



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

## *Facing the Climate Challenge with Christ*

**Happy Christmas! At last. We have been waiting for this day and now it is here. We look for the light – the light that shines with God’s love for all people. It’s a day to share our love with our family, friends – with our neighbours near and far. Today through our prayers, actions and gifts, we can stand with people on the frontline of climate change and let hope flow at Christmas.**

### **Call to Worship**

Gracious God, creator, and lover of the universe, be born in us this Christmas Day as hope, peace, joy and love.

May we sing with the angels, and delight in new life and new possibilities.

May your creation be filled with grace and wonder, and your whole earth praise your holy name. Amen.

### **Lighting the Advent Candle of Love**



On this Christmas Day we celebrate the Christ-child amongst us, and the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love we offer to others

### **Read the Partner Story**

Caleb knows hope and hard work. He lost both his parents to AIDS and his sister to the typhoid she caught from the local spring. Now that his sister has gone, it is up to him to collect the water he and his grandmother need to survive. Caleb has his eyes on a new rainwater tank. His grandmother has been saving every penny she can spare so they can build their own water tank. Clean water will quench his thirst, save him from long treks to fetch water every day and prevent illness.

In this climate crisis, we are supporting partners like the Centre for Community Solidarity with our gifts and our prayers. Together we share the hope, peace, joy and love we find in Christ.

### Light the candle

#### Together:

God of love and surprises;  
May we love one another, embracing your generous spirit and ways of justice.  
Give us perseverance to bring love to the world in word and in action.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

### Lectionary Thoughts

Hope, peace, joy, love and justice all come together on the day we have been waiting for: the day of the coming of Christ. Love is the reason the Light breaks into the darkness; justice is the means by which the darkness is conquered; hope keeps our faith strong while we wait for God's Reign to be all in all; joy and peace are the goal and fulfilment of God's purposes for us. We are invited to receive that love, work for that justice, live in that hope, and thus be covenant partners with God in bringing peace and joy to creation.

### Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem was probably written 800 years before Christ, celebrating the birth of another king in the line of David. As with last week's reading, the birth was both a natural event and a sign, since the continuation of David's line was a sign of God's faithfulness. But again, as with 7:10-16, this passage was recognised as more by Jesus' followers. The hopes

pinned on this earthly and fallible leader were brought to truth and reality in Jesus. It is Jesus who truly brings light into the darkness; Jesus who is truly and eternally God; Wonderful Counsellor, Peacemaker, who upholds justice and righteousness forevermore.

### Psalm 96

It is good, today of all days, to rejoice and sing and declare God's glory among the nations! Yet even here the ever-present theme of justice pervades the praise. Those who are praising God do so because of God's judgements. They want judgement to fall on the earth, because this is the voice of the oppressed, the poor, the lost and the abused crying out for justice and singing for joy at the certainty that it will come.

### Titus 2:11-14

We still sometimes hear that we must choose between faith and "works". This is one of countless passages which show it is not a choice of one or the other. God's love and grace is poured out on us in Jesus so that our lives may be transformed and we may be filled with the desire to do good for others. Rejoice, yes – and do something about it!

### Luke 2:1-14

He whaikororia ki te Atua i runga rawa  
*Glory to God on high*  
He maungarongo ki runga i te mata o te  
whenua  
*Peace on earth*  
He whakaaro pai ki te tangata  
*Goodwill to all people.*

These were the verses which Te Whiti of Parihaka took as his calling, and which are associated with the three-plumed Raukura. Te Whiti and his people took the Good News of Christ and made it a present reality through their non-violent resistance in the face of injustice. As Jesus arrives, born homeless, shortly to be a refugee, later to die unjustly accused, may we too channel the joy of his coming into solidarity with those experiencing injustice across our world.

## Intercessions

- For the Church on this Christmas day in its proclamation of 'Peace and good will to all humankind'
- For the people of Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Syria
- For peace and justice between Israelis and Palestinians
- For all refugees and people seeking asylum
- For all who have lost loved ones and are struggling this day
- For people who need clean water and safe sanitation
- For love of God and of one's neighbour, in the way of Jesus, born this day
- For hope, peace, joy and love to the world

## Blessing

May the God of Love dwell in every place, and the Child of hopefulness be present in our midst.

May peace fill all of creation and the Spirit's joy bring delight to our world.

## Music

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

- Come now Lord Jesus (Shirley Murray) CoC 14
- Not on a snowy night (Willow Macky) AA 98/CoC 31
- You are born in us again (Mark Wilson) CoC 52
- O come all ye faithful CAHON 479/CH4 306(with Te Reo verse)
- A maiden most gentle, New English Praise 601, A.Carter/Lourdes with Te Reo verse  
 v.1. A maiden most gentle and tender we sing: of Mary the mother of Jesus our King.  
 Ave, ave, ave Maria; Ave, ave, ave Maria.

v.2. How blest is the birth of her heavenly child, who came to redeem us in Mary so mild. Ave, ave, ave Maria; Ave, ave,ave Maria.

v.3. Awe Maria, inoi mo mātou, inoi mo mātou, awe, awe.  
 Awe, awe, awe Maria; Awe, awe, awe Maria.

v.4. Rejoice and be glad at this Christmas we pray, Sing praise to the Saviour sing endless Ave. Ave, ave, ave Maria; Ave, ave, ave Maria.

- HIMENE – 30  
 v.1 Haere mai ra koutou, Hunga whakapono, Haere mai ra ki Peterehema : Tenei tirohia, Nei tetino Kingi, Tino whakapaingia ia t' Ariki.

V. 2. Ia, Atua nei ano, Marama tiaho, Kihai i kinongia te Wahina. Ahakoa Atua, Whanau ana mai ia;Tino whakapaingia ia t' Ariki.

v.3 Koutou Anahera, Rehua mai  
he rangi, Tino hari ake koutou  
katoa. Hamama te reo Mona  
irunga nei: Tino whakapaingia ia t'  
Ariki.

v.4 Koutou o te ao nei, Uru mai ra  
koutou, Tukua atu mona te kororia.  
Nei ko te Atua, Kuawhakatangata:  
Tino whakapaingia ia t' Ariki.

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## Activity

- If you have posted banners around the walls of your church, take a few moments to read some of the messages as a way to include the world in your celebration.
- Place a large bowl or glass of water at the front of the church as a reminder of Caleb and others who need clean, safe water.
- Please reach out with love this Christmas and share a gift with someone who needs hope.

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