

# Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park

## Home Worship Service

Led by Pastor Andy Kowald

November 28, 2021

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### Welcome & Introduction

Welcome everyone! God's peace and joy to you all! Welcome also to those of you who are joining us on LOVESTREAM.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is a reminder of how God prepared His people for the coming of His Son Jesus, the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

To do this, many churches this year will be spending two of the four Sundays looking at how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.

We are going to do something a little different. Four years ago we spent 25 weeks looking at many stories that remind us about the coming of Jesus. We used a Jesse Tree. This year we will be doing something quite similar, but in 25 DAYS – not 25 weeks.

We use the words “Jesse Tree” because King David’s dad was a man called Jesse, and Jesus comes from King David’s line!

The line of people that were Jesus’ ancestors were not such great families. They had all sorts of problems. But God still worked through them, and Jesus was born – our Saviour. It was like Jesse’s mob were a like a chopped down tree trunk, but Jesus was like a little shoot that still grew out of that stump.



Four years ago, this story was told by the Our Saviour School Children. They did such a good job that I thought we would let them tell it again! We are not allowed to show the children’s faces on LOVESTREAM, but you will hear their voices... You will notice that it starts with the story of creation and goes right through to Jesus. We have gathered here today to receive rest and goodness from the living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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### Songs

[No Longer Slaves](#) CCLI#7030123

## Bible Reading

### Isaiah 11:1-3

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—<sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. <sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,

for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. <sup>11</sup> In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.

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## Message

Someone once asked an old man: *have there ever been any famous people born in your town.* He answered, *Nope! No famous people. Just babies...!*

How did the story of YOUR life begin?

If you had the chance to rewrite it, how would you *like* the story of your life to have begun?

We *know* that we begin as babies. You can't avoid that! But what else would you like to be the case?

- Would you liked to have been born to someone rich?
- I have heard that Russia's President Putin is rich. Would you like to be HIS child?
- America's ex President Donald Trump is rich. Would you like to be HIS child?
- Would you liked to have been born to parents who were both geniuses? So that you would inherit enough brains not to have to study to get through school!

- Would you liked to have been born with a musical talent?
- Or a sporting talent?
- Or good looks!

You would certainly have ideas about your life...

But what about God? What are GOD'S ideas about your life?

Starting Wednesday this week you are invited to begin **25 days of Advent**, using the Jesse Tree to keep tally of the stories, because that will give you a 25 day look at GOD'S view of your life!

GOD **knows** how you began... He has written about it!

Of course you know *something* about your beginnings, but it will be all YOUR idea. The truth is found somewhere else. The truth is found in God's Word.

We should know what GOD says about our beginnings!

Here's the first thing: The story of human beings – your story – doesn't start with, **Once upon a time...** like a fairy tale. The story of human beings starts **In the beginning...** There's a start! Someone is in charge! And it's heading somewhere.

The students reminded us in our introduction that our lives started with a kiss! ... I don't just want to start as a baby! I would like to know that a man and a woman loved each other enough to start my life with a kiss!

The Bible says that God's connection with human beings is just like that! God took some dirt and formed it into our shape. His personal hands touched US! And then His lips kissed the breath of life into us!

This is what His book effectively says.

That is how close God is to us! Right from the beginning, His lips, so to speak, breathed life into us!! ... And He is at pains to say that that is still how it is today! THIS is how He feels about you!! No matter what you are going through.

So when it comes to the Bible, THIS is how we understand our life.

- It's not what WE imagine. It's what GOD says.
- Now, here's the thing: Although it is a book that gives accurate history, like any history book, it is **not** written to **prove God**, or the history in it. It is written to **proclaim God** who is in charge of the history.
- It is written to bring you to FAITH in the God of history.

You can look at the Bible and without faith just see history like any other history.  
Or you can look at the Bible with faith, and see GOD at work in that history!

God hides in history. He can only be seen by faith! And faith only comes by proclaiming the story God's Word gives us.

Starting today – but really on Wednesday – we begin a 25 day journey to PROCLAIM the story. Over 25 weeks you will be reading many stories that will remind you about your life.

- It has to do with Jesus

- It has to do with the love of God
  - It has to do with how God did not cut cheating people, lying people, and fighting families out of His family tree
- There is GREAT hope for us, and ANYONE who turns to God.

I will only be speaking on 4 Sundays. YOU get the chance to read up on 25 stories. Each story has a picture that kind of summarizes the story. And you can place the pictures in your house however you like. Your Jesse tree could simply a line of 25 pictures on your kitchen wall. Or you could sketch each picture onto note paper and place them on your fridge. Or you could place them on your Christmas tree

Each week's stories and daily devotions are printed in this Booklet that you can pick up from our church after service or during the week from our office.

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 we are told to do all that we possibly can to impress God's story on our children.

***<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.***

We ALL need to have God's stories impressed on us.

The Lutheran Church of Australia has the monogram that we are the place ***where Love Comes to Life...***

We are told this in Isaiah 11:1-10

***<sup>1</sup> A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—  
<sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.  
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.***

It says...

***<sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.***

***<sup>10</sup> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.***

***The wolf will live with the lamb...*** That's what I call love coming to life!

***The calf and the lion will feed together – a child will lead them!***

That's what I call love coming to life!

God fully intended, that when Jesus came, He would grow a community of people where enemies would become friends!! ... That would be the big difference! ... Friends with God, and friends with each other!

This is what God is saying the purpose of Jesus is for us!

If you get a chance, google the testimony of Emerson Nowotny who grew up in the illicit drug trade, but was found by Jesus...

He said...

***It was not that I changed who I was...***

***It was that I accepted who I was...***

The first thing that God's Word clearly tells us is this: we must accept that we are like a stump...

Jesse's descendants should have followed God's ways but they didn't.

They were called to be God's people.

WE are called to be God's people.

They failed God. WE fail God! The true fact about our lives is that, UNDER OUR STEAM we are like a dry old stump!



This is a picture of the stump that used to be at the front corner of our church!

There is no sap

Nothing green!

No life line!

But the promise of God is that out of the stump of Jesse would come a shoot! God can bring life from death!

**Emerson Nowotny** did not have a life. What did HE do? He accepted who he was. A chopped off stump! With nothing to offer!

But out of his chopped off stump, Jesus grew! He became a NEW life! With purpose and meaning and hope!

In your personal life, and in your family relationships, you may feel like a dry old stump. You might feel that you don't have anything to offer to make things better. But to your dry old stump JESUS COMES!

Don't wonder if your family life is a mess. Jesus' family tree was also a mess! But when Jesus turns up, something attractive comes into our lives that OTHERS are drawn to. We have a peace to bathe in. And others want it too!

Read the stories! See ourselves in them! Daily come alive to how God sees you in Jesus! Amen.

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## Song

[O Come O Come Emmanuel](#) CCLI#31982

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## Confession and Absolution

Dear heavenly Father,  
You are our mighty, merciful Father,  
Like Your people of old, our sin has caused us to fear You, and run away from You.  
But through Your prophets of old, and now through Your son Jesus, You have shown us grace and mercy and have drawn us to repent. Your mercy has caused us to run TOWARD You.  
Please forgive us. Renew us. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we might love You and those around us the way You desire. Amen

Our heavenly Father HAS had mercy on us! He has sent His own Son to die for us. His Word is true, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I therefore declare: Your sin is forgiven! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the powerful fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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## Prayers

Prayer points to ponder:

- Thank you that you know us so intimately, you were there at the beginning and you are there in every aspect of our lives now. Thank you for reminding us no matter how far we fall or how far from you we travel, your claim on us is absolute and uncompromising. Help us turn back to you and experience true peace and hope and joy in our lives.
- We pray for our upcoming Christmas production and Carols night, that they may be opportunities for people to see you, to find a new revelation of your love for them and to be filled with joy, hope and peace.
- We lift up our Church AGM and School General Meeting today. May your wisdom, unity and goodness be demonstrated in the conversations and decisions made.
- We ask for your wisdom and guidance on our Call process, for our Call Committee and for the Pastor you are preparing to call to Our Saviour.
- We pray for Operation Christmas Child and the children and communities who will receive our gifts. May they come to know your love for them.

- Be with those struggling with loneliness, depression, financial or health concerns. We pray especially for people in our own community. Remind them of your love and care for them and prompt each of us to reach out to those who need our support and friendship.

**The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

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## Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

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## Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favour, and give you peace. Amen.

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## Song

[God So Loved](#) CCLI#7102394