



First Sunday after Christmas

Worship@Home December 27, 2020



Gathering and Lighting the Advent candles

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Galatians 4:4-7

Call to worship

We are drawn by wonder,
and invited into mystery.

Christ is born: gather 'round.

All places, all faces,
all creation together.

Christ is born: gather 'round.

With those gone before us,
and the ones yet to come.

Christ is born, gather 'round.

**Come, worship Christ,
the newborn King.**

Acknowledging

We acknowledge the First Peoples of this place: their Elders past and present: and those emerging: we seek healing and a loving relationship together.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Angels, from the Realms of Glory **TiS 309**

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
heralds of creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.*

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching over flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant Light:

*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.*

Wise men, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star:

*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.*

Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him:
every knee shall then bow down:

*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King,
come and worship,
worship Christ the new-born King.*

¹James Montgomery





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Prayer

When I hear the words in Isaiah (61:10 - 62:3) about being clothed in fine garments and covered with robes and jewels and garlands which reflect your character, I exult! But then I know how far short I fall in displaying and reflecting the splendour of your adorning.

I long to be the soft and fertile earth in which the shoots of your glory grow up into our world. Let me be the garden which grows the good fruit of righteousness and praise. Give me courage and strength to stand for justice and peace in a world where these things are not prime motivators or priorities.

Who am I that you would share with me such things? I am your beloved and you know me by name. You give me great blessings and surround me with the beauty of your world. For these and every blessing I give thanks.

Listening

Read Luke 2:22-40

For these words of faith
and Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.



Reflecting

Shearwater Team

My name is Anna and I am a prophet. I have lived long into this calling. Does it strike you as strange that I am a woman prophet? There are some notable ones in scripture. I am old now and have lived as a widow many years. All this time I have lived in the temple and worshipped faithfully, in prayer and fasting constantly. I have lived a perpetual season of Advent, waiting, preparing, anticipating. And now here he is! The one I have longed to see. He will replenish and renew, he will redeem and restore. Are you ready for this O people of God?

I will speak of Him to whomever will have the ears to hear. Advent is past, the One for whom I have waited has come!

My name is Simeon. I have held a hope of consolation and comforting for God's people, that they may be the blessing to the Nations God intended. Some people say I'm spiritual and religious: I say I try to stay close to the Holy Spirit. I have waited for this moment: for this sight I have known would come. I see God's salvation is for all peoples, through this child presented to me.

Salvation brings with it my rest: but to those who would follow close to the Spirit, it will lead you in paths vulnerable and wild: your inner world will be made transparent so that you may be made whole.

I am Mary, mother of Jesus. It's only been forty days since he was born, this little bundle of love in my arms and here I am, in the temple, for the rite of purification. I'm tired, like most mothers are at this stage; what with my body recovering from the pregnancy and birth, and feeding and tending, and broken nights and busy days. I've been doing well learning to be a mother and singing songs of peace and joy to my little boy.

Reflection continues P3





Reflection continues

Today though, I feel heavy. I wonder if this is how Hannah felt when she brought Samuel to the temple? Like the weight of the world is resting in this baby that I carry. This baby connected to my soul. In the temple I met Simeon, so gentle and deep, and he spoke a blessing and a prophecy. The blessing felt like a warm blanket, the prophecy, like a threatening thunderstorm. It reminded me of the visit of the angel; overwhelming holy fear, the words too mystifying to comprehend.

But then there was Anna, woman-wisdom beside me, delighting in the child and breathing balm into my fear. On her breath, the 'let it be' that I gave the angel came back to me. Like any adventure of the heart, the cost of love is grief. The wounded soul that Simeon spoke of is the cost of mothering this child. One day I will feel the steel of the sword, but not today. Today was for blessing and restoration. May it be so.

Whose voice resonates with you today as you engage with this reading from the gospel of Luke? What questions arise? What blessing, hope or promise will you take with you into the new year?

Responding: Prayers for World and Community

God has sent the Spirit of the Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" Gal. 4:6
So we bring our prayers to God in intimate Trust and Love.

We give thanks O God for the gift of the season of Christmas. Not one day, but many days to reflect upon this incredible event: Emmanuel. God with us. May these days between Christmas and New Year provide a place for deeper contemplation of your Love.

We pray for those for whom these weeks marks the anniversary of bush fires. As summer brings heat, north winds and dry days, we pray for all people and communities still traumatised by the devastation. Bring help: bring healing.

We pray for families who did not manage the celebrations of Christmas. May those for whom relationships are damaged, find a prayer to help them not harden their hearts. May time and your Spirit amongst us bring help: Bring healing.

We pray for those who are sick:
those who are dying.
And those whose years-mind* occurs at this time.

We pray for people on Holiday: rural businesses recovering from shutdown, and people exploring this great sacred land. May we rest respectfully, finding restoration and rejuvenation.

Prayer continues P4



*years-mind *Roman Catholic Church* The commemoration of a deceased person by the celebration of a requiem mass, prayers, etc., on a day one year from the date of the death or funeral, or every year on the anniversary of this date.

Worship@Home: Christmas 1. Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Prayer continues

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 from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God
be born within you:
and also within you.

Offering

The Christmas Bowl is active with practical help for ordinary people in the major world centres of vulnerability. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Jordan and Zimbabwe.

In Afghanistan, your gifts will help girls to stay at school and restore their hopes for the future. In the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees are given long-term support to build safe, peaceful futures. For Sri Lankan refugees returning home, your donation means the chance to start a new life after years of war and displacement. And in Jordan, Syrian refugees are helped with food rations, hygiene kits and job training that is helping people earn a living. In Zimbabwe, you are helping communities grow their own food, earn their own income and be more secure through the pandemic.

Your Christmas Bowl gift supports vulnerable people around the world, helping them to survive conflict and disaster and build stronger, fairer and more resilient communities. You are helping those who are displaced and disadvantaged to access what we all deserve: food, medical care and lifesaving support to rebuild lives.

<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/>

Notices

This is our last offering of weekly worship from the Shearwater Team at this time. We have been blessed to travel with you since the pandemic closed our church doors in March. Thank you for inviting us into your homes and lives as we continued to worship together, apart.

We hope that our resource has been a blessing to you, and has helped you to navigate the stormy waters of this strange time, knowing that you are not alone.

The Presbytery of Gippsland will endeavour to post a weekly worship resource on the webpage for individuals and communities. Please phone **Jennie** if you would like some help with accessing this on **0416 152 051**.

<https://gippsland.unitingchurch.org.au/>



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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Singing: Away in a Manger

rewritten

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.*

An innocent stranger,
this boy-child so near
brings blessing to those
who are living in fear,
brings hope to the weary
and love's burning light
to all who are lost or afraid in the night.

From here at the manger,
we ask you to stay
close by us as we try to walk in your way;
confronting the powers
and growing in grace
as those who most need you,
come bearing your face.

Let us, who have plenty,
give those who have less;
an offer of shelter, a friendship to bless,
asylum for refugees, food for the poor,
shared tables of comfort
and wide open doors.

From manger to marketplace,
Jesus come near
and whisper your wonder
to our waiting ears.
Bring healing and freedom,
bring hope and release
so all of creation
can breathe in your peace.

²Jennie Gordon

Blessing

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
go knowing that you are loved so much,
that the God-of-all, alpha and omega,
became flesh and lived amongst us,
so that we might know
what it is to live, fully,
in faith, hope and love.
May the blessing of Christ,
child born of Mary,
and the gentle breath of the Spirit
be upon you and within you
this day and always. Amen.

*Today's service and reflection has been
prepared by:*

*Rev. Jennie Gordon,
Rev. Dcn. Wendy Elson,
Rev. Ian Turnnidge.*

The Shearwater Congregations:
Cowes, Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Tarwin Lower,
Fish Creek, Foster & Toora.



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James Montgomery .k IRIS

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