



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

## *Facing the Climate Challenge with Joy*

**Today is the third Sunday of Advent, on 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.**

Turning to the book of Isaiah, we find the promise of a world where joy can be found in abundance. When the waters break forth in the wilderness, all people and the land will have what they need to live in the fullness of life. Through our prayers, actions and gifts, we can stand with people on the frontline of climate change and 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 Peace**



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

### **Read the Partner Story**

After a hurricane rocked her home in Nicaragua, Kelly was glad to receive food and water filters from CEPAD. The storm destroyed ten latrines in their community, polluting the river, the source of their water.

CEPAD is supporting Community Development Committees to improve development opportunities for residents. By working in local communities, CEPAD enables people to find their own solutions to the challenges they face and prepare for droughts and hurricanes. Together

we share joy when people have safe water.

### Light the candle

#### Together:

God of joy and celebration;  
May we experience your joy as we celebrate together.  
Give us energy to bring joy to the world in word and in action.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

## Lectionary Thoughts

This Sunday's readings confront us with God's bias in favour of the poor. God desires that all should experience joy, and for the poor and oppressed that requires judgement: bringing up the lowly and bringing down the rich. It's an uncomfortable thought for those of us who are, on a world scale, rich. Yet once we are there – once injustices are levelled out - God pours out superabundant healing and life to all. There is enough, even for us.

### Isaiah 35:1-10

This passage is bursting with life and joy and healing! Flowers don't just blossom, but do so abundantly. The lame don't just walk, but leap like deer. Waters burst out into the wilderness, bringing cool, clear, life and refreshment. The weak, the fearful, blind, deaf and dumb, the thirsty and endangered – God's abundance pours out on them all. This is what God's purpose for God's world looks like. Rejoice!.

### Luke 1:46-55 (in place of the psalm)

Here is a world in which everything is turned upside down. When God became incarnate, it was good news for the poor, the sick, the oppressed, and the hungry, for whom there was little other good news. When God uses the "strength of God's arm" on earth it is to bring justice and healing to those in need. The challenge in these words is unavoidable, but with it comes the joy that filled Mary when she sang of it.

### James 5:7-10

These few verses seem to return us to the theme of hope, of patient waiting while nothing seems to be happening, of knowing that (however little it looks like it right now), God's grace will fall like rain and bring about a harvest. Perhaps it is a helpful message as we hear, from our other readings, promises of a joyful Heavenly Realm which is not yet here in its fullness. We are to wait in patient hope.

### Matthew 11:2-11

One would think that John the Baptist, of all people, would understand Jesus. John's message, like Jesus', was one of God's justice working on the earth. But it seems that he was still surprised at how Jesus was bringing that justice about. John envisaged violent threshing and burning fires. Instead, Jesus healed. That was God's chosen path to justice. Blessed are any who do not take offence at that.

## Intercessions

- For the work of scientists, medical researchers, doctors, nurses, and

all who care for the sick and suffering

- For communities on the frontline of the climate crisis and those worrying about the future
- For all efforts to combat the spread and effects of Covid-19 throughout the world
- For those who are living through disasters who do not have access to medical care, food, or shelter
- For all who are overwhelmed by others' expectations especially at this time of the year
- For the Church throughout the world to be a community of joy, despite the challenges and losses that we all face
- For the Church to witness to the joy that is found in Christ's presence.

- When out of poverty is born (Kathryn Galloway) CH4 291
- Hills of the north CAHON 282/CH4
- Last of the great prophetic line (Timothy Dudley-Smith)

Last of the great prophetic line,  
by desert ways he trod,  
a voice to call by word and sign  
a nation home to God.  
"Repent!" - that summons heard of  
John  
our hearts shall not forget;  
his voice is stilled, his day is gone,  
his call is with us yet.

A watchman's cry to end the night,  
a herald of the day,  
he points to Christ, the Light of light,  
"Prepare, prepare his way!"  
He points to Christ, the coming one,  
of whom the Scriptures told,  
baptizing God's beloved Son:  
"The Lamb of God behold!"  
Last of the great prophetic line,  
by desert ways he came,  
with promise of a King divine,  
a kingdom and a Name.  
He points to Christ, the living Word,  
before whose feet we fall,  
the Light, the Lamb, the Son and Lord,  
to Christ the all in all.

## Blessing

May God's joy reveal divine presence.  
May God's joy open our eyes.  
May God's joy bring healing.  
May God's joy set us free. Amen

## Music

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

- Wait for the Lord (Taize) CAHON 949/CH4 276

## Activity

- Read the [partner story](#) or play or sing joyful music or take some time to plant a young tree or colourful border in your church grounds to share the joy we find in being together.
- Paint more banners with messages of joy and celebration for people and our world. Take them home or add them to the decorations at church.

## For Discussion

- Ask people to share a story or an activity that gives them joy. Encourage people to make connections and be brave.
- Look for the joy in climate change. What opportunity could it give us in our community or in the vulnerable parts of the world?
- Have you ever experienced a time when you faced a major crisis and ended up laughing? Art, music and dancing can be energising. What can give us energy to take bigger steps to care for creation?

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