



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

Facing the Climate Challenge with Hope

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, a time to walk the path towards the light of Christmas. As we walk, let us watch out for each other, sharing our love with our neighbours near and far.

It is the beginning of a new church year. Through this Advent season we will watch and listen to stories of people living on the frontline of climate change. Some have already lost their homes and livelihoods to flooding and drought. Through our prayers, actions and gifts, we can stand with them to let hope flow this Christmas.

Call to Worship

E te whanau a te Karaiti,

We gather with hope in the presence of God. We seek justice and long for new life.

Let us worship God.

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope



On this first Sunday of Advent, we remember the hope we find in God, and the gifts of hope we offer to others.

Read the Partner Story

The Pacific Ocean links us with many people and lands who are facing the immediate effects of rising global temperatures. Already people have had to move from their traditional whenua or land. Others are trying to cope with salty water and the lack of drinking water.

The Pacific Conference of Churches has been relentless in voicing the cry of their people for climate justice. Like a canary in a mine, they have warned all people of the dangerous level of global warming in an effort to protect our common home for the unborn and future generations.

Together we live with hope for the whole creation.

Light the candle

Together:

God of hope and newness of life;

May we notice the signs of your presence in all of creation.

Give us courage to offer hope to our world in word and in action.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Lectionary Thoughts

The "hope" we focus on this week is contrasted in our readings with complacency. Complacency means we are blind to realities in our world and unprepared for what is to come. Today, it may be seen when we continue on with our lives unchanged while the darkness of climate injustice grows. Hope, in contrast, has the courage to open its eyes to the truth, even when it is difficult and confronting and challenging. Hope sees reality clearly and holds fast to God's promises of a just world to come. Hope gives us the courage to *act*, because we know we are part of bringing God's future about.

Isaiah 2:1-5

At the beginning of *Isaiah* the horrors of exile and the destruction of the Temple were still to come. Those who heard these words were being given hope in advance: a vision of a world of justice to hold onto just as everything was about to fall apart. We, too, are called to name the realities of climate injustice, yet proclaim hope and act. Today, what swords can we beat into

ploughshares? What resources and skills and energy can we redirect from causing death and despair to bringing food and hope and peace?

Psalm 122

While this is a song about a long-ago King and long-ago Jerusalem, the call to pray for peace and security for those in and around the Holy Land is as pertinent as ever. We may not have "relatives and friends" there, but they are God's children and therefore our family. We might also wonder at the joy the psalmist felt at being able to go to the Temple, and consider again the luxury we share in this part of the world of being free to worship in peace.

Romans 13:11-14

Complacency is very like being asleep to realities around us. Paul encourages us to "wake up!" and begin to act with our eyes open to the truth revealed by the light. There is darkness in our world, so wake up and do something! And remember we are given the "armour of light" by Jesus to sustain us: the protection of the knowledge of salvation, the light-filled sword of the Spirit to take into the darkness, and unquenchable hope in God.

Matthew 24:36-44

For the original hearers, Jesus' words were probably a warning about the Roman attack on Jerusalem in 70CE: an example of Jesus being awake to the reality of what was happening in the world. Although that was a past event, Jesus' call for us to be aware of the currents in the world and not fall into complacency has never ceased to

be relevant. Once again we are told to “Keep awake.” The example of Noah is contrasted to those around him. We, like Noah, are to be alert to the voice of God, and, like Noah, to act in trust and hope as the waters rise.

Intercessions

- For those working on the land
- For indigenous people whose land has been confiscated or violated
- For the upholding of land tribunals and human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand
- For places where floods are prevalent
- For places where water is depleted
- For peace in our world
- For peace in Aotearoa New Zealand
- For the churches to live in peace and witness to the source of peace, Jesus Christ

Blessing

May the peace of God grant us wisdom.
May the peace of God guide our way.
May the peace of God bring us together.
May the peace of God bless all creation.
Amen

Music

AA Alleluia Aotearoa
CAHON Complete Anglican Hymns
Old and New
CH4 Church Hymnary 4th edition
CoC Carol our Christmas

- O come o come Emmanuel
CAHON 480/CH4 273
- Wait for the Lord (Taize)
CAHON 949/CH4 276
- Prepare the way of the Lord
(Taize/Berthier) Ritualsong
507/various Taize books
- The kingdom of God is justice
and peace (Taize) Ritualsong
846/various Taize books
- Come, Lord Jesus (Chris de
Silva), Ritualsong 510

Activity

- Read the [partner story](#) or watch a video from about the effects of climate change from the Pacific Conference of Churches
- Paint banners with messages of hope for our world to take home or for decorations at church.

For Discussion

- The Gospel writer encourages us to be watchful – to prepare for the unexpected. What can we see? Share some of the issues or situations that are of concern.
- Where can we see God working in our world?
- What might we do as a church to stand with people on the frontline climate change.

Special thanks to Revs Carole Hughes, Anne Van Gend and Michael Wallace for this worship material.