

THE PARISH OF LONG POINT BAY



PORT ROWAN ♦ PORT RYERSE ♦ TURKEY POINT ♦ VITTORIA ♦ ST. JOHN'S WOODHOUSE

Friday December 24 2021

Eve of Christmas



The Greeting

I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord. Luke 2.10–11.

Collect

Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. As we have known the revelation of that light on earth, bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever

First Reading Is 9:2-7

A READING FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Psalm 96

REFRAIN All the ends of the earth have sent the salvation of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless his name; proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day

Declare his glory among the nations and his wonders among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is more to be feared than all gods. **R**

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but it is the Lord who made the heavens.

Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! Oh, the power and the splendour of his sanctuary!

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and power.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due his name; bring offerings and come into his courts. **R**

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before him.

Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein. **R**

Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, when he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth. **R**

2nd READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO TITUS - TITUS 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

GOSPEL

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE 2:1-14 (15-20)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

[When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

The Christmas challenge

As we approach this Christmas, with all of the awareness of this pandemic and the threats it poses for us, I want to do a serious refocus on how we read what are called the Infancy Narratives (the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke. I think too often we read these narratives simply as pieces of historical biography: that is, 'this is how Jesus was born.' That was never the intent of the biblical writers. The intent of the writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) was to proclaim who they believed Jesus to be and what the consequences were for his followers. As history, we would not have 4 different reports that don't match on a literal level: but in the 4 gospels we have 4 very different stories - No birth story in Mark, Jesus born in a stable (Luke), Jesus born in a house (Matthew), Jesus as the pre-existent Word of God (John).

Since, at Christmas, we focus on the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, let me focus there. The generally agreed dates for the writing of these gospels are: Matthew, generally agreed to have been written around the year 70 AD, and Luke around the year 85 AD (note that that is 40 - 65 years after Jesus' birth). Matthew is writing in the midst of or just after of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple - an absolutely devastating event for the Jewish community. Luke is writing in the midst of the struggle between the Jewish community and the 'followers of the Nazarene' (later known as the Christian community). Both of these are periods of real struggles for survival. In both of these periods, the fledgling Christian community faced the very real question: Can we survive? The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke are the 'prologue' or the community's initial response to the challenge, 'Can we survive?'

In Matthew's Gospel, Herod is the new Pharaoh, seeking the death of the child, the new deliverer. All the resources are at the disposal of this new Pharaoh. How could he not succeed? What resources does this infant have? Does Herod/the new Pharaoh succeed? Against all odds, No!

In Luke's gospel, this poor refugee family, out on the road in the country, has only a feeding trough and some briars and thorns to build protection from the night's prowling predators. Would you bet on the predators or their prey?

Even as we have to close our churches this Christmas, even as we have to discover new resources in the midst of this new threat, who are you willing to bet on for our outcome?

God is as close to us as our own heartbeat, the Spirit of God is as present to us as our own breath. But we will only discover that if we take the time to look, take the time to experience the breath of God in our own life. These narratives are not just nice stories. They are about life and death and God's life-giving presence in the midst of all that threatens us. So, this Christmas, in the midst of this pandemic, take the time to experience the presence of God, the Spirit of God, even in the midst of this life-threatening experience - and ask yourself, Who/what am I willing to bet my life on?

Have a very hope/faith reflecting Christmas this year. And remember the cry of Jesus followers down through the ages - including our own: "In the midst of death, we are in life"!

Prayers from JoAnne Easton

Lord Jesus, who was honoured by the Magi with gifts, and worshipped by humble shepherds, accept our praises as we celebrate your birth at Bethlehem. Bestow on us this a holy night, as we remember your birth on earth, the illumination and brightness of your one true light, Jesus Christ our Lord, born to and in us this day.

As we share together the most profound mystery of your birth among us. So, we pray that you would fill us with your peace. Pour into our hearts that peace which we so desperately seek, and which you alone can give. May we live as children of the same heavenly Father, willing to share our love for you and also to listen to the faith of others, that together your people may be one. Awaken in our hearts, love and gratitude for all that you have done for us and may our joyful hearts share in the message of the angels to all humankind.

We remember those for whom Christmas will be difficult. Draw near to those who find this season a source of pain or grief, and to all who are suffering or sick, especially those we remember in our own heart, that they may feel the comfort of this holy night. Lord Jesus you were laid in a humble manger, because there was no room for you in the inn. Embrace with your tender care all who wander alone or have no place to lay their head, that they may experience the hope of your birth. We are mindful of the poor and the hungry, the sick, those alone this night and those separated from the ones they love. Let us pray for all who are anxious, depressed, or ill. By your love poured out at Bethlehem, guard, guide and comfort those for whom we pray this night.

Grant reconciliation to those besought with conflict and violence, that they may live in the peace as a result of this holy night. Lord heal our world. May God grant unto us whatever we need that we might serve him in showing his love and compassion to our world, allowing the light of God to illuminate the dark places with grace and truth.

So may the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the magi, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be ours this Christmas. And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us always. Amen.

We now pray for Todd our Bishop, Anne our Metropolitan, Linda our Primate, Mark National Indigenous Archbishop, Marinez Bishop of Amazonia. AD Rick Jones, Rev. Enrique Martinez, Rev. Jack Cox

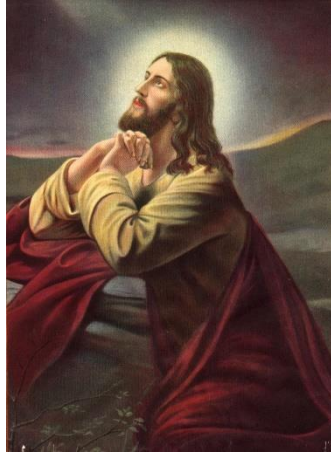
For the week beginning Sunday December 26, 2021, we will be praying for the **Rev. Kendall Reimer-Johnston** (interim), the **Rev. Matthew Hartt** (Deacon) and the people of the **Brant Reginal Ministry**.

Remembering our shut-ins at home, hospital and in local nursing homes.
June, Shirley, Iris, Julie, John, Sheila, Sylvia, Anna and Jack B.

We pray for the ones who have asked for your healing touch upon their lives: Betty F., Don G., Franz and Elaine Z., Steven K., Rebecca M., Trista P., Bill MC., Dwayne M. and Andrea B., Susan A., Olivia H., Karen M., Delores B., Dale F, Rose G, Julie, Barbara S., Carol M., George F., Carol H., and anyone known to you, silently or aloud

It is important that we keep the prayer list and shut-in list up to date. If you know of any changes to these lists, can you please email Anne at lpbparishsecretary@gmail.com or Enrique at enrique6921@gmail.com

If you know of anyone that has asked you to pray for them let us know and we will add to the list



Prayer of Confession

Search us O God and know our hearts today
Try us and know our anxious thoughts,
see if there are any hurtful ways in us
and lead us in your loving and life-giving Way

Words of Assurance

God knows our secret fears, ignorance & selfish ways.
God forgives, forgive yourself, forgive others
Amen

Closing Prayer

God our strength and salvation, receive all we offer you today, and grant that we who have confessed your name, and received new life in baptism, may live in the joy of the resurrection, through Jesus Christ the Lord, Amen

Doxology

Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Please click on the link to watch this week's Parish Video

<https://youtu.be/ctYTN7mdLcg>

Please click on link below to see the Christmas message from the Bishop

<https://youtu.be/O0Y7YVjbX4s>

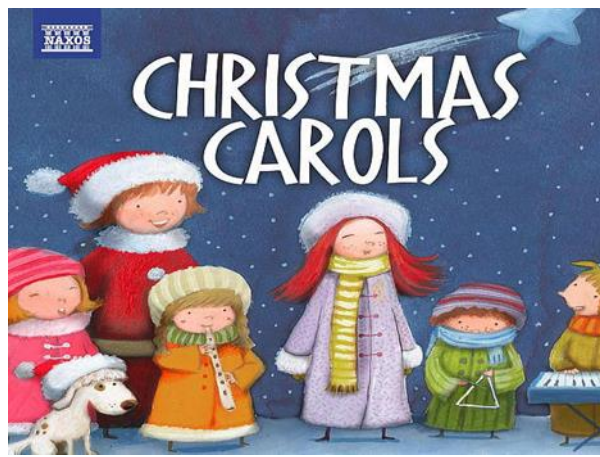
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to the upsurge in COVID cases in our area, some church services will be cancelled. We will keep you updated as news becomes available

If you have anything you would like to contribute or comment on. Any good movies you've seen or books you have read. Do you have memories you want to share? Please send them to Rev. Enrique and he can include in the newspaper.

Any birthdays/anniversaries/special occasions in January – Let me know for the newspaper. We can celebrate you and add some facts that happened on that day in history. I don't need your year of birth, just the month and date. Of course, if you have a special age birthday and want to celebrate it just let me know. If you are interested in this special occasion section, please send me details.





Hymn #119 - Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, and all is bright
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth



Hymn #120 - O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth.



Hymn #154 Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love



Closing Hymn # 138 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

2. Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."



CONTACT INFORMATION:

At this extraordinary time if you wish a telephone visit, please call Enrique. If you have any other announcements or news contact Anne Halls at the contacts below.

Enrique Martinez can be contacted by email at enrique6921@gmail.com or by phone at 519 586 3401 – Please note that Enrique’s day off will be Fridays

Our parish assistant Anne Halls can be contacted by email at lpparishsecretary@gmail.com or by phone @ 519-586-7034

Please visit our website parishoflongpointbay.com and Facebook page