



“... and the life was the light of all people” John 1:4b

About the Theme

At Christmas we listen to the life-changing story that shows God’s great gift of love to us all. Through Advent we can listen and watch as the story unfolds, rediscovering the love that is at the heart of the universe. It is this love that inspires us to live in hope, doing what we can to make our world a place where all people can live in dignity and peace.

Facing the Climate Crisis in Hope

The Christmas Appeal begins with the climate challenge that faces the whole world. Whether or not one uses the language of climate emergency, daily life has become harsher for many people and communities unable to adapt to successive droughts or rising waters. The poorest people and countries have [contributed](#) the least to the rising temperatures but they are the ones who are carrying the largest cost.

More than half of the world’s population – over 3.3 billion [are](#) “highly vulnerable” to the impacts of climate change according to the most recent IPCC report. Global

unity and action is critical to address the use of fossil fuels and other factors contributing to climate change.

At the same time people on the frontline of climate change need assistance with water, food, shelter and more, to replace what they have already lost. It is not fair that the communities that have lost their land to water or drought, through no fault of their own, should have to carry the cost of relocation.

Climate change is contributing to the loss of life and livelihoods. It is also a driver of conflict. Supporting families and communities to adapt to our changed environment in ways that respect and honour their dignity is critical as global temperatures continue to rise.

Those most affected are too busy to give into despair, they must find hope.

The biggest challenge is not what is happening, but how we respond to the mounting evidence of change. Our partners have integrated climate change into the work they do in communities just as they are doing in response to the

pandemic. Donations to the Christmas Appeal will go to people living on the frontlines of climate change.

It is for this reason we begin Advent by finding hope in the work of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC). In many ways they have set sail ahead of us, showing us what needs to be done by accompanying people whose homes and livelihoods are disappearing under water. At the same time PCC invites us to think theologically, to Reweave the Ecological Mats. In October General Secretary Rev. James Bhagwan and Programmes Manager Frances Namoumou spoke about this work. You can read an edited transcript of their presentation [here](#).

On the second Sunday, which has Peace as its theme, we focus on the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, navigating tense and challenging conflicts to share water and life. On the third Sunday, we find Joy with small farmers in Nicaragua who are celebrating a better water supply and new ways to grow food. On the fourth Sunday, we share with families devastated by the floods that covered one third of Pakistan in water. And on Christmas Day, we read the story of one boy and his grandmother in the dry southwest of Uganda who share a simple prayer for water.

Finding Life and Light

In the lead up to Christmas there is much to think about and much to be done. It is easy to focus on the next event in the calendar, the food we need to prepare or the gifts we must buy. Soon we will be wrapped up in the Advent hymns and carols and the ancient Christmas story.

But listen carefully to the readings for Advent. It is in the Bible readings that we

confront the hard stuff. What does it mean to 'Prepare the Way of the Lord' when the planet is burning and violence impacts so many people?

John 1:4b "... and the life was the light of all people."

In the opening verses of John's Gospel, we are confronted with the creative power of God, the giver of life. Verse John 1:4b shows us the way. As people of faith, we have a responsibility to live for hope in God's world. By giving gifts of love, we can share that hope. In our prayers we can show our concern for the whole of creation. By working together, we can create more momentum for change, taking action so more people have water, food and justice.

The Climate Crisis

This year's Christmas Appeal highlights the life-changing, life-giving work of five of our partners sharing hope on the frontline of climate change. They are part of local communities, taking practical steps so people have safe water and can better protect themselves when disaster strikes.

We are thankful for your gifts to these partners over many years. You have shared resources so they can improve people's livelihoods and find ways to protect themselves from harm and have a say in matters that affect them. Thanks to their community building work, our partners have developed local strategies to keep people strong even when water may be lapping around their homes. In the words of the Pacific Climate Warriors, "We are not drowning, we are fighting".

Your donations will give them the resources they need now to make sure families have water and food, displaced people have shelter, children can attend school and people can provide the psychosocial support they need for their own well-being.

Listening to the voices of those who have survived violence, disaster and hardship, we can find the energy we need to stand alongside people who need food, water and justice. **When we work together in ways that give life, we share in God's love for the world. This is our Christmas story.**

Towards Water Justice and a Sustainable Future

The world has reached the halfway mark on the [Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030](#) with its 17 goals and 169 targets. This Christmas we focus on two of these goals:



In numbers

- 1 in 4 people need access to safe drinking water.
- 1 in 3 people need basic handwashing facilities in their homes.
- 3.6 billion people need safe sanitation.
- The number of weather-related disasters – floods, droughts, storms and extreme temperatures – has increased by a factor of five over the past 50 years
- Since 2000, flood-related disasters have increased by 134% and the number and duration of droughts have increased by 29%.

Note: these and other statistics are available by clicking the link connected to each Sustainable Development Goal.