



Share food this Christmas



“He has filled the hungry with good things” Luke 1:53a

Share Food and Create Hope

The church year begins today with the season of waiting we know as Advent. At home and at work, there is a lot to be done, but at church we slow down from the busy-ness and take time to reflect and pray. We listen to the ancient stories and sing carols, hoping once again to connect with each other, with God and our world. As the climate crisis deepens, we make time for people who are often ignored but who are already experiencing its effects.

The Christmas Story is a promise that the world can be fairer, kinder, and a more peaceful place where all people have water, food and justice, the essentials of life. It is our hope and our prayer.

Call to Worship

God dreams into being a new earth and a new humanity.
God calls us to nurture this holy birth
Who is listening?
Who will respond?

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope



On this first Sunday of Advent, we listen for stories of hope.

Read the Partner Story

In Sri Lanka, Somawathie grows food on her tiny farm – a few trees, mung beans, peanuts, eggplant and more.

Hungry wild elephants often come looking for food. Unless she can scare them away, they eat her crops.

Our partner MONLAR is helping small farmers like Somawathie. When she and her late husband could not afford to buy seeds and fertiliser, MONLAR taught them how to grow food at little cost. But now climate change is biting, and the elephants are coming more often, she is worried about the future. **Small scale farmers and elephants need hope.**

Light the candle

As the koru unfurls
and Advent begins,
we light the candle of hope -
hope for the healing of the Earth,
hope for the hungry,
hope for the poor,
hope for those struggling to survive,
and live with dignity with few resources,
hope that God's newness will come.
We light the Advent candle of hope.

Lectionary Thoughts

Advent may be a time of waiting but it is not a time for rest. The readings are provocative in so many ways. If we had not read them before, we might think we can be gently lulled into the Christmas Story, but the lectionary is shaped in such a way as to make this impossible. Prepare to be confronted by the Word and what is happening in our world. We wait and we watch. We listen and we pray. Longing for the Hope that means people will have food and what they need for life.

Isaiah 64:1-9

The writer speaks of the longing for God to come down from heaven to put the world to rights. He uses images of fire and earthquakes to evoke the awesome power of God who intervenes in history (v.3). The longing to do what is right is deeply embedded in this text – 'we are the clay and you are our potter' (v. 8b). To know what is right, we need to listen carefully. God works through people who choose to live in love and work for the transformation of the world.

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

The psalmist expresses our longing to be saved from all that troubles us. No one wants to be laughed at by their enemies (v.6) or to have to drink tears in full measure (v. 5). God is the source of life and hope for us and the world. (v.28b) It is in our faith that we find the strength to work together for the healing of the world and each other.

I Corinthians 1:3-9

Paul begins his letter to the Christian community with words of grace and affirmation. All the gifts that we have come from God and are to be shared with others (v. 5-7) in keeping with God's ways. Paul is gently suggesting that the reader takes time to reflect and consider whether we are the best we can be (blameless). God is faithful and will come to us, just as God comes to those who are living in poverty and fear. Spend some time in this Advent season to find a gift you can share.

Mark 13:24-37

There is no time for tired old rituals in the Gospel of Mark. Instead we find constant reminders to be alert, to be prepared for whatever will happen. Mark says the earth will pass away (or at least the world as we know it), but that we can hold on to is the story or words of our faith (v.31).

If we are not careful Advent will speed by us and we will not have reflected on what is most important to us at this time or considered how we might choose to live differently.

This is a passage that speaks of hope – in times of disaster and uncertainty, keep awake. The climate crisis is growing, we must be alert.

This Advent lets make time to connect with the God of Love and Life - who has our best interests at heart, who does not forget the people that are most often forgotten.

Prayer

Loving God

We give thanks for what we have, for our families and for food.

We give thanks for the world, that no matter what we do continues to feed us and sustain our lives.

We pray for Somawathie who has bravely shared her story and for the elephants – who all need food.

Help us find the courage to face the hard stuff, to make the changes that we can make, to share what we can.

In your loving name we pray.

Amen

Blessing

As the summertime Kiwi forages on into the daylight a new era is dawning
this is the turning point of time
this holy birth changes everything.

Let us now live this newness!

Kia tumanako. Be hope!

Kia tika. Be just!

Kia mau te rongo. Be peace!

Kia koa. Be joy!

Kia aroha. Be love!

So be it!

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
- Kauri, Flax & Rata Trees
(Norman Brookes)
- Pohutakawa Promise (Norman
Brookes)
- The Season of the Flowering
(Bill Wallace)
- Carol Our Christmas (Shirley
Murray & Colin Gibson)

Activity

- Read the [partner story](#).
- Go Bananas at the beginning of the new church year. Use the template below to make plenty of bananas. Cut them out if you have time or bring lots of scissors to share. Invite people to write a dream for the coming year on their banana and to use blue tack or tape to attach them to a church wall. Make bunches if you like.

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 Rev Mark Gibson for the liturgical material.

