

Bible Reading: Matthew 1:17-25

One of the most awesome responsibilities of having a baby is giving the baby a name. Or two names, or more than two. Does anyone here have more than 3 names?

And parents have a host of reasons for choosing names. Maybe family tradition: in the Purdie line there were several generations where father and son alternated between James and Archibald. Thankfully for me the tradition died out or I'd be married to Archibald!

We named our youngest son Ben because he was born on my sister's wedding day and she married a Ben so the family decided they should share the same name.

Or sometimes people have a particular reason, maybe even a revelation, for a name of a new child. The gospel of Matthew describes the most extraordinary experiences that Joseph had leading up to Jesus' birth, as he struggled with how to handle the scandalous situation that he found himself in. During the crisis he dreamed of an angel of the Lord, and he woke convinced that God was asking him to marry Mary and claim her child as his adopted son. And with that conviction came a name for the child: Jesus, in Hebrew, 'Yeshua', similar to the Old Testament name Joshua, or in its fullest version. Matthew clarifies the significance of the name: It means to rescue or save, with an abbreviated version of the great name of God in the Ye (or Je) at the start. Our God saves. The name Jesus literally means Saviour.

It was a common enough name at the time, just as Joshua is common enough in our time. But it is a mighty name with a big meaning.

But Matthew does not stop there. He adds two other names to the name of the newborn baby, born in Bethlehem. The first he adds in right at the end of the genealogy: Jesus who is called the Messiah.

Messiah is the same word as Christ. Both words translate the English word 'annointed'; Messiah in Hebrew and Christos in Greek. Some Bibles use the word Messiah in the New Testament and some use Christ. In the Old Testament it was Kings who were anointed, oil poured onto their head as an act of coronation, and also High Priests. But through the Old Testament there is a longing and a promise, of a future saviour, a coming Messiah, who will be anointed by God to save his people. Christians believed, from the very beginning, that Jesus born in Bethlehem was the fulfillment of this promise. And so we call Jesus the Christ, the Messiah.

Matthew has one more claim to make in his birth story about Jesus, however.

Matthew picks up a very specific prophecy made by the prophet Isaiah: verse 22

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"^[9] (which means "God with us").

Another name, which we honour and celebrate on Christmas Day. Immanuel, which Matthew kindly translates for us as “God is with us”.

So, three names across three languages. I know, it’s kind of complicated. But these names really intrigue me. I’m curious about how Jesus was the anointed one and what that meant 2000 years ago and what it might mean for us today. I’m curious about how Jesus saves, and what he saves us from and what he saves us for. To me it is a deeply compelling claim that in Jesus God was actually with us, able to be seen and heard and touched in ordinary human life. But how is he with us now, through his Spirit? How can we know him, and hear him and follow him, God-with-us through our ordinary lives?

These names spark questions that bring me a fresh appreciation of the little babe who in manger lay. A newborn baby is quite adorable, but these names that Jesus carried burst out of the cuteness, out of the stable and across the centuries. I do believe that Jesus, is Saviour, is God with you and God with me.

Good Christians all, rejoice.

We celebrate Christmas as the turning point of history, when God revealed his hand, showed his heart, spoke out his word ... in the form of a little babe, born in a manger, who grew to become Saviour of all. Jesus.

**CHRISTMAS DAY, Monday 25 December 2017,
Cashmere Presbyterian Church**

Preacher: Silvia

Equipment: children's activity sheets with felt pens to hand out
Bells/shakers for children (at front)

ORDER OF SERVICE:

Lighting the Advent Candles

Today, this Christmas Day, we light the Christ candle

Come, light of the world.

Open our eyes to see your glory

even when it is hidden.

Come in the little things and everyday.

Shine in our hearts, living Lord Jesus.

Amen.

Welcome to worship this Christmas morning.

Merry Christmas one and all!

My name is Silvia Purdie, I'm minister here. It is marvelous to share this glorious morning with you.

Carol 221: The first Noel (verses 1, 2, 6)

Call to Worship: (Isaiah 9, verses 2, 4 & 6)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

They lived in a land of darkness but now light is shining on them.

They rejoice in what you have done, O God,
for you have broken the yoke that burdened them
and the rod that beat their shoulders.

A child is born to us!

A child is given to us!

One who will be called Wonderful!

Counsellor!

Mighty God!

Eternal Father!

Prince of Peace!

Time of Prayer

Let us pray

God of all grace, Lord of all time,

We give you thanks this Christmas morning for the gift of Jesus

We gather to honour him, come as a child in a manger

so long ago and with us now as Lord and Saviour.

Thank you for Christmas time, its colour and sparkle

for family and friends to share this day

Thank you for treats and delicious food, for gifts to give and receive.

Thank you for summer sun, these hills, this city, the beaches

for journeys and holidays.

Thank you for the year that has been, for every blessing big or small

Thank you for the people who have walked this year with us

especially for new friends, people you have brought into our lives this year.

We pause for a moment to honour those we have lost this year,

We remember with thanks those who have died.

E nga mate, kei roto i te arohanui o te Ariki, Haere, haere, haere.

..

As we bring our thanks we also acknowledge our regrets and disappointments.

I am keenly aware of ways in which I have let some people down this year, even hurt people.

Lord, have mercy on us as we bring our failings before you this Christmas time.

Under the tinsel there is much that is broken in our world and in our own lives.

Forgive us, Lord.

Jesus, you showed us the love of God. You took our brokenness onto yourself and opened the way to life in all fullness.

Thank you for accepting us. Thank you for your peace. Amen.

Prayer Song (*remain seated*): Jesus, name above all names (*sung twice*)

(*Songs of the Kingdom 226, blue book*)

Jesus, name above all names

Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.

Emmanuel, God is with us.

Blessed Redeemer, Living word.

What's your name?

Christmas Day is a special day for giving others gifts. Has anyone received any special gifts yet?

Now, I wonder – what was the very first gift you were given? When you were just new born?

Your name.

My sister was given the name 'Natalie' meaning, 'for the birth', because she was due to be born at Christmas time, but she was quite late and didn't come until mid January.

I was given the name Silvia, named after an Italian woman who had been a special friend of my mother. The fact that the first girl my father had kissed had also been called Sylvia was quite irrelevant, so he said!

What is your name?

Do you know why your parents gave you that name?

Our children have an activity sheet and it asks them to write down all the names they were given, and also to write down the names of some other people here in church, so please introduce yourself to our children, and to others you don't know.

Passing the Peace

Share the peace of Christ with one another.

Introduce yourself to someone you don't know.

Carol 225: Infant holy, infant lowly

Matthew's Gospel begins with Jesus' genealogy, the generations from Abraham to Joseph, via King David on the way. The genealogy ends with this conclusion, rather carefully worded:

Matthew chapter 1 verse 16:

“and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.”

John picks up the story of Jesus at verse 17:

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Christmas message: 'The Name of Jesus'

Carol 238: Good Christians all rejoice

Children's time

Children are invited to the front for a story time

Offering

CWS appeal

Carol 224 (during offering): Joy to the world (with bells & shakers)

Dedication of the offering (*please stand*)

Prayers for others

***Father God, your name is holy.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us bread for each day.
Forgive us when we fail,
as we forgive those who let us down.
Save us from times of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

Carol 228: O come all ye faithful (verses 1, 2, 5, 7)

Blessing

May the echo of angel song fill your Christmas
and the love of Mary and Joseph fill your home.
The presence of God-with-us carry you through all that lies ahead,
and the peace of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, be in you
and go with you, this Christmas day and every day.
Amen.

Amen, amen, amen (sung)

*Please remain standing as the Bible is processed out.
May your Christmas Day be full of blessings.*

Matthew 1: 16-25

and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[d]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[e] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[f] because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^[g] (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.