



Advent 4 Yr B – 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
Christmas Eve

**Greeter:** Mehry

**Meditation Song:** O come, O come the time is near

O come, O come the time is near;  
we yearn to know your presence here.  
Creation stirs: the time is full.  
Be born to us, Emmanuel.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to us,  
a child shall be the sign.

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your advent here;  
love stir within the womb of night  
and death's own shadows put to flight:  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to us,  
a child shall be the sign.

**Welcome:**

**Greeting:**

On this Christmas Eve  
may the light of Christ be with you.

**And also with you**

**Moment of Stillness:**

As we begin our service, let's take a moment to be still and aware of God's presence within and all around us.

**Advent Candle:** *The first 3 Advent Candles are lit and the third candle is lit for love*

We light this candle of love  
to recall Mary and Joseph  
who saw their visions and dreamed their dreams,  
who heard angelic announcements  
and were obedient to your word and their calling,  
giving a home and care to the child.

**May the Light overcome the darkness.**

**Acknowledgement of Country:**

This is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.  
We acknowledge and give thanks for the Gadigal and Wangal people who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual relationship of the First Nations Peoples to this Country.

**We commit to walking with and learning from the elders of this land, and to the ongoing journey of justice and reconciliation.**

**Call to Worship:**

Holy God, in this quiet season, the season of waiting,

**We rest in the shelter of your love.**

In this season of waiting, we seek your light to guide us.

**We trust in the light of your promise.**

In this season of solitude, when we listen for the rhythm of your breath.

**We find hope in the signs of your presence.**

In this season, it is a time to make room and to make ready.

**For we shall join in the angel's chorus.**

Peace on earth, goodwill to all people.

**We cry out for peace on earth, goodwill to all.**

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all time

In our watching and our waiting

**Come Lord Jesus.**

In our hopes and in our fears

**Come Lord Jesus.**

In our homes and in our world

Come Lord Jesus.

**Come Lord Jesus.**

**Bless us and surprise us as we look forward to the day of your birth.**

**Amen**

**Hymn: Light a candle of hope (TIS 286)**

1. Light one candle for hope,  
one bright candle for hope,  
He brings hope to every heart.  
He comes. He comes.
2. Light one candle for peace,  
one bright candle for peace,  
He brings peace to every heart.  
He comes. He comes.
3. Light one candle for joy,  
one bright candle for joy,  
Every nation will find salvation  
in Beth-l'em's baby boy.
4. Light one candle for love,  
one bright candle for love,  
He brings love to every heart.  
He comes. He comes.  
He brings love to every heart.  
He comes. He comes.

**Prayer of confession:**

Because it is so hard to wait, it is not easy to live through Advent's days.

But watch what God does during this time.

God waits for us to turn from our old ways to find new paths;

God waits for us to admit what we have done, and failed to do,  
So, we might be forgiven and graced with new life.  
Let us approach the One who waits - for us!

God of Stable, stars and surprises,  
of light and hope and new life:  
open our eyes and hearts to your presence in the world;  
forgive our obsession with property and possessions;  
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision;  
forgive us when we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.  
Open us to your grace,  
that we might hear again the song of the angels,  
and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives.  
**Amen**

### **Words of assurance:**

Love has come into the world,  
a free gift of grace for ordinary people,  
a nurturing of hope,  
and a promise of new things!

I invite you to respond with me:  
**We are loved. We belong. We are  
forgiven. Thanks be to God.  
Amen.**

### **Peace:**

The peace of Christ be with you  
**And also with you.**

### **Hymn: Not the powerful (TIS 288)**

Not the powerful, not the privileged, not  
the famous in the land,  
but the no-ones and the needy  
were the first to hold God's hand.

Not a well-established family  
with an heirloom christening shawl,

but a homeless, wandering couple  
parented the Lord of All.

Not, at first, to little children,  
nor to those whose faith burned bright,  
but to adults, stalled in darkness,  
angels brought God's love and light.

God, determined to be different  
from the standards we think best,  
in God's choice of friends and family,  
lets forgotten folk be blessed.

Not obsessed by our achievements,  
worldly wealth or family tree,  
may we, in and with God's chosen,  
find our fondest pedigree.

**Moment for the young at heart: Song of the Stars - Graham**

**Bible Readings: Marie**

**Introduction to Hebrew Bible reading:**

At the heart of Psalm 89 is the question of faithfulness. More particularly, the question centres on the faithfulness of God. As a royal psalm, the psalm celebrates and explores the relationship between God and David, his anointed one, and those that follow in his stead.

**Psalm 89:1-4, 20-26**

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord,<sup>[a]</sup> forever;  
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

<sup>2</sup> I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;  
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

<sup>3</sup> You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;  
I have sworn to my servant David:

<sup>20</sup> I have found my servant David;  
with my holy oil I have anointed him;

<sup>21</sup> my hand shall always remain with him;  
my arm also shall strengthen him.

<sup>24</sup> My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him,

and in my name his horn shall be exalted.

<sup>25</sup> I will set his hand on the sea  
and his right hand on the rivers.

<sup>26</sup> He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,  
my God, and the Rock of my salvation!

### **Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>35</sup> 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<sup>[c]</sup> will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> 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.

Hear the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection: Rev Joy**

**Moment of Stillness:**

**Prayers of the People: Alison**

**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.  
Save us in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours.  
Now and forever.  
Amen**

**Community News:**

**Offering Prayer:**

Holy One, on this Christmas Eve we wait in hope.  
And we give in hope.  
Hope for your coming reign;  
Hope because of your presence with us now.  
Receive our gifts,  
And use them for your work of healing and hope in our world.  
**Amen.**

**Song: Star Child (Shirley Murray)**

Star-Child, earth-Child,  
go-between of God,  
love Child, Christ Child,  
heaven's lightning rod,

*Refrain:*

This year, this year,  
let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone,  
everyone alive!

Street child, beat child,  
no place left to go,  
hurt child, used child

no one wants to know [*Refrain*]

Grown child, old child,  
mem'ry full of years,  
sad child, lost child,  
story told in tears [*Refrain*]

Spared child, spoiled child,  
having, wanting more,  
wise child, faith child,  
knowing joy in store [*Refrain*]

Hope-for-peace Child,  
God's stupendous sign,  
down-to-earth Child,  
Star of stars that shine [*Refrain*]

### ***Benediction & Blessing:***

Hold your light out to the world.  
Follow, where the Spirit of Hope leads you.  
Listen, as the Child of Peace cries for you.  
Rejoice, as the Love of God embraces you.

And may Almighty God bless you;  
Creator, Christ and Spirit  
be upon you and remain forever within you.

### **3-fold-amen**

### **Pastoral Prayers: Brian & Christo**

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*Assurance: adapted Dorothy McRae-McMahon – Prayers for Life's Particular Moments*

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*Blessing: Adapted Shine on Star of Bethlehem – Christian Aid*