths.”**

### REFLECTION

As we begin our journey towards Advent let us pause for a moment to consider this invitation to go up to the mountain of the Lord. God dwells in the holy mountain of God. We are invited to access that mountain. It is the highest of all mountains. It is raised above all other hills and all the nations shall stream to it. Consider this, that the mountain of the Lord is accessed in our hearts, where the Kingdom of God has been revealed. (See image overleaf)

### CLOSING PRAYER

Write or speak out a prayer in response to your reflection.





*Genevieve Milnes*

The Stirling Ranges National Park from Red Gum Hill - by Rev Genevieve Milnes

# WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2022

## SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

### ADVENT PRAYER

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past. You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel. You have challenged us in the words of the prophets. You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like. Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now. You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us. You come to us through men and women who need our help. You come to us as we worship you with your people. Lord, God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end. You will be with us at the hour of our death. You will still be God when our history has run its course. We welcome you, the God who comes. Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### ISAIAH 11 V 1-18

11 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
From his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—

3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;  
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

5 Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.

7 The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

8 The infant will play near the cobra's den,  
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

9 They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.



## REFLECTION

### A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse

At this point in Israel's history, all that's left of David's dynasty is a pathetic stump. A tree is majestic and valuable compared to a stump! Yet even though David inaugurated a wondrous kingdom, Jesus, the Greater David, will rule an incomparably superior one, where the infant will play near the cobra's den. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD. He is the Branch, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. This stump gets in the way of mowing all our grass at Holy Trinity Williams. You can see a shoot has come from it. The shire has just ripped this out for us, but nothing threatens the shoot from the stump of Jesse!



Williams Parish - by Rev Paul Bartley

## CLOSING PRAYER

Write or speak out a prayer in response to your reflection.

# WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2022

## THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

### ADVENT PRAYER

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past. You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel. You have challenged us in the words of the prophets. You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like. Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now. You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us. You come to us through men and women who need our help. You come to us as we worship you with your people. Lord, God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end. You will be with us at the hour of our death. You will still be God when our history has run its course. We welcome you, the God who comes. Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### ISAIAH 35 V 1-10

The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.  
Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.  
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,  
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;  
they will see the glory of the Lord,  
the splendor of our God.  
<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees that give way;  
<sup>4</sup> say to those with fearful hearts,  
“Be strong, do not fear;  
your God will come,  
he will come with vengeance;  
with divine retribution  
he will come to save you.”  
<sup>5</sup> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
<sup>6</sup> Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
and the mute tongue shout for joy.  
Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert.  
The burning sand will become a pool,  
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.  
In the haunts where jackals once lay,  
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

## ISAIAH 35 V 1-10 (CONTINUED)

**8** And a highway will be there;  
it will be called the Way of Holiness;  
it will be for those who walk on that Way.  
The unclean will not journey on it;  
wicked fools will not go about on it.  
No lion will be there,  
nor any ravenous beast;  
they will not be found there.  
But only the redeemed will walk there,  
**10** and those the Lord has rescued will return.  
They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

### REFLECTION

Isaiah is thought of as the greatest of the writing prophets. Written around 701 BC, it is a book that unveils the full dimensions of God's judgement and salvation. Vs 4 tells us to "Be strong, do not fear, your God will come". He goes on to say that 'The desert will blossom, burning sand will become a pool'. We are told that on that day, the redeemed will enter Zion with singing. What wonderful words of assurance from Isaiah- 'God will come'! As we journey through Advent, let us be thankful for our God's love for us, so much love that he sent us his Son, to be born in our human likeness. It is the greatest gift ever given to mankind. He came to teach us humility, kindness, forgiveness, and love. Let us put Christ as the reason for Christmas!



Looking over to Princess royal Harbour towards Albany from Little Grove - by Rev John Jones

### CLOSING PRAYER

Write or speak out a prayer in response to your reflections



# WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2022

## FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

### ADVENT PRAYER

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past. You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel. You have challenged us in the words of the prophets. You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like. Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now. You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us. You come to us through men and women who need our help. You come to us as we worship you with your people. Lord, God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end. You will be with us at the hour of our death. You will still be God when our history has run its course. We welcome you, the God who comes. Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### MATTHEW 1 V 18-25

**18** This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. **19** Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**20** But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

**22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

**24** When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **25** But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

### REFLECTION

In this scripture passage, we hear something of Joseph's side of the story. There is an overwhelming impression that Joseph was a man of honour, of faith and of great openness to God. On discovering that his betrothed was pregnant by another, even before the visit of the angel, he determines to act out of Grace rather than Law.

A few years ago, I came across the poem overleaf, which really spoke to me. In it, I saw a vulnerability in Joseph, but also great trust and obedience and a willingness to serve God's will no matter what. What a great example for all of us.

I am Joseph, carpenter,  
of David's kingly line,  
I wanted an heir; discovered  
my wife's son wasn't mine.

I am an obstinate lover,  
loved Mary for better or worse.  
Wouldn't stop loving when I found  
someone Else came first.

Mine was the likeness I hoped for  
when the first-born man-child came.  
But nothing of him was me. I couldn't  
even choose his name.

I am Joseph, who wanted  
to teach my own boy how to live.  
My lesson for my foster son:  
Endure. Love. Give.

I am Joseph by U.A. Fanthorpe found at <https://christmas-time.com>



Denmark River, framed by Paper Bark Trees - by Rev Sally Buckley

**CLOSING PRAYER** Write or speak out a prayer in response to your reflections

# CHRISTMAS DAY – SUNDAY 25TH DECEMBER 2022

## ADVENT PRAYER

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past. You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel. You have challenged us in the words of the prophets. You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like. Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now. You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us. You come to us through men and women who need our help. You come to us as we worship you with your people. Lord, God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end. You will be with us at the hour of our death. You will still be God when our history has run its course. We welcome you, the God who comes. Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## JOHN 1 V 1-14

**In the beginning was the Word  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God.  
All things came into being through him  
and without him not one thing came into being.  
What has come into being in him was life  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness has not overcome it.  
The Word was in the world,  
yet the world did not know him.  
So the Word became flesh and lived among us  
and we have seen the glory,  
like the glory of a newborn child,  
full of grace and truth.  
From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.  
No-one has ever seen God.  
Jesus the Son has made the Eternal Mystery known.  
He is close to the heart of God.  
He has shown us the light that enlightens every person coming  
into the world.**



## REFLECTION

### The Word Made Flesh

The Word made flesh is the mystery of the incarnation. For me this mystery is both cosmic and personal. It is not one or the other but both. Christ comes both into the world and into our hearts and souls. God comes not only at this time of year but always and everywhere. My prayer is that silence becomes a sacred space for contemplation and a deeper journey into the mystery of the incarnation.



The nativity scene, stained glass window St Mary's Kojonup by Sandra Pedler

## CLOSING PRAYER

May the light of the divine shine upon us  
May the love of the divine heal  
our struggling world,  
May the birth of the divine  
take place  
again and again  
in each of our hearts.  
Amen



A photo of the cosmos from the James Webb Telescope

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Bishop Ian Coutts** was ordained priest in England in 1990 and for many years was a Parish Priest and Social Worker in the UK. He and Anne emigrated to Australia in 2011 and, after working with Anglicare and St Mark's Theological college, he was installed as Bishop of Bunbury in 2018. Bishop Ian enjoys creating a model railway at Bishop's Court. However his passion is flying and he often arrives for visits to distant parishes by plane.

**Rev'd Genevieve Milnes** was ordained Deacon in 2022 and is hoping to continue on to the Priesthood. Her current placement is at St John the Evangelist in Albany as well as providing services in outlying areas. Genevieve works as a Clinical Psychologist and combines this with her passion for photography and antiquarian books.

**Revd Paul Bartley** lives in Williams with his wife, Peggy, and their five children. Paul was deaconed in Perth diocese in 2019 and priested in Bunbury in 2020. After a time as Associate Minister at Living Water in Albany, he was made priest of Gateway Parish. In his spare time, Paul enjoys coffee, reading, mountain biking and flying radio-controlled planes.

**Rev'd John Jones** was ordained priest in 2018 and, while assisting at the Bunbury Anglican Cathedral, was appointed a prison chaplain. John is currently the prison chaplain in Albany and assistant priest at St John the Evangelist Church. John's passion is helping in remote rural areas, which he combines with his love of flying and photography.

**Rev'd Sally Buckley** was ordained priest in Perth in 1999 and was Priest in Charge in Esperance from 2003 - 2014. In 2019 Sally and Chris relocated to Denmark when Sally accepted the position of Priest in Charge of Denmark-Walpole. Sally is a Franciscan tertiary and has a love of creation and a desire to make our Lord known and loved everywhere. Within the Franciscan order Sally is currently Assistant Provincial Minister of the Asia Pacific.

**Rev'd Vicki Webb** was ordained deacon in 2019 and was appointed parish deacon in Kojonup. In 2021 she stepped aside to continue studying and helping out as deacon in surrounding rural parishes awaiting the appointment of a priest. Vicki works as a Youthcare Chaplain and is a spiritual director with a passion for rural soul care and creating sacred spaces for retreat. Vicki and Bill offer personal retreat hospitality and spiritual companionship in their home to friends, family and colleagues.