



Christmas 1 Yr B – 31st December 2023

Leader: David / Greeter: Ron

Meditation Hymn: A new commandment I give unto you (TIS 699)

A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this shall all know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another. *(Repeat)*

Welcome:

Greeting:

As we celebrate the arrival of the Christ-child this Christmas:
May the Lord be with you
And also with you

Moment of Stillness:

Christ Candle:

We light this light to remind us that the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

Acknowledgement First Peoples:

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

We give thanks to God that hope was born!

**God's light, whose sign was a star,
was poured out for all people.**

All the fears and pain of this world cannot diminish God's light.

**That light is the life of Jesus Christ,
who breaks through the darkness.**

Thanks be to God, for the most precious gift of Light.

Let us live as people of new Light and Hope.

Opening Prayer

God of promise and mysterious Light,
be with us this day as we journey to meet your Gift.

Give us courage and hope along our way,
as your light continues to glow brightly in our path,
leading us to love and follow you.

In Jesus' Name.

AMEN.

Songs: As with gladness men of old (TIS 314)

1 As with gladness men of old

did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright:
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore your glory see.

2 As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to your lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
one whom heaven and earth adore:
so may we with willing feet
ever seek your mercy seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare
at your cradle rough and bare:
so may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

4 Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed lives at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds your glory hide;

5 in the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
you its light, its joy, its crown,
you its sun which goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
hallelujahs to our King.

Prayer of confession:

We come to God knowing that we have failed to obey the call of Jesus
to love God and one another with our whole hearts;

but we come also to a God who reaches out to us with healing and reconciliation.

In this knowledge, let us pray

We are sorry when we let the comfort of Christmas stop us from seeing those who don't live in comfort; those who are hungry, those in pain, those in need of your love. Break those bonds of comfort and strengthen us to take on the risk of following you. Help us to follow your light. Shine brightly in us and through us. Forgive the blindness we so often offer to you. Give us vision of what you would have us be and do in the light of your love.
AMEN.

Words of assurance:

The Light has come. The Light has come and has put out the darkness. Now we can walk in the light. You are loved by God and called to walk with God in the light.

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us:
"Your sins are forgiven."

Thanks be to God

Peace:

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

**Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace
(TIS 324)**

Lord, bid Your servant
go in peace,
Your word is now fulfilled.
These eyes have seen
salvation's dawn,
This child so long foretold.

This is the Savior

of the world,
The Gentiles' promised light,
God's glory dwelling
in our midst,
The joy of Israel.

His mother's soul
a sword shall pierce
of sorrow keen and deep.
From many hearts
their secret thoughts
through him shall be revealed

Blessed be the Father,
who has given
his Son to be our Lord,
blessed too that Son,
and with them both
the Spirit of their love

Moment for the young at heart: [Brian Lenehan](#)

Bible Readings: [Rick Legge](#)

Luke 2 22-40

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” 33 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” 36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Return to Nazareth

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Matthew 2:1–23

The Visit of the Wise Men

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Hear the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection: Rev Clabon Allen

Moment of Stillness:

Prayers of the People: Judith Townsend

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:

As we faithfully give for the life and mission of God's church in this place and in the world (either online or in the plate), let's pray our offering prayer.

God who gives great gifts, we long for the time when the meek shall inherit the earth and all who hunger and thirst after justice shall be satisfied, and we believe that, despite the persistence of evil, now is always the time when more good can be done and we can make a difference.

May it be so, through the offering of these gifts and the offering of our lives.

Amen.

Song: And Did You See Him, Little star

And did you see Him little star,
long, long ago?
and was it you, I wonder, shone
on manger low?
And did you see the shepherd men,
when angels sang?
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,'
the message rang.

And did you guide the three wise kings
with shining light?
and bring them to the holy Child
on that great night?
And will you still shine down on earth,
though from afar,
and lead us back to Bethlehem,
O little star?

Benediction & Blessing:

Go into God's world, bearing the light of hope and peace.
Bring the Good News of the love of God through Jesus Christ to all people.
Go in peace.

And the blessing of Creator, Christ and Spirit be with you
this day and evermore.

3-fold-amen

Pastoral Prayers: Heather Thompson

Acknowledgements:

Image: Refugee icon by Kelly Latimer

*Call to worship, opening prayer, prayer of confession, assurance and benediction: adapted from –
ministrymatters.com*