

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide



An open, welcoming and inclusive community
in the heart of the City of Adelaide

Keeping Community

Thursday 25 November 2021

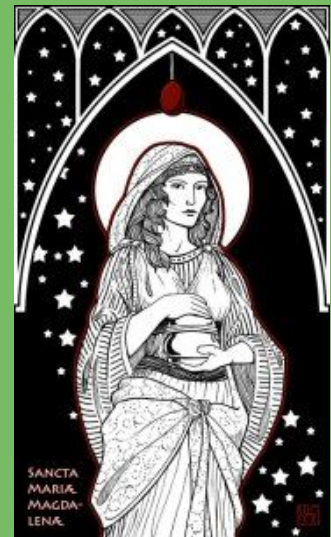
Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions means it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship. Sunday Mass is offered weekly at 10 am, and the church will also be open on Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm.

The decision to return to worship in community, whether for private prayer, or the public celebration of the Word and Sacraments, is not a straightforward matter. These newsletters are intended to keep our entire community informed on events in the life of the Parish: we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.

We will respond to this challenge was we have done before. Please keep an eye on the [web page](#) and the [blog](#) for further information.



1. From Fr Gwilym – The Season of Advent



The season of Advent is a season of preparation for the Coming of the Lord. Most people understand this to mean that we are getting ready to celebrate the Birth of Jesus at Christmas. The feast of Christ the King is the last Sunday in the church's year, and the four Sundays of Advent are obviously the lead up to the Feast of the Incarnation, which most people know as Christmas. We're getting ready for the Baby in the Manger, the Angels, the Shepherds and all that.

Already the shops and businesses are pumping out the themes of joy and celebration, and those which acknowledge the Christian view of Christmas already have the crib set up in the window. In the streets of the city there are decorations and private houses are lit up with fairy lights.

However, the Coming of the Lord can also refer to the Second Coming of Jesus. As we say, every Sunday in the Creed, "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." It was customary to preach on the Four Last Things during the Four Sundays of Advent. Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – a great opportunity to preach hellfire and damnation sermons! Nowadays such themes are almost taboo. This aspect of Advent has almost disappeared from the church of today. The only thing to remind us that we need to be ready for Judgement Day

is the colour of the vestments – purple. Purple is the colour of repentance, a colour which prompts us to examine our consciences and prepare to meet our Lord.

The Four Last Things do give an opportunity to reflect on our lives, which have an end; the thoughts and actions of our lives, which do have consequences; the joy which we will have in a close relationship with God; and the desolation and despair of those who set themselves against all that is good.

That last paragraph illustrates the difficulty we have in approaching these very serious matters. The vision of God on his throne of judgement, separating the good from the bad, condemning some to everlasting joy and some to eternal punishment is not an image which everyone can accept. Even among Christians, opinions vary. Some accept the reality of Judgement, Heaven and Hell while others question the goodness of a God who would consign any one to damnation. Yet others deny the reality of Heaven and Hell as “places” where one might end up. With such widespread disagreement, preachers might be better advised to discuss these matters with small groups, where a number of understandings can be explored in a conversation.

Instead, the focus of our Sundays of Advent is often in the foretelling of the birth of Jesus. Very often the preacher will speak of the Prophets of the Old Testament; Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Isaiah 7:14 for example. John the Baptist is also a subject for preaching, as “the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.” A third Sunday might be devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, focussing on her meeting with the Archangel Gabriel. A fourth topic is the role of Angels, the heavenly messengers of God, bringing tidings of comfort and joy to the shepherds.

Another idea is to make use of the Advent Wreath, which is a relatively recent addition to the rituals of Advent. They make a good countdown to Christmas. Some displays have four candles, while some have one for each day of Advent, somewhere between 20 and 25! Most church Advent Wreaths have four candles, three purple, one rose pink and one white or gold. Natalie Sleeth’s hymn, “Light one candle”^{*} identifies the themes of the candles as Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

John Bell, in his hymn “Advent Ring”^{**} combines these two themes and suggests that the first candle is for God’s promise of salvation, the second for the Prophets, the third for John the Baptist and the fourth for the Virgin Mary.

I can hardly wait to see what scheme I am going to use during Advent!

There is one thing with which all theologians, liturgists, hymn writers and preachers agree. The fifth candle, the white one, which is lit for Christmas day, stands for the Birth of Jesus, the light of the World. However we approach the festival of the Incarnation, we are looking forward to that astonishing Birthday celebrated on 25 December.

May your preparations be filled with comfort and joy,

Gwilym

* Together in Song 286

** Together in Song 289

2. Daily Prayer

Most Christian denominations have forms for prayer in the morning and the evening, and at other times of the day. Morning and Evening Prayer in the Anglican church's *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pages 3 – 33) or a different form for each day of the week (pages 383 – 424).

Online Resources

There is a complete online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app. The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day. While we cannot attend at the church at the present time, you may like to join the wider community in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

3. Reflections and Meditations

Fr Gwilym and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections are presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>.

To access these meditations, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top. If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

4. Advent Prayer on Wednesdays

Beginning next Wednesday, 1 December, Alison McAllister and Leonie Zadow will be in the church at 7.30 am each Wednesday morning for 30 minutes of silent prayer.

You are welcome to join us.

Start at 7.30 am promptly ... Finish 8 am.

You can also join us remotely - you can be at home, or even in the car increasing the saints in the room!

If you would like to invite a friend that would be great too.

P.S. If you do intend to join us remotely, we'd love to know!

Alison and Leonie

There are no special requirements; a short reading, 20 minutes of silent prayer and a chant to conclude.

If you would like to join us in the church just come – if you're late, just come in.

You don't need to come every week!

If you'd like to join in from home, and you'd like to follow what we are doing, either email or phone me and we'll send you the resources for the day.

Any questions please talk to one of us at church or email leonie@redirt.com.au, phone 0409 691 651

5. Blue Christmas

BLUE CHRISTMAS, THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER



A church service to support people who have lost loved ones and are experiencing grief.

The worship recognizes that many experience loss and pain and provides the promise of hope.

Candles, arranged as an Advent wreath, are lit and empty chairs are reserved as a way of commemorating those who have been lost in previous years.

This time is for those who struggle to find joy and hope during festive seasons.

The service is set to begin at 6:30pm on Thursday 9 December.

6. In the Church's Calendar

In the coming week in the Church's calendar, we remember St Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.

We know little about **St Andrew**. In St Matthew's gospel, he and his brother Peter are called by Jesus to leave their work as fishermen with the famous phrase "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." (Matthew 4:20).

In St John's Gospel, Andrew is a disciple of John the Baptist. When Jesus walked by one day, John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Andrew and another disciple followed Jesus. "Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day" (John 1:38-39a).



Before the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, it was Andrew who spoke up about the boy who had the barley loaves and fishes. When the Gentiles went to see Jesus, they came to Philip, but Philip then had recourse to Andrew.

As in the case of all the apostles except Peter and John, the Gospels give us little about the holiness of Andrew. He was an apostle. That is enough. He was called personally by Jesus to proclaim the Good News, to heal with Jesus' power and to share his life and death. Holiness today is no different. It is a gift that includes a call to be concerned about the Kingdom, an outgoing attitude that wants nothing more than to share the riches of Christ with all people.

Legend has it that Andrew preached the Good News in what is now modern Greece and Turkey and was crucified at Patras on an X-shaped cross.

7. St Andrew – from a homily on the Gospel of John by St John Chrysostom

We have found the Messiah

After Andrew had stayed with Jesus and had learned much from him, he did not keep this treasure to himself, but hastened to share it with his brother. Notice what Andrew said to him: We have found the Messiah, that is to say, the Christ. Notice how his words reveal what he has learned in so short a time. They show the power of the master who has convinced them of this truth. They reveal the zeal and concern of men preoccupied with this question from the very beginning. Andrew's words reveal a soul waiting with the utmost longing for the coming of the Messiah, looking forward to his appearing from heaven, rejoicing when he does appear, and hastening to announce so great an event to others. To support one another in the things of the spirit is the true sign of good will between brothers, of loving kinship and sincere affection.

Notice, too, how, even from the beginning, Peter is docile and receptive in spirit. He hastens to Jesus without delay. He brought him to Jesus, says the evangelist. But Peter must not be condemned for his readiness to accept Andrew's word without much weighing of it. It is probable that his brother had given him, and many others, a careful account of the event; the evangelists, in the interest of brevity, regularly summarise a lengthy narrative. Saint John does not say that Peter believed immediately, but that he brought him to Jesus. Andrew was to hand him over to Jesus, to learn everything for himself. There was also another disciple present, and he hastened with them for the same purpose.

When John the Baptist said: This is the Lamb, and he baptizes in the Spirit, he left the deeper understanding of these things to be received from Christ. All the more so would Andrew act in the same way, since he did not think himself able to give a complete explanation. He brought his brother to the very source of light, and Peter was so joyful and eager that he would not delay even for a moment.

8. For your prayers

We continue to pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.

For the world. The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

For the church. For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. For Roman Catholics and Anglicans, that they may pray for one another. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Idah (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of the Northern Territory; and within our own Diocese, for the South Sudanese Congregation at St Luke's Whitmore Square.

For our local community. For the Collective and its ministry in the local community. For the Magdalene Centre, as it deals with the need to change the way it delivers services in order to safeguard the health of customers, staff and volunteers.

For those in need. For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Valerie, Sim, Clarice, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Linda and Alex.

For those who have died. Those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; those who have died as a result of COVID-19 and in other tragic circumstances; those who

have died recently, especially Fr Gary Priest, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time. ✠ Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

For the saints. For the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, St Andrew, and holy women and men of every time and place.



This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.