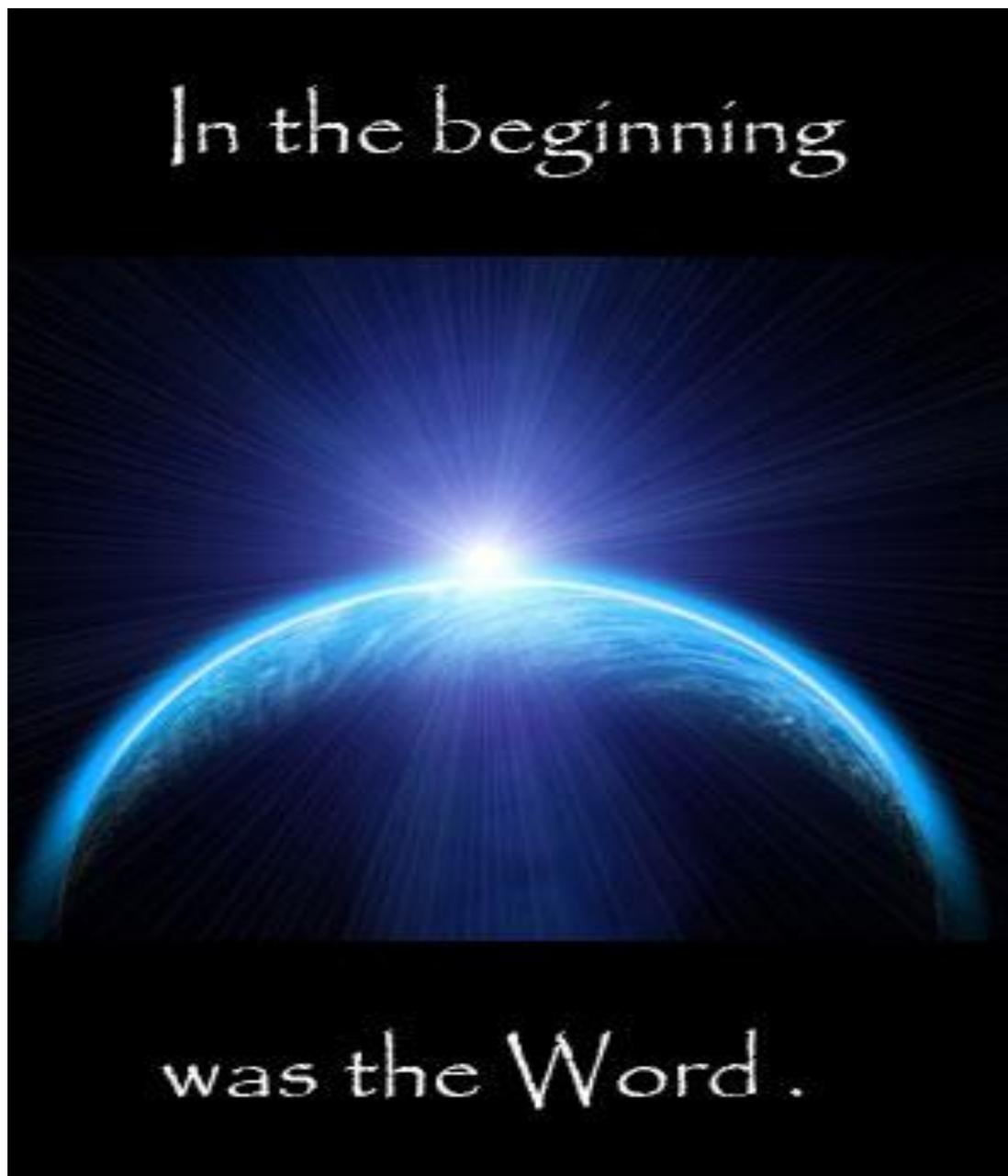




Eastwood Uniting Church

Christmas 2

3 January, 2021



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

A CALL TOWARDS WORSHIP

We meet this morning in a brand new year!
And in the fading hours of the Church's season of Christmas.

The Child of God is earthed in human life,
making real within the world
the heartbeat of God,
with its endless gifts of grace.

Christ Jesus, God with us all:

Your Word is found among us.

Christ Jesus, God with us all:

***We sing your praises this day.
We lift our souls in faith.***

HYMN Tune Wiltshire TiS 122

What shall I do, my God to love,
my loving God to praise?
the length, and breadth, and height to prove
and depth of sovereign grace?

Thy sovereign grace to all extends,
immense and unconfined;
from age to age it never ends,
to reach all humankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known,
wide as infinity,
so wide it never passed by one;
or it had passed by me.

My trespass was grown up to Heaven;
but far above the skies,
in Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see your mercies rise.

The depth of all-redeeming love,
what angel-tongue can tell?
O may I to the utmost prove
the gift unspeakable!

Come quickly, then, my Lord, and take
possession of your own;
my longing heart be pleased to make
Thine everlasting throne.

John Wesley 18th Century

PRAYER IN HUMILITY & GRATITUDE

Even as our longing hearts reach out towards you, great God,
we fall far short of our own hopes
and of your holy hope for us.

***You have trusted us
with the wonder of your life among us
and we betray that trust
in ways too many to name.***

We grieve those times
when we have not been gracious to others.

***We regret the moments
we have chosen lesser paths.***

Forgive us when we, your church,
have failed to witness to your love
for us and for all people
in a world which waits
and struggles
and loses hope.

Gracious God,
***remind us of our calling
and forgive us in our human frailty. Amen.***

A DECLARATION OF GOD'S GENEROUS GRACE

The word to us in Christ Jesus
is never less
than grace upon grace.

This is the miracle of the hope which Christ brings.
Thanks be to God.

DOXOLOGY *Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!*
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!
Hal-le lu jah, Hal-le lu jah!

From the Caribbean (TIS 720) © 1990 WGWR, Iona Community, CCLI # 65422

We Listen for word of God

FROM BIBLICAL WITNESSES

Listen for a faith expressed by the ancient Hebrews.

Jeremiah 31. 7-14

This is the witness of God's People!

Thanks be to God!

Listen for words of faith in early Christian writings.

Ephesians 1. 3-14

This is the witness of God's People!

Thanks be to God!

HYMN Tune *Capel* TiS 430 or AHB 337

Your words to me are life and health;
pour strength into my soul;
enable, guide, and teach my heart
to reach its perfect goal!

Your words to me are light and truth;
from day to day they show
their wisdom, passing earthly lore
as in their truth I grow.

Your words to me are full of joy,
of beauty, peace and grace;
from them I learn your blessed will,
through them I see your face.

Your words are perfected in one,
yourself, the living Word;
within my heart your image print
in clearest lines, O Lord.

George Currie Martin 1865-1937. Public Domain

Listen for words of faith in the Gospel.

John 1. 1-9, 10-18

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

‘One More Time Around the Sun: The Dawn of New Possibilities’

We Respond to Grace Unlimited

HYMN Tune *Regent Square* TiS 431

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.

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.

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.

Thanks to God whose Word is published
in the tongues of every race.
See its glory undiminished
by the change of time or place.
God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.

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.

Reginald Thomas Brooks 1918 – CCLI # 65422

AN AFFIRMATION OF OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

Let us affirm our faith.

***When the song of angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flock,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the brothers and sisters,
to make music in the heart.***

Howard Thurman *alt.* in *Singing the Tradition* Unitarian Universalist Association © 1993

COMPASSION & COMMUNITY

OUR PRAYERS OF HOPE AND LONGING

Be made flesh within our lives, Christ Jesus.

In a world which seems to deny hope,
be real within us,
that others may see and take heart.

We pray especially for these people and situations today:

Please offer your short prayer silently

Come, gentle Jesus, come.

***Come, brave Christ,
and hold us in your transforming life.***

Cry out
into the silences of pain, loving God.
Call to us

when we walk past without seeing.
Speak into the wildernesses of hopelessness
with encouragement and truth.

Come, gentle Jesus, come.

***Come, brave Christ,
and hold us in your transforming life.***

Then stand among our own lives, God in and with us.
Show us who we are and who we could be.
Raise among us your passion for loving
and hold before us the dream
which you have for all life and our Planet, Earth.

We pray this in humble faith, O God.

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.

With heartfelt intention and prayer we bring our offerings to God.

Let us pray.

***We bring our gifts with glad hearts, O God,
receive all that we have given in faith.
Enlarge all that we have offered
with the wonder of your love, we pray. Amen.***

We Go Out to Serve God in the World

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

Go forth as children of God.
Carry with you
all that Christ brings
and all that Christ promises for the world.

May Christ's life be held within our own,
God's creativity enlarge all that we are
and God's Spirit lift our hearts in joy.

Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN Tune *Lauds Tis* 414

There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world!'

Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

Brian Wren 1936 - CCLI # 65422