

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

Wesley Uniting Church, Forrest

28 November 2021



Gathering the People

Welcome and News

Acknowledgement of Country

Greeting: May the peace of Holy One, Holy Three be with you all:
And also with you.

Opening movement prayer – readying ourselves for worship

Christmas in the Scrub

singing what we're waiting for

1. At Christmas time the birds all sing
The rabbits jump, the lizards crawl
At Christmas time the outback rings
All for the birth of God

Chorus

For the birth of God, the wallabies hop
For the birth of God, the cockatoos squawk
For the birth of God, the platypus swims
For the birth of God, the kookaburra laughs
For the birth of God was such exciting news
They'd never heard before
They came from all the land to see this baby in the straw.

2. And if you were there you would have heard
The wise old kangaroo
"Oh, I've starved in droughts, I've swum the floods,
"I've hopped around, both up and down,
"Through hills and plains I've never seen
"Such a baby in the straw."

3. And if you were there you would have heard
The wise little bandicoot.
"Oh, I've snuffled and fossicked the midnight scrub
"I've been in logs and fogs and bogs,
"Well bless my days, I've never heard
"Of a baby in the straw."

4. And if you were there you would have heard
The wise old noisy crow.
"Oh, I've flown this land, seen many a baby
"Born in burrows, trees and furrows,
"Yet this one outshines them all,
"This baby in the straw."

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Waiting: Hope

Looking for hope – *Jules and the children*

Litany of the wreath: hope

In the beginning was the Word –
spoken and breathed,
a promise made and kept.

Listen and hear –

God's promise is true!

the Word was in the beginning,
and through him all things come into being.

Eternal and near at hand,

already and not yet,

God's promise is the foundation of all life.

Listen!

Hear the covenant anew, giving voice to a future with hope.

God sent a star to light the way to hope,
as we wait, may hope lead us to God again.

Children hang the word 'hope'

Listen – 'Come Christmas Child'

Come, Christmas Child, come again in your wonder,
changing the world with the light that you hold,
burst through the mist and the dust of the ages,
Word for our time to unwrap and enfold

*Come, Christmas Child come again,
Christmas Child.*

Come to be born in a comfortless cradle,
come where our cruelties keep us in chains;
Herod still hunts for the innocent children.
Rachel still weeps and her sorrow remains.

Bring us your mirror of hope and compassion,
bring us your mindset that mends and restores;
bake us the bread of new life you will offer,
knocking once more on humanity's doors.

Come, Christmas Child, in the festival's flurry,
come in the silence, the pain and the night,
come in the hearts that are faithful as Mary
bringing the joy of the love you invite.

Litany of waiting: 'For you we wait'

Ruth Burgess (*Winter, Wild Goose*, 2016)

God of truth

For you we wait

God of justice

For you we wait

God of lovingkindness

For you we wait

We know that you are always near

Silence – 3 minutes

The Story

The Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Response: In this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Silence

Homily

Silence

Dedication of offerings

Holy Communion

We Express Our Praise and Confession

We celebrate You and praise You,

God of new beginnings and surprising opportunities

Because You never cease to make Yourself available to us.

We appreciate You and thank You,

God of unquenchable life and irrepressible grace

Because You continue to offer us the resources of Your Spirit.

We love You and embrace You,

God of unfailing compassion and constant companionship

Because You walk beside us and transform us into agents of love.

Forgive us, O Lord,

When we seek to keep You to ourselves

and shut others from Your influence

Forgive us, O Christ,

When we wallow in our own weakness

and take advantage of the weakness of others.

Forgive us, O Spirit,

When we deny Your friendship

and withhold Your compassion from others.

Silent Confession

Heal us, restore and empower us, O God, we pray

For the sake of Your kingdom which has broken into our world.

Amen.

Prayer for the world 'Bearers of hope'

Chris Polhill (*Winter, Wild Goose*, 2016)

The Lord's Prayer

We Come to the Lord's Table

We thank and praise You, O God
for You are not distant and uninvolved in our lives and our world
But, You have come to us, humbly and gently,
challengingly and irresistibly.

**And whoever receives You, whoever believes in You
becomes a child of God, born of the Spirit.**

Silent Reflection

So, we remember Jesus' birth and life,
His suffering and victory.
On the night before His crucifixion,
Jesus shared His last meal with His friends;
He took the loaf of bread and blessed it,
then breaking it, He offered it to them saying:
This is my body broken for you. Eat this in memory of me.

After the meal, He took the cup of wine and blessed it,
then He offered it to them saying:
This is my blood shed for you. Drink this in memory of me.

So, we eat and we drink and we remember.
With hope and joy in the new life which comes in God's kingdom. Amen.

Receive communion

Jesus body, broken for us; **Jesus body, broken for us**
eat together
Jesus love, poured out for us; **Jesus love, poured out for us**
drink together

We Give Thanks

We thank You, Lord God,
For breaking into our world, our lives and our experience.
We thank You, O Christ,
**For this meal of remembering,
and the stories of love and grace that it tells.**
We thank You, O Spirit,
**For Your Presence and Your challenge for us to become agents of
God's compassion.**
In Jesus' Name. **Amen**

Sent into the World

Sing: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and fill our lives, all dark and fear dispel,
as once an exiled Israel you found,
redeemed, restored and set on holy ground.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

O come, O light of Christ, so bright and clear
and lift our spirits by your advent here.
In all who gather, show us your face,
that we may know the warmth of your embrace.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

O come, O Wisdom, mind and heart divine,
help us restore a world we've let decline.
Enlighten us; your way we would know
and show us where new seeds of hope to sow.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

O Advent God of hope, joy, love and peace,
in you we pray our sad divisions cease.
Bind us as one, a people of grace,
for at your table each one has a place.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

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Blessing



Liturgist: Rev Dr Sarah Agnew | Preacher: Rev Dr Geoff Dornan

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

With thanks to our musicians & singers

Flowers arranged by Jan Tarbotton

Image:

'Jesus before Pilate, First interview': Tissot, James, 1836-1902

<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56679>

Litany of the wreath. Words by Teri Carol Peterson (*Winter*, Wild Goose, 2016)
adapted by Sarah Agnew (2020)

Communion liturgy: John van de Laar

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