



Share food this Christmas



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

Share Food with Joy

The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally a time of joy. Even though life may be difficult, we can take time to laugh and to sing, sharing all that is good. We need times of joy to build communities of change.

We can only stop the climate from warming by working together to make sure the care of God’s earth and our home is the top priority. When life gets hard and our choices close down, we can reach out to others with words of warmth and compassion, building solidarity and joy.

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 Joy



On this third Sunday of Advent, we listen for stories of joy.

Read the Partner Story

Hunger is normal in much of Haiti. Life is extremely difficult for everyone. Parents want to have enough food every day and offer their children a better future. This community oven in one rural community helps fund the local school and gives families the joy of eating fresh bread.

Our partner, ICKL brings together local community leaders and university researchers in its Popular University to share research and create local solutions for some of the most vulnerable people. ICKL provides teacher training support and classroom materials in three rural schools. **When very poor families have food to share, there is joy.**

Light the candle

In high summer
as korimako and tūī carol the dawn,
as bees swarm harakeke stalks
laden with nectar filled flowers,
and toetoe dance in the wind
we light the candle of joy.
May there be joy for the oppressed,
and joy for those bound by structures of
injustice;
and may tears of mourning be turned,
to tears of celebration.

We light the Advent candle of joy.

Lectionary Thoughts

Once again, the Advent readings challenge us in a very deep way if we read them closely. Central to the readings is an understanding of justice for people who are poor, imprisoned and often forgotten – we are on their side.

Some may say they want to hear good news stories but that may not mean they think prisoners should be released as Isaiah does. There are garlands, decorations and exhortations to find joy.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Isaiah's message is at once decisive and uplifting. He has been sent to proclaim good news, to bind up, to proclaim liberty and release captives. He is writing to people who have watched loved ones die (v.3) and cities destroyed (v.4). Yet, in the topsy turvy world that fits with Advent, Isaiah offers garlands (v.3 and in v.10) and jewels (v.10).

The way of Yahweh is the way of justice (v.8). These words are dangerous words, when Jesus reads the opening verses at

the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19), he gets hurried out of town (v.29).

Psalm 126

In this brief psalm, the writer traces the year, from the planting of seed to the harvest, from weeping to shouts of joy. Remembering the good times with laughter and joy gives us strength and resilience for the hard times.

I Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul ends this letter with three simple directions: rejoice, pray, give thanks (v. 16-18). His words are those of encouragement – to give expression to the spirit and test the teachings of those we hear. The reading ends with words of peace and blessing.

John 1:6-8, 19-28

In this passage we return to the story of John the Baptist. This time the religious authorities have sent a delegation of priests and Levites to check out his teaching. John's response is careful. He clearly positions himself not as the Messiah (and therefore of no threat) but in total humility (v.27) says his mission, to "make straight the way of the Lord". This prophetic role is important today when so many people do not have the food that is essential to life. Unless more action is taken to stop the climate crisis, hunger will increase.

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 pray for people who are held in captivity, and imprisoned by poverty and the lack of food.

We pray for the people of Haiti who want to live a good life where they have enough to eat every day and their children can go to school despite the many challenges they face. May have a say in their own future.

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

- 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)
- Let Justice Roll Down (Colin Gibson) Alleluia Aotearoa
- Tell my People I love them (Leonard Barlotti) Alleluia Aotearoa

Activity

- Read the [partner story](#).
- Take time to tell funny stories, sing songs, make decorations and eat party food. Have fun!

For Discussion

- ICKL brings community leaders, university people and activists together for its Popular University. Many have grown up in rural communities. Sharing analyses and deciding on strategies to improve livelihoods and build common understandings across the country are important tools for change. How can we learn from each other and strengthen communities of people that care about our world?

Special thanks to Rev Mark Gibson for the liturgical material.