



WESLEY WELLINGTON
75 Taranaki Street
www.wesleychurch.org.nz

Sunday 24th December 2023
4th Sunday of Advent – Love

Haere mai ki tēnei Whare Karakia
Welcome to this House of Prayer



**We are a multi-racial Christian community:
Methodist in affiliation – Ecumenical in intention
Diverse in theology – Inclusive in outreach.**

**Kia ora koutou katoa — Talofa Lava
Malo e lelei — Bula Vinaka Greetings to you all!**

Order of Service

SUNDAY – 24th December 2023

Worship Leader: Rev. Nicola Teague Grundy

Organist: Colin Scarf

WELCOME & SAFETY BRIEFING

GATHERING (Emi mai ki taua karakia)

PREPARE THE WAY

In the presence of God, amazing things can happen.

In the presence of God, we though many, are made one.

Through the love of God, miraculous things are possible.

Through the love of God, peace wins out over violence.

Trusting in the presentness of God,

**May we dare to go wherever there is need,
proclaiming peace with every step.**

Trusting in the unsurpassable power of God's love,

**May we boldly follow wherever we are led
spreading justice all along the way.**

**We open ourselves to the presentness of God –
eyes, ears, hands, and hearts opened wide.**

We are here.

With help we will travel the challenging road ahead.

WORDS OF AWARENESS

God of surprises,
startle us with truth we do not see,
amaze us with your power and grace,
beckon us, and lead us far above
restricted hope and narrow faith.
May it be so.

HYMN (Himene) ‘Christmas in Southern Hemisphere’

Words: William L Wallace; Tune: Cranham; H&P 107

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES (Kānara Whakamāmā)

Each night we sleep wearily under a large summer moon.
The nights are short and the dawn comes soon.
Come, Companion Jesus, Come.

Last Sunday we lit the candle of koa – joy,
the third Advent candle.
We light it again, along with the candles of tumanako and
Rangimarie– hope and peace
which will always be brought to birth
in, through, and among, all creation.

First and second and third candles are lit

The fourth Advent candle is the candle of aroha - joy
In the stillness of our worship here we light it,
watching it burn and glow.

Fourth candle is lit

And we affirm that we are a people of God
always seeking to break down the walls
that divide and separate us, as a community
and in the lives of people near and far.

OPENING PRAYER

We come together this morning as celebrants,
as seekers and companions.

We enter into this, the longest day, joyfully,
allowing ourselves the beauty of this time together
in which we may rest our cares and sorrows,
and allow our hearts and spirits to be uplifted.
I invite you to take a deep breath,
drink in the beauty and community that

surrounds you in this place,
and as you release it,
become centered here,
in the now.

Silence

Illuminate

An advent poem by Brittany Deininger

MINISTRY OF THE WORD (Ngā Pānui Karaipiture)

Into this day will break moments of awareness,
Tiny shards of light that illumine the whole reality of existence.
**May these readings be such a moment and may we be blessed by
their gift.**

Overshadowed

by Bruce Sanguin. "If Darwin Prayed".

Overshadow us, O Holy One,
as your spirit overshadowed Mary,
announcing her role as a key player
in the Christmas story.

Overshadow our sense of insignificance
with the mystery that you chose us
to give birth to the Holy.

Overshadow our low estimation of ourselves
with Spirit's esteeming presence.

Overshadow our fear that you are calling us
with Spirit's empowering grace.

Our small selves relax
in the shadow of your grace.
We regain our full stature
and accept the leading role

in this drama of sacred birth.
We are reminded
that with you,
all things are possible.

Luke 1: 26-38 (Inclusive Text)

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a woman betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David.

The woman's name was Mary.

Gabriel went in and said to her,
"Rejoice, so highly favoured! God is with you."

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour.

"Listen! You are to conceive and bear a child, and you must name him Jesus.

"Your child will be great, and will be called Begotten of the Most High.

"God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. He will rule over the House of Jacob for ever, and his reign will have no end.

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am not involved with a man?"

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you", the angel answered
"and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow.

And so the child will be holy and will be called Begotten of God.

"Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a child, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God."

"I am the handmaid of God," said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me."

And the angel left her.

HYMN: (Himene) ‘The Angel Gabriel from heaven came’

Words: Sabine Baring-Gould; Music: Basque Carol [H&P 87]

SO WHAT’S THE STORY ...?

A cry is heard: Mother remembers

(A monologue by Mary of Nazareth at age sixty)

Presented by Heather Garside.

This drama is dedicated to the memory of many children killed in our community and world – those abused, those killed by bullets and bombs, those children who die unjustly anywhere at any time. The original piece was written for a worshipping community in the Bronx New York by Christina J Del Piero.

HYMN (Himene) Who is the child that is to be born?

Words: Shirley Murray; Music: Colin Gibson [Carol our Christmas 50]

TIME FOR REFLECTION

HYMN: (Himene) Born in the night

Words and Music: Geoffrey Ainger [H&P 95]

OFFERING (Tātou Koha ki Te Hāhi)

God is at work in the world, renewing, remaking, resurrecting, bringing hope through the faith, the gifts, and the work of the church. We trust in God and together we work for peace and justice through God's Spirit. Let us rejoice in our God-given opportunity to share in God's work.

The offering is collected

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Thank you, God of Love, for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity aroused in us by Christ's coming into the world. May these gifts represent a new spirit of joyous sharing among us, for the sake of all your children everywhere.

Amen.

COMMUNITY TIME

Let us offer the peace to each other saying:

The peace of God is here to stay.

Notices - Sharing Joys and Sorrows

PRAYER FOR OTHERS (Ngā Inoi Mō te Whānau)

We pray for peace.

In those parts of the world torn apart by war and injustice, we pray for peace in the hearts of those who have it in their power to bring change and reconciliation.

And we pray for justice, that as a baby could become a King, all things are possible through You.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for our fragile and beautiful earth, that amidst the consumerism of this time we will grow in love and care for her, and be a people willing to make sacrifices to care for creation.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for families,
in particular families struggling with rising living costs
and the extra pressures that this season brings.
We pray too for the elderly
and those particularly vulnerable and lonely;
and we pray that we will form communities
which nurture and support the vulnerable.
Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for our church,
that we will always rejoice in Your stories,
and find new ways of telling them and sharing them
with a world so greatly in need of Your message.
Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.
Amen

LORD'S PRAYER (*Te Karakia o Te Atua*)

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tou Ingoa
Kia tae mai tou rangatira-tanga.
Kia meatia tau e pai ai
ki runga i te whenua,
kia rite ano ki to te rangi.
Homai ki a mātou aianei
he taro mā mātou mo tēnei ra.
Murua o mātou hara
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i o te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whaka-waia;
Engari whaka-orangia mātou, i te kino:
Nou hoki te rangatira-tanga,
te kaha,
me te kororia,
Ake, ake, ake.
Āmine.**

SONG: Christmas Halleluia

Words and Music: Philip Garside

Halleluia, Christmas is coming.

Oh, let us praise the Lord.

Sing halleluia,

Welcome the Christ child

Bringing hope for a peaceful world.

Christmas Halleluia

Sing as a round in 2 parts

Words & Music: Philip Garside

The musical notation is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: Hal - le - lu - ia, Christ - mas is com - ing. Oh, let us praise the Lord. Sing. The second staff continues the melody with quarter and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line. The lyrics are: hal - le-lu - ia, wel-come the Christ child, Bring-ing hope for a peace-ful world. There is an asterisk above the first measure of the second staff.

PARTING WORDS (*Ngā Inoi Whakamutunga*)

The God we worship is never confined to his holy place.

So go and travel with the God

who is found in ordinary and surprising places.

Gathered together

We wait for the light.

Standing together

We trust in the light.

Praying together

We hope for the light.

Seeking together

We step out with the light.

Singing together

We are blessed by the light.

WORDS OF BLESSING

Go now in joy, building, living in, and enjoying
a community full of welcome and equality.

GRACE

**Kia tau ki a tātou katoa,
te atawhai o to tātou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga
ki te Wairua Tapu. Amine**

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Liturgy for this service was sourced and adapted from:

Jessica Petersen. Advent 4. Process & Faith.

<http://processandfaith.org/sites/default/files/pdfs>

Rex A. Hunt. <https://www.rexaehuntprogressivelgy.com/advent3b17122023>

Brittany Deininger, Illuminate,

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/illuminate-no-text-version>

Bruce Sanguin, If Darwin Prayed. Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics.

Christina J. Del Piero, *A cry is heard: Mother remembers*, Before the Amen,

pgs 28-30, The Pilgrim Press

Hymn Book Trust, *Carol our Christmas, Hope is our Song*

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<https://www.facebook.com/wesleywellington.methodistchurch.10am>