**Advent 4**

In chapter 2, Luke moves away from the birth of John the Baptist to tell us about the birth of Jesus, Mary’s son. There are 4 cameos for us to reflect on.

1. Events leading to Jesus birth.
2. Angels’ announcement of his birth to shepherds.
3. Jesus’ presentation in the temple.
4. Later the boy Jesus in the temple.

As we think about these events, it will be interesting to compare or contrast with events around John’s birth and childhood.

Luke 2:1-7 The birth of Jesus

* What is Luke doing in vss 1-2?
* Does he succeed?
* What was the relationship between Joseph and Mary at this point?
* How might this trip, caused by the census, have been very convenient for Joseph and Mary?
* What does Luke tell us about where Jesus was born?
* No room in the inn? The word *kataluma,* traditionally translated ‘inn’ in 2:7, is different from the regular word for an inn, *pandocheion,* found in the story of the Good Samaritan (10:34). Elsewhere in Luke (22:11) *kataluma* is translated ‘guest room’. How might this change the ‘traditional’ Christmas story?

Luke 2:8-20 Shepherds and Angels

* What might be the significance of the shepherds being the first to be told of the birth?
* What similarities are there between the visits of the angels here and of Gabriel to Zechariah and Mary?
* How might the shepherds have understood the terms ‘Saviour’ and ‘Christ’?
* How spectacular was the sign?
* How universal is the angels’ song?
* How did the shepherds describe the angel’s message? vs 15
* What was the shepherds’ reaction to what they had seen and heard?
* What was Mary’s reaction to the shepherds’ visit?
* What similarities and differences do you see between the birth narratives of John and Jesus?

Luke 2:21-40 Presentation of Jesus at the Temple

* Compare the naming stories of John and Jesus. 1:59-60 & 2:21
* What was the ‘purification law’, vss 22-24? See Leviticus 12:2-8
* What does Joseph and Mary’s keeping of the circumcision and purification laws tell you about them?
* What was significant about Simeon’s presence at the temple at that time?

Luke 2:29-32, known as the Nunc Dimittis, is used by some churches in their Evensong.

* What allusions to the Old Testament can you see in this song? Isaiah 52:10; 49:6
* What is the essence of Simeon’s prophecy to Mary? vss 34-35
* What do we know about Anna?
* How did she back up what Simeon had said?
* How do the comments about Jesus’ development, 2:39-40, compare with those about John’s, 1:80?

Luke 2:41-52 The boy Jesus at the Temple

* What does vs 41 tell us about Joseph and Mary?
* What caused Joseph and Mary concern?
* How long did it take to find Jesus?
* What was Jesus doing?
* How did he describe what he was doing and what does this tell us about his understanding of his mission?
* In spite of his claims what did he do?
vss 51-52
* How does vs 52 compare with 2:39-40 and 1:80?