



Eastwood Uniting Church

Christmas 1

27 December, 2020

So this is Christmas...



Acknowledgement of Country

*We acknowledge the Wallumattagal people of the Dharug/Eora nation,
the first inhabitants of this place.*

We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

We Gather in Praise of God

CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ Jesus is born among us,
full of light and love and joy.

Amen!

Our own eyes have seen God's salvation,
it's out in the open for everyone to see:
a God-revealing light for all the little ones;

***the least,
the last,
the lost!***

CAROL

Tune *North Wind* TIS 318

The north wind is tossing the leaves,
the red dust is over the town,
the sparrows are under the eaves
and the grass in the paddock is brown,
as we lift up our voices and sing to the Christ-child,
the heavenly King.

The tree ferns in green gullies sway,
the cool stream flows silently by,
the joybells are greeting the day,
and the chimes are adrift in the sky,
as we lift up our voices and sing to the Christ-child,
the heavenly King.

William James/John Wheeler. CCLI # 65422

A PRAYER FOR THIS DAY

Let us pray

***We arise today
blessed by all things;
by wings of breath,
delight of eyes,
and wonder of whisper,***

***by intimacy of touch,
eternity of soul,
and urgency of thought,***

***by miracle of health,
and embrace of God.***

May we live fully this day.

Amen

John O'Donohue alt. 1956-2008

FROM A BIBLICAL WITNESS

Listen for a faith expressed by the ancient Hebrews.

Isaiah 61. 10 – 62.3

In this is found word of God,

words of life!

for us and the world.

DOXOLOGY Tune *Thaxted*, Gustav Holst, 1916

O God beyond all praising,
we worship you today
and sing the love amazing
that songs cannot repay;
for we can only wonder
at every gift you send,
at blessings without number
and mercies without end:
we lift our hearts before you
and wait upon your word,
we honor and adore you,
our great and mighty Lord.

Michael Perry CCLI # 65422

THE PEACE

May the Peace of Jesus be always with you!

And also with you!

We Listen for word of God

HYMN Tune TiS 326 *The Secret* by John Bell. First 16 bars only rpt for each verse

Carol our Christmas, an upside down Christmas -
snow is not falling and trees are not bare;
carol the summer and welcome the Christ Child
warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.

Sing of the gold and the green and the sparkle
water and river and lure of the beach,
sing in the happiness of open spaces
sing a nativity summer can reach.

Shepherds and musters move over hillsides
finding not angels but sheep to be shorn;
wise ones make journeys whatever the season,
search for the signs of the truth to be born.

Right side up Christmas belongs to the universe,
made in the moment a woman gives birth;
hope is the Jesus Gift, love is the offering
everywhere, anywhere, here on the earth .

Shirley Murray, Alleluia Aotearoa CCLI # 65422

FROM A BIBLICAL WITNESSES

Listen for words of faith in the Gospel.

Luke 2. 22-40

For the word of God in scripture,
for the word of God among us,
for the word of God within us

Thanks be to God!

Iona Abbey Worship Book p 18

A CONTEMPORARY WITNESS ‘... and what have we done?’

Including <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooWTIOcUj4E>

We Respond to God’s Character of Love

HYMN

Tune *Ode to Joy* TiS 158

Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army,
proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
monarchs scorn and angels sing;
such a place as none would reckon
hosts a holy helpless thing;
stable beasts and by-passed strangers
watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven
coming here on Christmas Day.

Centuries of skill and science
span the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether,
with such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Wild Goose Song Book Vol 1 1987 Used with Permission

A RECOGNITION OF AWE AND VULNERABILITY

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage.
A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell thro' all its regions.
A dog starv'd at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.

A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The lamb misus'd breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.

The prince's robes and beggar's rags
Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.

Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine.
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.

He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell and death.
The child's toys and the old man's reasons
Are the fruits of the two seasons.

God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night;
But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.

Excerpted from William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*

DOXOLOGY Tune *Glory to God* TiS 773

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!
Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!

Jacques Berthier CCLI # 65422

OUR PRAYERS OF HOPE AND LONGING

O God, as we sing

"Away in a manger"

we think of the many people who are away from home
- not with their families this Christmas season –

those who are sick in hospital,

those who are in prison,

those not at home

because of work commitments

and all those who are travelling.

We think also

of those who, away from their loved ones,

are sick with COVID symptoms in the next room.

As we sing

"no crib for a bed"

we pray for the many homeless throughout our world –

those who have suffered loss

in hurricanes,

fires and earthquakes,

as refugees from civil wars,

those drifting from city to city looking for work.

As we sing

"the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head"

we think of those needing rest –

those fearing what lies ahead,
those who cannot sleep because of pain,
those who are struggling to make ends meet,
and those who work today
for the health and safety needs of our community.

As we sing

"the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay"
we pray for the light of your love to touch
all those who have lost faith,
those who need their confidence and hope restored,
those who face an uncertain future,
the leaders of our churches and country

And for ourselves.

May your love

be born afresh in each of us this Christmas,
so we may spread the light of your love to others.

Amen.

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.***

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS IN GRATEFULNESS TO GOD

Christmas Bowl Offerings in aid of many in need in Australia and abroad through the National Council of Churches may be made by calling Act for Peace on 1800 025 101 or give online at actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

Offerings made for the life and work of our Eastwood Church may be made via direct debit as many are choosing now to do, the church bank details are BSB: 634 634 and account number: 100020668.

We make our offering
in love of God and neighbour.

With these gifts, great God,
we offer you our lives
to do your work in the world.

Take our bodies and our minds,
our work and our leisure,
our relationships with other people,
our friendships and our family life,
our dreams and our doubts,
our faith and our plans for the future.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
we bring them to you.
Amen.

We Scatter to Serve God in the World

HYMN TiS 301

The first nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so keep.

*Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

When they looked up they saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light
and so it continued both day and night.

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

This star drew nigh to the north-west;
over Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then entered in those wise men three
and reverently, upon their knee,
they offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Now let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who brought forth heaven and earth from nought,
and with his blood mankind has bought.

Anon 17th century

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

God in Me rejoices with God in You.
Love in Me embraces Love in You.
Hope in Me joins Hope in You.
Spirit in Me prays to Spirit in You.
Let us together be people of truth.

Amen.

Geno Sisneros, St Matthew's Auckland, May 22, 2011