



5 January 2025 Christmas 2 and Epiphany

Greeter: **Wendy Salier**

Leader ; **Alison Burnett**

Meditation Song: **A new commandment**
(please remain seated)

***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 will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.***

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:

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

Christ Candle

We light this candle to remind us that Christ, the light of the world is present among us.

Acknowledgement of Land

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

A star shining brightly in the East,

discovered by those who have eyes to see the unusual and the challenging.

A journey into unknown territory,

taken by those who have courage and curiosity.

The Holy One recognized, despite humble origin.

Come, let us worship.

Opening prayer:

God of life, starlight is our night companion – a gift of wonder – that helped direct ancient ones on their journey, and helps us reflect upon our own.

Amen.

Hymn: **Thanks to God, whose word was spoken (TIS 431)**

***1. Thanks to God, whose word was spoken
in the deed that made the earth;
his the voice that called a nation,
his the fires that tried her worth.***

**God has spoken:
praise him for his open word!**

**2. Thanks to God, whose Word incarnate
glorified the flesh of man;
deeds and words and death and rising
tell the grace in heaven's plan.**

**God has spoken:
praise him for his open word!**

**3. Thanks to God, whose word was written
in the Bible's sacred page,
record of the revelation
showing God to every age.**

**God has spoken:
praise him for his open word!**

**5. Thanks to God, whose word is answered
by the Spirit's voice within;
here we drink of joy unmeasured,
life redeemed from death and sin.**

**God is speaking:
praise him for his open word!**

Prayer of confession:

King Herod was frightened and threatened by the birth of the Christ child.

All of Jerusalem was frightened with him.

We all act out of fear, sometimes, in our lives.

We can be afraid of losing power, identity, privilege, things we value.

Fear drives us away from God.

Help us, O God, to suppress our fears and to act out of love and light.

Words of affirmation

God has brought us again to this place,
where we can leave behind our confessions.

For these gifts of confession, God says,

“Thanks. Thanks for your honesty,
your trust, your faith, your love.”

And the gift that God gives us this new year
is a new journey with the child

who grows, loves us and lives for us.

Amen.

Peace:

Lift your eyes and look around.

The light of the babe of Bethlehem shines from the face of each one here.

Let us now greet that light, rejoice that we are here together,

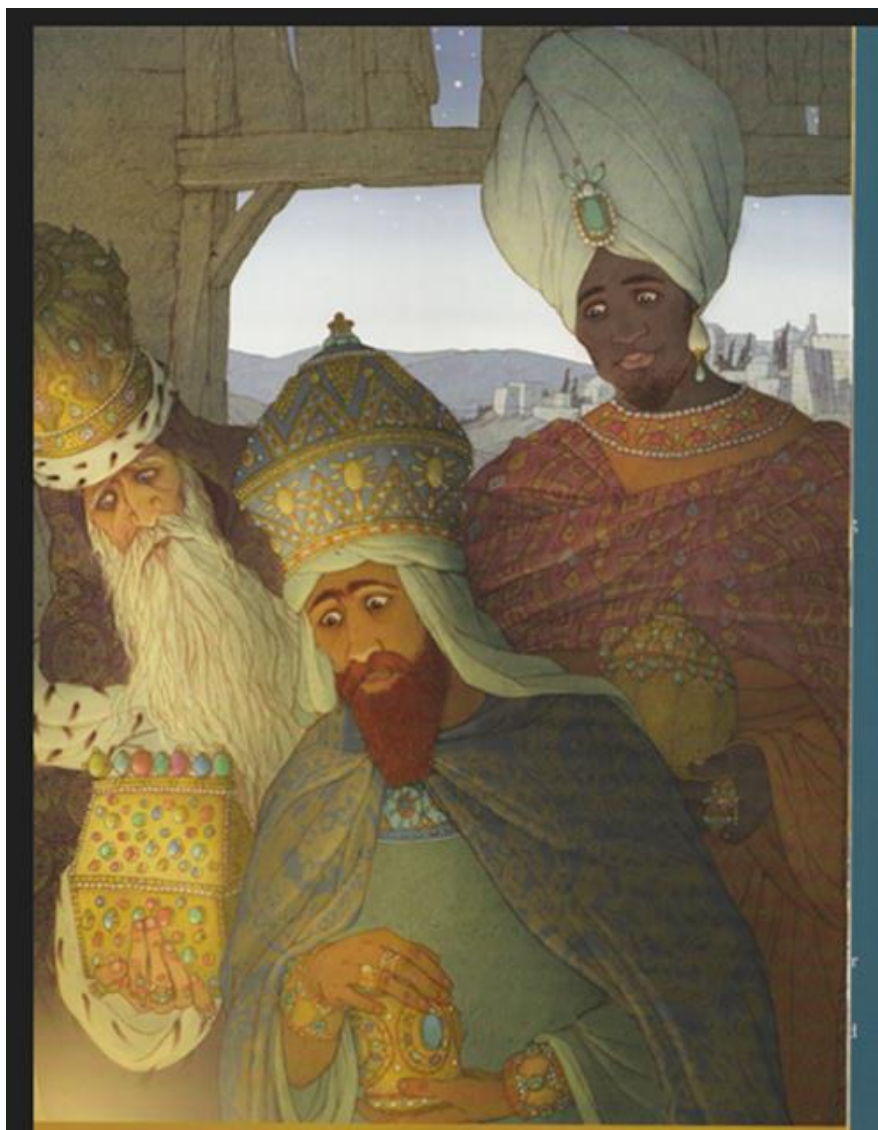
and pass the peace of Christ, our joy and our hope.

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

Let's share Christ's peace with one another from where we are seated

Young People's Time: **Brian Lenehan**





*"Let's find the new King!" the three magi cried,
As they jumped on their camels and started to ride.
And they knelt before Jesus with gifts to behold,
As Mary remembered the things she'd been told.*

Gifts for a King



On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. —Matthew 2:11

Mary, there's someone here to see Jesus," Joseph said, as he ushered the visitors into the room. Mary was sitting by the window with her son on her lap and she looked up in surprise to see three men who looked like kings standing in the doorway. Each one was holding a shiny, precious gift and their splendid robes swished on the floor as they walked toward her.

"We are here to worship the King," said the first. As he knelt in front of Jesus, Mary marveled at his purple cloak and the sparkling jewels in his crown. "I bring gold for the King," he said softly as he placed a glittering vessel on the ground in front of Jesus. Mary looked at the gold and remembered then, the angel Gabriel's visit. It seemed like a long time ago now, but Mary could still hear his words ... The Lord God will make him a King

"And I bring frankincense," the second one said, as he carried a bejeweled jar towards Jesus. Mary couldn't help noticing his fur-lined cloak and the glittering rings adorning his fingers as he placed his gift on the floor. "This incense is a sign of our worship," he said.

Mary looked at the incense and remembered, then, how incense was used by the priests in the temple as they worshiped God.

"And I bring myrrh, an expensive perfume," the third one said softly, as he knelt and placed a golden urn before Jesus. "Thank you," said Mary quietly, as the wise man looked deep into her eyes. The room was silent.

Later that night, after the three wise men were long gone, Mary stood by her window and looked at the bright, shining star that had led them to her son. She swayed gently back and forth, as she lulled Jesus to sleep on her shoulder.

And in the corner of the room, in the light of the star, sat three shining gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Introduction to Hebrew Bible reading:

This beautiful mélange of promise oracles asserts the power of the Lord to gather those Judeans who have experienced forced migration and captivity. They are words of hope and restoration; a message of joy and praise. But there's a catch, this is not a statement of facts. It is an oracle, a promise yet to be fulfilled, a description of things hoped for. Jeremiah is ever hopeful and his message is delivered to a people sorely in need of hope.

Jeremiah 31:7–14

7 For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

8 See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labour, together; a great company, they shall return here.

9 With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

12 They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.

13 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. **14** I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

John 1:10-18

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Reflection: **Rev Carolyn Thornley**

Prayers of the People: **Marie Thompson**

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

Communion Hymn: **Come to the banquet (Fay White)**

***1. Come to the banquet there's a place for you
Though you maybe have no money,
though you maybe feel unworthy
in your strength or in your weakness***

you are welcome, come.

2.Come to the banquet there's a place for you
*See, you are an honoured guest,
from constant serving you may rest
so sit you down, be fed & blessed for
you are welcome, come.*

3.Come to the banquet there's a place for you
*Here is one who runs to meet you,
loving arms stretched out to greet you,
do not let your fear defeat you,
you are welcome, come*

4.Come to the banquet there's a place for you
*Willing hands have made this bread ,
with salt and yeast and labour shared,
let all the hungry ones be fed;
it's time for feasting, come.*

5.Come to the banquet there's a place for you
*Abundant wine, enough for all,
our generous loving host has called,
the cup of blessing now is poured,
for sweet communion, come.*

Come to the banquet there's a place for you.

Communion

May the God of new beginnings be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the One who makes all things, including us, new.

Children of God, sing praises to the One who gives you new life.

We praise the One who continues to surprise us with hope and grace.

Before there was time,

You took a moment to bring creation out of chaos.

You created mountains, and carved deep canyons;

You filled the oceans and planted food for all creatures;

You plowed rivers to water a Garden, and shaped us in Your image.
But we did not have time for You,
preferring to spend our days chasing sin,
and our nights seeking death.
You always made time for us,
speaking of Your hopes through the prophets,
sharing Your dreams through the angels.
Then, one day You decided
to do a new thing, becoming one of us
as Jesus become human to bring hope and grace to us.

So we join with the saints in heaven,
and our sisters and brothers on earth, who sing of Your glory:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of every time and space.
All creation sings of Your majesty and glory.
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who gives us the water of life.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are You, Keeper of our days,
and blessed is Jesus Christ,
who is with us in every season of life.
He comes, not to judge us, but to forgive us;
He comes, not to cast us out,
but to gather us into the new Jerusalem;
He comes, not to watch us suffer,
but to die on the cross, that we might live with You.

As we give thanks for his life,
and remember his death and resurrection,
we would talk of that mystery which is our faith:

**Christ died, so sin would have no more power over us;
Christ rose, destroying death's grip on us;
when the new heaven and new earth come,
Christ will make all things, including us, new.**

In these sacred moments,

send Your Spirit to sanctify the bread and the cup,
and to open the hearts of those who approach the Table.
As the Bread of life touches our lips,
may we be strengthened to serve
those whom the world has forgotten.
As the Cup of salvation quenches our thirst for You,
may we be enabled to bring relief
to those who wander
the desert wastes of our society.

And when all time ends, and all people are gathered
around Your Table in Heaven, we will rejoice in Your presence,
and sing your praises forever:
One God, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen.

Christ is the bread of joy, **who shares food with sinners.**
Christ is the cup of life, **who revives the faint-hearted.**
Let us receive what we are; let us become what we receive.
The body of Christ.

Jesus Lamb of God **have mercy on us.**
Jesus, bearer of our sins, **have mercy on us.**
Jesus, redeemer of the world, **grant us your peace.**

Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ,
and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

Christ's body broken for you.
The blood of Christ keep you in eternal live.

Prayer

God of grace, you renew us at your table with the bread of life.
May this food strengthen us in love and help us to serve you in each other.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen.

Offering Prayer:

As the magi brought gold,
so we bring these gifts.

As the magi brought frankincense,
so we bring our prayers.

As the magi brought myrrh,
so we bring our lives to you, O God.
Amen.

Notices:

- 26th December- 20th Jan - Rev Joy Annual Leave
- 19th January 2025 - Aboriginal Sunday
- 26th January 2025 - Australia Day
- 2nd February 2025 – Family Fun Church resumes
- 5th February 2025 - Wednesday Prayer/Communion resumes
- 17th February 2025 - Women’s Spirituality Group resumes

Song: Give Thanks

***Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He’s given
Jesus Christ his Son. (repeat)***

***And now,
Let the weak say “I am strong!”
Let the poor say “I am rich!”
Because of what the Lord has done
for us. (repeat)***

Give thanks.

Benediction & Blessing

May God be a guiding star before you,
a glorious song above you,
a gentle path below you,
a galvanizing voice behind you
wherever you may journey.
In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Acknowledgements:

Resources from MediaCom *Seasons of the Spirit*, Thom M. Shuman, *Great Prayer of Thanksgiving*,
Image He Qi, *The Magi 2001 Adoration of the Kings*