



## Share food this Christmas



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

## Share Peace with Small-scale Farmers

Today is the second Sunday of Advent – time to slow down and focus on what matters most. The words of John the Baptist provide the inspiration for this task: “Prepare the Way of the Lord.” Where are we headed? How can we make peace? What will it take for us to stop destroying the earth that is the only home we have? The challenge is on to limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

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 Peace



On the second Sunday of Advent, we listen for stories of peace.

### Read the Partner Story

In South Sudan a mother heard guns and fighting. She gathered her children and ran for her life. Now she works hard in her garden, grateful for the care and support she has found in Maridi. She is proud of her first crops and the promise of food for her family. The garden comes with the promise of peace in a region where conflict and hunger are spreading.

Our partner Mission for Sustainable Advancement is helping mothers with children begin a new life in Maridi. With tools, seeds, plants and training, displaced women will be able to feed themselves. Their children will be able to go to school.  
**Families displaced by violence and conflict need peace.**

## Light the candle

As kānuka come to bloom  
in this season of the flowering  
**we light the candle of peace.**  
As we prepare for the birth of the Peace  
Child,  
may the flower of peace,  
grow from the seed of justice,  
in our lives and in God's hurting world.  
**We light the Advent candle of peace.**

## Lectionary Thoughts

Today's readings take us to a different place from where we begin. Spend some time thinking about what is happening here and now, and then go to a high mountain to a place where you can see the world as God wants it to be. The world does not have to stay on this path. Our faith can show us how to stand with the people who have been forgotten and who live in violence and fear.

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 Peace that comes when people have food and what they need for life.

### Isaiah 40:1-11

Here the writer of Isaiah begins by offering words of comfort. No matter what has happened to us and what might happen in the future, God is with us – v.11 speaks of God "will gather his lambs in his arms". God's word defines reality forever (v. 8b). From the grass to the mountain God is here. It is our task to figure out how to live more sustainably on the planet that is our home.

### Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13

The psalm begins with land and ends with a vision of peace, showing us that you cannot have one without the other. God is the source of peace (v.8) who offers salvation and wholeness "to those who turn to God with their hearts." Peace is to be felt. The image evoked by v.10b, "righteousness and peace will kiss each other" is at once both emotional and physical.

### II Peter 3: 8-15a

The passage begins with the sense of the eternal, God's time that begins now. It speaks of God's patience and gentle guidance as God waits for our repentance. Then like a thunderclap in v.10, the writer announces the day of the Lord that comes with great drama to fulfil the promise of 'new heavens and a new earth' (v.13). The scenes change quickly, but the real point of the passage is in v.14, "strive to be found by God at peace, without spot or blemish". Advent challenges us all to live better.

### Mark 1: 1-8

When we don't know what to do or believe, we look for someone to show us the way – or in today perhaps it is the media that has more influence. In the Gospel of Mark, the task of showing the way belongs to John the Baptist. The people do not go to the Temple seeking knowledge and truth. Instead they flock to the wilderness to meet him (v.5). John may have been the celebrity of his day but he does not seek power. He limits his role to baptism and perhaps listening to confessions. John's deep love for his people and his concern for their well-being

is the story within the story which we may miss in our haste to encounter Jesus. Like John the Baptist, we can make God's love known in our care for people and the planet.

When Jesus comes for baptism, the heavens open (v.10). In this waiting time, we too can encounter the world as it is and look to the heavens for a new vision. As people of faith it is time to prepare the way for a different way of living.

This Advent let's 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 take time to think of others who are separated from their loved ones and displaced from their homes, who are living in fear of the violence and conflict that surrounds them.

We pray for South Sudan and its people, that the conflict that causes hunger and ignites violence will cease, and the people will have what they need to live and build a better future.

We pray for our world, for those who feed war rather than people, those who risk their lives to make peace.

Help us find the courage to face the hard stuff, to confront the violence and discrimination in our own communities,

and work to make them a safer place for all.

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 4<sup>th</sup> edition  
CoC Carol our Christmas

- 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](#).
- Draw and cut out (or have ready to cut out) outlines of a kānuka flower or a candle. Invite people to write a place or a situation where people need peace and decorate their candles. Tape them to the wall or similar, perhaps alongside the bananas. Commit to pray for them in the week ahead.

## For Discussion

- What are we waiting for this Advent?
- Who are we listening to? How do we know what to believe?
- What else 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.*

