

**Pitt Street Uniting Church, 24 December 2015**  
**A Contemporary Reflection by Rev Dr Margaret Mayman**  
**Christmas Eve C**  
**Isaiah 9: 2-7; Luke 2: 3-7; Luke 2: 8-14; Luke 2: 15-20**

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On ordinary nights at this time, we are usually in our homes, settling down after dinner to read or catch up on Facebook or watch TV.

But this is no ordinary night.

On this night we remember the time when the Dream in the heart of God took flesh and was born like us with pain, and water, and blood, and crying, and struggle.

Waters breaking, life birthing.

Divinity and humanity intermingling as they do in every birth.

But this one - so, long ago and so far away.

In Bethlehem in Judea.

On a cold night in winter, with shepherds startled by stars and angels.

Under a night sky so different from ours.

These Australian summer days are long - and when the stars emerge, the Southern Cross flags our identity as it scatters its light across our sky.

On this summer night, we are not gathered out in a field, shivering with cold and with fear over the appearance of angels.

We are gathered for worship in warm churches, the air fired with candles and heavy with anticipation.

We are free to be here. We choose to be here.

Mary did not choose to give birth in that cold stable: the only warmth for her was Joseph's body holding hers as she laboured.

Yet in that place, Mary, who had carried this baby close to her heart for nine months - gave birth to a Saviour.

This is not a claim to be proven. This is a mystery to be embraced.

So! We are here tonight believing, hoping that this Saviour will be born anew in our hearts and our lives on this holy night.

We join in the angel's song: *'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards all people'*

This season isn't simply a time of waiting for a child to be born.

For God has already come.

This is a season for the birth of consciousness, for a change of heart, that the coming of the Christ child has already made possible.

The birthing of Jesus has created a sacred memory, which empowers us and guides us through the darkness that is always part of the birthing, so that we too can make our way into the light.

Each one of us can be a child of God, awake to what brings life in the midst of very troubled times.

This season is a time to enter into the sacred memory of birthing God, - growing in love, - so that we learn to love what God loves, to love whom God loves, and long for what God longs to bring to fullness in us and through us:

peace for all people and for the earth itself.

We are to be born into the heart of God, in whom there is no division.

Into the heart of God where all are equal:

men and women, young and old, black, and white,

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and straight.

Into the heart of God where all life is valued:

the rich, the poor, first world, third world,

Australian and Syrian,

Palestinian and Israeli,

Muslim, Christian and Jew;

the earth, its waters, its skies, and the creatures;

the privileged politicians -

and the wretched asylum seekers, whose remember this night, on Nauru and Manus and Christmas Islands.

In God there is no division. In God, all will be made whole.

It is here and now, that we, male, female, whatever our gender,

are called to birthing again and again, until - as-in God - all is one.

The choices made by each of us are borne by all of us. Through the holy child, we learn that we are all part of one another.

Happy, holy Christmas, as you become a child of God. And a blessed journey onwards, into the embodiment of God as disciples of Jesus - life makers, pain bearers and love makers - born like Mary's child - of waters breaking and of spirit birthing.

Remember this child's birthday and remember the human one whom the child became.

Tell the sacred stories again, and live through them a way of being:

a way of love and compassion, peace and justice.

Blessed be this Child.

Blessed be all who journey toward the light this holy night!