



Peel Valley Congregation

Gowrie, Hallsville & West Tamworth

Christmas 2023

Meg Mangan 0476 375 989

P.O. BOX 3315 WEST

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NLT)

Jesus Christ Is God's Son

¹ Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.

² And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.

³ The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honour at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

⁴ This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

Luke 2:1-15 (NLT)

The Birth of Jesus

² At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He travelled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

The Shepherds and Angels

⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them.

"Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹² And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

¹⁵ When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.



Lectionary Readings for today:

Nativity 1 Isaiah 9:2-7 Titus 2:11-14

Psalm 96 Luke 2:16-20

Nativity 2 Isaiah 62:6-12 Titus 3:4-7

Psalm 97 Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

Nativity 3 Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98

John 1:1-14 Hebrews 1:5-12



Peel Valley Congregation

in recess resuming on

21 January, 2024 Country Gospel

Breakfast at Hallsville.

28 January 11am WEST

28 January ~ Markets at Hallsville

PEEL VALLEY CONGREGATION

Our goal: "To be transformed communities, experiencing, enjoying & sharing the gift of the friendship of Jesus."

Mission: "Called to be Free, Gifted to Serve."

Pastoral Care: **Meg Mangan 0476 375 989**

Elders: Margaret Crowell Daryl Lush



..... enjoy & share the gift of the friendship of Jesus



IN OUR PRAYERS

- We give thanks for the rain which has fallen this week.
- We pray for people caught up in fighting over Christmas in Ukraine, the Middle East and Myanmar.
- We pray for those who are unwell during the Christmas period.
- We pray for people who are missing loved ones this Christmas.
- We give thanks for our fire-fighters.
- We pray that 2024 will be a time of peace and goodwill.

Meg's Musings

Ecclesiastes 3 talks about there being a time for everything - laughter, sadness, peace, building, tearing down etc.

It is often quoted at the beginning of the year. I feel that it is also appropriate for Christmas.

For some people Christmas is a time of high emotions, and it can be a bit of a roller coaster - especially if there are small children.

For some people, this Christmas will be a reminder of absent loved ones. For others, it will be the first time to spend Christmas with a new "special" group of people. Each of those situations carries its' own doubts, fears, sadness and joys.

Wherever you are this Christmas, and whoever you are with, remember that Christmas is a time to celebrate "Emmanuel" - God with us.

When we remember that God is with us always, we can cope with any, and every, emotion

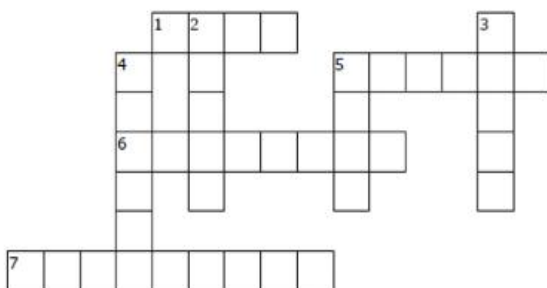
Blessings from Meg



The Birth of Jesus

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 (KJV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 2:1-20



ACROSS

1. An infant or very young child
5. The place where Mary laid the baby Jesus
6. A person who takes care of sheep
7. The city where Jesus was born

DOWN

2. Heavenly being that told the shepherds about Jesus' birth
3. The savior of the world
4. The earthly father of Jesus
5. The mother of Jesus

From Rev Geoff Flynn

Jesus is the unique voice of God.

Throughout the year, we in Australia have given a spent a lot of energy debating what a "voice to parliament" might look like. Our voices are as important as our words as they have the power to awaken the sense and lead others to act. Through our voices we create nuance of meaning and convey our emotions. Having a voice gives an individual agency and power and a way to express their beliefs.

Each year it gets harder for Christian voices to be heard amongst all the other voices that are competing to be heard at Christmas. My observation is that even among Christians we tend to give some biblical voices preferential treatment over others. Top of the list is Lukes's account of the birth of the baby Jesus and Matthews account of the three Magi bringing gifts to the infant Jesus comes a close second.

This Christmas I invite you to listen to the voice of the book of Hebrews chapter 1. Yes, it is one of the readings set down for Christmas day, but it is often silenced in our Churches because it doesn't mention of Shepherds, Magi or even Mary and Joseph. Hebrews begins with the voice of God.

"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days God has spoken to us by a son." This is significant, because Hebrews is claiming that Jesus is the voice of God in a unique way. Jesus is "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being" (Heb 1:3).

Now, I realize that we may believe ourselves to be too sophisticated to think much of antiquated concepts like God being incarnate in a human being. But the concept of incarnation is not about the biology of where children come from. It is an affirmation that Jesus really and truly does show us what God is like. We can look at Jesus, his life, his teaching, his mercy, his justice, and we can be confident that we are seeing a true image of God.

Although many Christians fail to consider the incarnation except during Christmas when they're reminded by the little baby in the manger, it's one of the most encouraging and important facets of our faith. Jesus is God spelling himself out in language we can understand. Jesus is the voice of eternity translated into the language of time. The inaudible has become audible. The invisible has become visible. The unapproachable has become accessible. Because God has spoken in Jesus, there is an answer to your question, a solution to your problem, hope for our future, forgiveness for your sins, and salvation for your soul.

May you hear the voice of God afresh as you celebrate the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

God Bless, Rev Geoff

