



ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!
SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER 2017
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL

John the Baptist appears in the wilderness, roaring like a lion, calling for repentance, revealing the sins and crimes hidden behind the pious facades of the religious leaders and the people of Israel. He is so disturbing that a delegation from the Jewish authorities comes all the way from Jerusalem to interview this strange man and find out who he is. But John does not volunteer and give a clear answer. He quotes the great prophet Isaiah and says that he is only preparing the way for one greater who will come after him and will baptize with the Holy Spirit (cf Mt 3.11).

John has disturbed the authorities as well as the simple people and—even though today is *Gaudete Sunday*, the Sunday of Rejoicing—we should allow ourselves to be disturbed because we, too, easily forget in these hectic days of feasting, shopping, and malling what this season is about.

Why this disturbance, all this excitement and rejoicing, even in today's liturgy?

While we look forward to Christmas, the liturgy invites us to look back to the One who comes after John, whose sandal straps he feels unworthy to untie; to the One who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit, the cause of real joy.

Isaiah rejoices "heartily in the Lord" because he feels that "the spirit of the Lord God is upon" him (vv 10, 1). In the Second Reading, filled with God's Spirit, Paul exclaims, "Rejoice always!" (v 16). In the Responsorial Psalm, Mary sings, "My soul rejoices in my God." Baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, we Christians are called to "rejoice always." But you may object: Life is difficult, filled with problems, sufferings, and worries—how can I rejoice always? But look at Paul: surely you have not suffered as much as he did. Yet, he is filled with joy.

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THE REV'D TIFFANY SPARKS PRESIDING AND RICHARD JAMES PREACHING

Next Week's Readings

- 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16
- Psalm 89.1-4, 19-27
- Luke 1.26-38

Sentence: Bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, the day of vengeance of our God. Isaiah 61.1-2

Collect: Eternal God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of your Son: grant us wisdom to see your purpose and openness to hear your will, that we too may prepare the way for Christ who is coming in power and glory to establish his rule of peace and justice; through Jesus Christ our Judge and our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

•**Readings:** Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11; Song of Mary; 1 Thessalonians 5.12-28; John 1.6-8, 19-28

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.

John 1.6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’, as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

We give thanks for :

- * Our Church family and community
- * Our volunteers—and all who help in the mission of the Church

We pray for :

- * The Parishes of Moggill-Mt Crosby and Red Hill
- * Chermside Anglican Welfare Ministries
- * The Southport School

For health and healing for :

Thomas Moore, Beryl and Tom Wakefield, Anthony Bugden, Saloni Paul, Fred Morrison, Theda Lowe, Jan, Romola Squire, Fr Neville and Eileen Jackson, Sue McCurdy, Gillian, Kerry Muir and Jocelyn O’Neill.

At home or nursing home :

Jean Ward, Noela Burdett and Joyce Shearing.

WHAT IS GOING ON AT ST. PAUL'S?

ST PAUL'S PARISH OFFICE—

will close on 19 December and reopen on Tuesday 23 January 2018. For emergency pastoral care please contact Rev'd Tiffany on 0405224616; office phone messages and emails will be checked during the break.

365 DAYS WITH THE LORD

2018—If you are interested in purchasing a copy please talk to Rev'd Tiffany.

BOARD GAME GROUP—

Run by David Adams. Every second Saturday in the Crypt at 7.30pm. All welcome!

MORNING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY GROUP—

Wednesday mornings at 9:05am. If you are interested please come along. All Welcome!

PRACTICALLY SPIRITUAL—

This is a group that meets once a month to reflect on theological books. Talk to Rev'd Tiffany or Rev'd Kathy on how to become involved.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES—

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER:

8:30am—Advent 4

6:00pm—Children's and Families Christmas Service

10:30pm—Carols

11:00pm—Midnight Mass

MONDAY 25 DECEMBER:

8:30am—Christmas Service

BOOK CLUB—

Our summer read 'Remarkable Creatures' by Tracy Chevalier, tells of how one woman's gift transcends class and social prejudice to lead to some of the most important discoveries of the 19th Century. If you enjoy reading do come and join us. Our next meeting is set for 7:30pm Tuesday 6 February at the home of Sue Barker. For more information talk to Ann Caston.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY

How Funds are Used?

Your giving to our parish community helps our community grow! Your donations go towards having a full time minister, electricity, insurance, rates, copyright, cleaning, music ministry, supporting Children's Church, grounds maintenance, Mission giving to Anglican Board of Mission, Bush Ministry Fund and the Anglicare women's' shelter. These are agencies that provide clean water to 3rd world communities, educational opportunities and safe shelters to the vulnerable. Without your contributions our parish would not be able to support a full time minister, pay the costs of running the parish and to support these wonderful missions. Every dollar goes towards making a difference to Ashgrove and to the world.

HEARING IMPAIRED?

St Paul's has provision for people with hearing impairment. A headset is available from the back of church, or a receiver for those with a hearing aid (turn on and switch ear piece to the T switch).

We are on the web!

stpaulsashgrove.org.au

**ANGLICAN CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA**

St Paul's Anglican Church
10 Jubilee Tce
Ashgrove
Queensland 4060
Phone: 3366 2320

OUR MISSION

**WE PARTICIPATE IN
GOD'S MISSION OF
TRANSFORMING
INDIVIDUALS AND
COMMUNITIES,
OFFERING MEANING
FOR TODAY AND HOPE
FOR TOMORROW
THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST.**

HELP US GROW!!!

Bank online!!

For easier ways to give and build up St. Paul's and our mission. Give online.

Account Name: Ithaca-Ashgrove Anglican Parish.
BSB 704901 Acc No 00004420



BITCOINS ACCEPTED HERE!!!

St. Paul's is the first Church in Australia to accept virtual currency! Scan code for our wallet details!



WHO ARE WE? MINISTRY AT ST. PAUL'S

Rector:

The Reverend Tiffany Sparks
0405224616

tiffany.sparks@stpaulsashgrove.org.au

Hon Associate Priest: The Reverend Pam Hynd: pam.hynd@stpaulsashgrove.org.au

Honorary Priests: The Reverend Kathy Hammer and the Reverend Jack Hammer: jkhammer@bigpond.net.au

Wardens: Peoples Wardens: Sarah Combe and Rae Haggarty; **Priest's Warden:** George McCallan

Welcoming-Care Group: Elizabeth Sillano and Gill Outen

Choir: Robyn Carl

Rosters: Tiffany Sparks

Thrift Shop: Margaret Marshall & Deborah Walker

Mother's Union: Joy Lloyd

Playgroup: Sarah Combe

Book Club: Ann Caston

For all inquiries please email the office: info@stpaulsashgrove.org.au

From pg 1:

It all depends on whether we put our trust and hope in God, as Mary and Paul did. Even in difficult times and severe storms, we can "rejoice always" because we can find true joy and happiness in God. Paul exhorts us, "Do not quench the Spirit" (v 19). Instead of focusing on the One whom the Baptizer announces to come after him, the One who fills us in baptism with the Holy Spirit, we may be too concerned about the problems of daily life. As a result, we quench the joy-giving Spirit in us, the Spirit that offers a joy that the world, the malls, and the season's parties cannot give.

Unhappiness results from the lack of God. And God, Christ, has unfortunately been pushed little by little out of Christmas. What a difference there is between saying "Happy Holidays" and wishing "Merry Christmas." Even a pagan celebrates happy holidays, but how beautiful and joy-filled it is to have Christ at the center of a Merry Christmas.

365 Days with the Lord 2017

