

# Advent Reflection

## The Daily Reading

The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Mary's Song of Praise:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour  
on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and Holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promises he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his descendants for ever.

Luke 1.26,27,31,38,46-55 NRSV

## Pray, Read, Reflect, Pray

### How to use this booklet

Through Advent, try to immerse yourself in the remarkable words of Mary in response to God's calling on her life. Each day will focus on one segment and we suggest you approach it as follows:

**Pray** for the Lord to help you engage with the Scripture

**Read** the passage on the front page, then the segment for the day

**Reflect** on it using the questions provided to help you. You might like to use the back of the booklet to write down your thoughts.

**Pray** again into your own situation and for God's work through us at St Andrew's Church. Use the prayer below to close.

## Prayer

Lord God, thank you for calling us to serve you through St Andrew's in 2024.  
As you prepared your servant Mary to bear Jesus, our saviour,  
conceive within us the nature of your Son,  
that we may be formed as his body to work together in North Swindon.  
As we lift up the lowly, fill the hungry and remember mercy,  
guide us to the people you are calling,  
and the works you have prepared for us  
and give us each the obedience to say with Mary,  
'let it be with me according to your word'  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen  
My thoughts...

## Join us on Zoom

from a computer, smartphone or tablet: [//bit.ly/StANS](https://bit.ly/StANS)  
on a phone, 0208 080 6592 and enter 813 6651 6924 # when asked.

12.30pm on Tuesdays 5th and 12th  
8.00am on Wednesdays 6th and 13th  
5.30pm on Thursdays 7th and 14<sup>th</sup>

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**Thursday 30th November:** Then Mary said, "**Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.**"

Why do I think Mary accepted this difficult challenge?  
When have I been surprised by something God has done in my life?  
How did I respond?  
What about it scared me?

**Pray** for courage to listen and accept God's call, for direction for our work at St Andrew's.

**Friday 1st December:** My soul **MAGNIFIES** the Lord

How did this task magnify the Lord through Mary?

How have I seen the Lord magnified in my life?

What difference did it make?

What is the Lord asking me to do about it?

**Pray** that God will be magnified through us, for St Andrew's to bring His mission to life.

**Saturday 2nd December:** And my spirit **REJOICES** in God my Saviour

Why did Mary feel such joy?

What has God done that brings me joy?

Who else is affected by my joy?

How can I share it with others?

**Pray** with thanks for the joy that God brings, for St Andrew's to reflect the joy of the Lord in our community.

**Sunday 3rd December:** For he has looked with **FAVOUR**

How might Mary have felt being singled out like this?

When has the Lord looked with favour on me?

What was it like?

How did I thank Him?

**Pray** for the Lord to look with favour upon us and upon the work of St Andrew's.

**Monday 4th December:** on the **LOWLINESS** of his servant

What does Mary's humility tell me about her character?

When have I felt not good enough for God?

What does this word show me about God's attitude towards me?

How should I respond?

**Pray** for grace to know that God loves us just as we are. That our lowly church may know and understand its significance in God's plan.

**Tuesday 5th December:** Surely, from now on all generations will call me **BLESSED**

How was Mary right about the generations calling her blessed?

When have I felt God's blessing upon me?

Where did that blessing take me?

How can I share it with others?

**Pray** with thanks for God's blessing, that the Lord will bless the work of St Andrew's.

**Join us for Daily Prayer on Zoom at 12.30pm**

**Wednesday 6th December:** For the Mighty One has done **GREAT THINGS** for me

What great things did God do for Mary?

What is the greatest thing God has done for me?

What difference did it make in my life?

How did (or will) I share it?

**Pray** that God will continue to do great things in our lives and in the life and work of St Andrew's.

**Join us for Morning Prayer on Zoom at 8.00am**

**Thursday 7th December:** And **HOLY** is his name

How does Mary see God's holiness?

Where do I see God's holiness and how does it touch me?

Where do I need to share it with others?

**Pray** for the holiness of the Lord to fill our lives and spill out into His work through us.

**Join us for Evening Prayer on Zoom at 5.30pm**

**Friday 8th December:** His **MERCY** is for those who **FEAR** him from generation to generation

What does this tell us about Mary's knowledge of God?

When have I needed God's mercy?

What does fear of the Lord look like for me?

Who do I know that needs to hear this?

**Pray** for someone who needs to know God's mercy. For us as a church to know it too.

**Saturday 9th December:** He has shown **STRENGTH** with his arm

How does Mary lean on the strength of the Lord?

How have I leaned on the strength of the Lord?

What did that feel like?

Where do I need to rely on God's strength today?

**Pray** for God's strength in our weakness. For the strength to face up to difficult decisions at St Andrew's.

**Sunday 10th December:** He has scattered the **PROUD** in the **THOUGHTS** of their **HEARTS**

How did Mary keep pride from getting in the way?

What does this say about the effect of pride on my wellbeing?

When have I allowed pride to get in the way of God's will?

How can I keep pride from the thoughts of my heart?

**Pray** for the grace to live with humility. That the thoughts of our hearts at St Andrew's will show the glory of God and not our own pride.

**Monday 11th December:** He has brought down the **POWERFUL** from their thrones

What powers might have been at play in Mary's life at that time?

Where have I seen an abuse of power?

When might I have been tempted to abuse my own power?

When have I handed my power to the Lord for Him to use?

**Pray** that the power of God may be greater than our own as we fulfil His work in North Swindon.

**Tuesday 12th December:** And **LIFTED UP** the **LOWLY**

How might Mary have felt uplifted?

How have I felt uplifted by God?

How can I fulfil God's mandate to lift up the lowly?

**Pray** with thanks for God's uplifting care. That we at St Andrew's may know how to model God's uplifting.

**Join us for Daily Prayer on Zoom at 12.30pm**

**Wednesday 13th December:** He has **FILLED** the **HUNGRY** with good things

What experience might Mary have had with hunger?

When have I felt that my hunger has been satisfied by God?

Who do I know that hungers and how am I being called to provide?

**Pray:** that those who hunger will be filled with good things, to know how we at St Andrew's can help God's mission to the hungry.

**Join us for Morning Prayer on Zoom at 8.00am**

**Thursday 14th December:** And sent the **RICH** away empty

What does this tell me about Mary's attitude to earthly riches?

What riches have I been blessed with and how do I share them?

What would it feel like to be rich, but empty without God's love?

**Pray:** that God will guide us both personally at as Church to share the riches we have.

**Join us for Evening Prayer on Zoom at 5.30pm**

**Friday 15th December:** He has **HELPED** his servant Israel in **REMEMBRANCE** of his mercy

What might Mary have learned of God's help to the Israelites?

When have I known that God has remembered me and those I love?

Where do I feel I need God's help right now?

How do we need God's help at St Andrew's?

**Pray:** that God may remember us in his mercy, in our lives and in our work at St Andrew's.

**Saturday 16th December:** According to the **PROMISES** he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants **FOR EVER**

How would Mary have known of God's promises?

How does Jesus fulfil God's promises then, now and in the future?

Where have I seen God's promises in my life?

What does it mean to have God's promises for ever?

**Pray:** for the fulfilment of God's promises in our lives, in the life and work of St Andrew's, and for generations to come.