



Prepare Ye The Way



How often do we open ourselves up to change? Especially at Christmas, when we are warmed by tradition and the familiar, and find comfort in people and homes we know well, we don't always welcome things that will disrupt us from our norm.

Over the next four weeks of advent, as once again we prepare the way for Jesus' arrival, we will reflect on how we might be disrupted from our norm by seeking out **transformational encounter**.



In the Magnificat we read,
"He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the humble".

Do we recognise our own pride and might
which needs to be undone?

Do we see the hunger of those who hope to be filled?
How can we join in the work of God and cause holy disruption?



Join us on this journey to prepare the way for Jesus' arrival through transformational encounter. Look out for more stories and reflections, by following us on social media:

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Keep in touch, and let us know about the effect of your transformational encounters using **#prepareyetheway**.



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Transformational Encounter

*He has filled the hungry with good things
but he has sent the rich away empty.*

Luke 1: 53

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The story of Jesus' birth is full of disruptive encounters. Beginning with Mary's visit from the Angel Gabriel, and ending with a group of scholars travelling thousands of miles to meet a teenage mum and her child, the experiences of those in the biblical stories couldn't be more unlikely. Yet these are stories of transformation, as people step into the presence of God and have their worlds changed.

Take Mary, for example. In Luke Chapter 1, a teenage girl encounters an angel in her home. Finding herself suddenly in the presence of the heavens, the disruption of a simple Bethlehem room by the angel's blinding light must have been a transformation in itself. But not only was Mary's physical world transformed by the divine, so too was her understanding of God.

The words Mary speaks in Luke 1: 46-56, in response to her experience, show her discovery of a God who turns things upside down. Through the revelation of the angel, Mary meets a God who comes to perform the mightiest act of salvation the world has ever seen, but does so without power or pride. In fact, she encounters a God who chooses instead to be found with the humble and the hungry.

The God Mary discovers favours the marginalised, casts pride to the wayside and invites the poor as guests of honour to the feast.

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A God who chooses to see value in those who may look unpromising to human eyes. This is certainly a far cry from the earthly displays of power and leadership Mary would have been used to. This God tips the balance of power.

Mary encounters a God of justice, service and humility, and her world is transformed.

Through his choice of arrival, God foretells of Jesus' ministry to come – one of holy disruption, interruption and change.

This act of disruption didn't stop with Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection, but surely is the commission of the church today too. A calling to step out of the comfortable, and into transformational encounter with the divine.

Richard Foster says that

'to stand before the holy one of eternity is to change'.

Just like Mary, we are called to encounter God's presence, and in doing so be open to holy disruption.

This advent, you are invited to prepare the way for Jesus' arrival by stepping into transformational encounter.

As Mary meets God in the humble and the hungry, we too can choose encounter God through those we might least expect.

Each week, there will be an opportunity to reflect on the transformational encounters experienced by those at Jesus birth, and think about this in the context of some of the issues we currently face as a society. As we do so, we will ask ourselves:

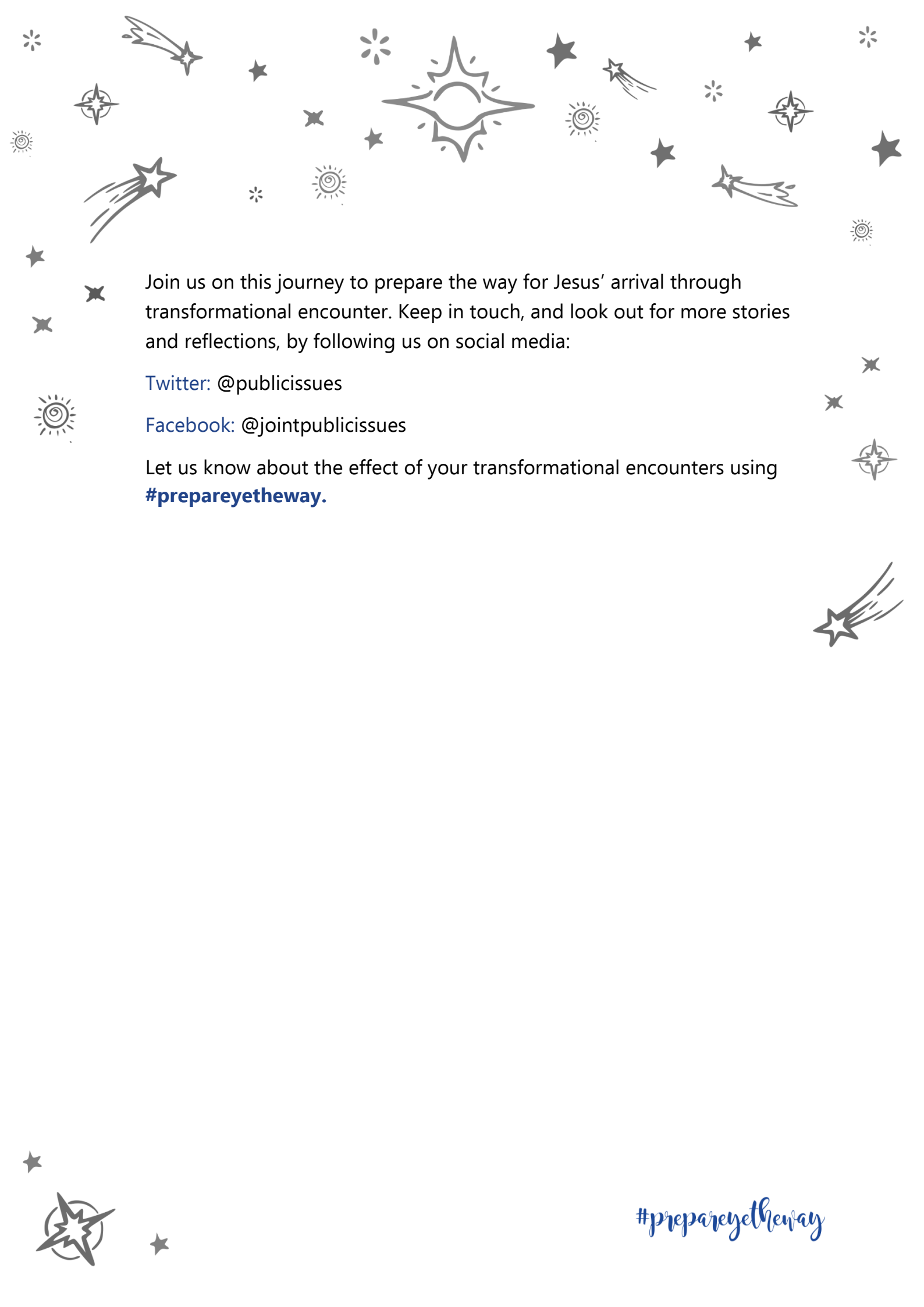
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