



Share food this Christmas



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

Share Food with Love

Love is the focus of the fourth Sunday of Advent. Christmas is coming very soon and we need to be ready. There are things to be done and food to prepare, but we need to allow time for ourselves and to pray for the people and places that need God’s love – especially for those people who do not have enough to eat.

We cannot ignore the climate crisis or the perilous times in which many live. Love is about thoughts and feelings. Advent is not a time to block out the pain and worries we experience for they are what anchor us and keep us focused on what matters the most. Going slowly through this season allows us some time to make careful choices and to be aware of what is happening in our lives and the world. How can we share the love that gives life?

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 Love



On this second Sunday of Advent, we listen for stories of love.

Read the Partner Story

In Tonga, Kapiolani is a fan weaver and passionate home gardener. Her home is surrounded by vegetables, banana and breadfruit trees, pele and flowers, flourishing with the compost she learned to make at a workshop run by our partner. She knows she will improve her family’s livelihood by raising chickens in her new chicken house. With more training on

climate change, she can help her community prepare for future disasters.

Our partner Tonga Community Development Trust has been working through its local groups to help Tongans recover after last year's eruption and tsunami. It is running psychosocial training so people can help those living with loss and trauma. **After natural disasters, families need practical support and love.**

Light the candle

As a summer solstice sun rises in the eastern sky,
as berries ripen,
and the fragrance of mānuka blooms fill the warm air,
we light the candle of love.

May the fire and fragrance of God's love,
transform our world,
so that the hungry are fed,
so that the lowly are lifted up,
so that all the community of life can flourish.
We light the Advent candle of love.

Lectionary Thoughts

Relationships are central to these readings: Nathan to David, David and Yahweh, Paul and the Christians in Rome, Mary and the angel Gabriel, Mary and God. Faith happens between people and God – it is much more than a warm feeling or the certainty of being right.

We have had four weeks to get ready. What have we been carrying on this Advent journey? Who are our companions? What is God saying to us?

II Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Nathan makes his first appearance as David's trusty advisor or oracle. After many years of wandering, David has settled down and constructed a permanent house of cedar. When he tells Nathan he wants to build a permanent house for the Ark of the Lord, Nathan at first agrees. But in the evening, Nathan hears from Yahweh – the 'not yet' message. For now, the Ark needs to stay in the tent (perhaps allowing for it to be shared more with different groups who have given their allegiance to David), but in time, David's descendants will build a 'house' for it (v.11) and David's 'throne established forever (v.16). There is a sense of eternity in these words of covenant – faith connects us with history and puts us in touch with what is lasting.

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26

In the opening words, the psalmist praises the faithfulness of Yahweh as expressed in the covenant. The words echo the covenant of II Samuel 7 and acknowledge this faithfulness for all time. The writer turns to lament in the later part of the psalm (38-51) - after the king faced a disastrous defeat in battle.

Romans 16:25-7

In these concluding words to the Romans, Paul puts the life and words of Jesus Christ at the centre of their universe. The love that is the source of life is available for all people. Faith is about relationship to 'the only wise God, through Jesus Christ' (v.27). Christmas is very close and so is the promise of faith.

Luke 1:26-38

We have been waiting long enough. It is time for Mary to take her place in the Advent story. The angel Gabriel comes to Nazareth to speak to Mary. Mary listens to Gabriel's message and asks 'How can this be...' (v.34) – she is her own woman in the story. Perhaps if Mary had known what would happen to her soon to be born baby, she might well have been afraid, but for now Gabriel's reassurances are enough. The story is imbued with love and trust – the relationship between God and Mary is a two-way relationship. In the Magnificat, Mary's words give expression to this love and to the longing we have for the world to be transformed.

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, for the love that connects us all.

We pray for people who are troubled and lonely, for those who have lost loved ones or live with constant pain, for those who are hungry, who live in dangerous places and who are denied water, food and justice.

We pray for the people of Tonga, rebuilding their lives after last year's eruption and tsunami. We pray for the well-being of each and every person who has lived through disaster and violence.

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

- 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)

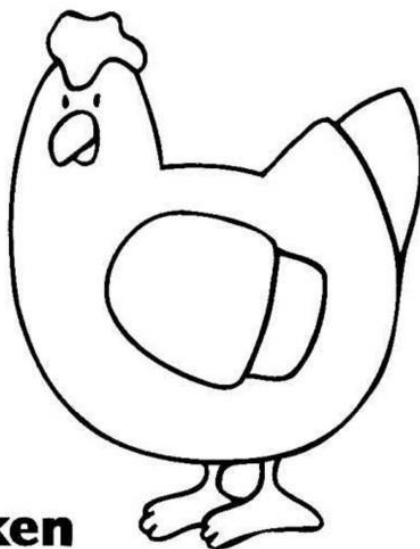
Activity

- Read the [partner story](#).
- Have some fun with chickens. Maybe write a song for the chickens, or if you prefer, add to the wall display: Draw a big chicken house. Invite people to colour a chicken and use a speech balloon to write a loving Christmas message.

For Discussion

- Are you ready for Christmas?
- Talk about wishes and Christmas. How do we make wishes come true? What do we mean when we say, "I wish you a Merry Christmas?"
- How can we make room for others this Christmas? For the planet? For God?

Special thanks to Rev Mark Gibson for the liturgical material.



Chicken