



uniting
church

in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

ADVENT 2



JOHN THE BAPTIST

ALIGN WITH GOD'S COMING REALM

4 December, 2022

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Second Sunday of Advent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, and pay our respects to their elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the living Burrumattagal people today.

ADVENT PREPARATION

In this season of expectation,

We prepare to welcome unexpected new life.

Into the bustle of our lives
the hard to find moments of solitude.

Into our homes and situations
with friends and families,

We prepare to welcome unexpected new life.

Into our hearts, our unknown self,
into the often hidden parts of our lives,

***We prepare to welcome
unexpected new life in Christ Jesus.***

In this season of anticipation

***We prepare to welcome
unexpected new life in Christ Jesus.***

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

GATHERING PRAYER

Grace us this Advent,
God in Community,
with expectant new life and love
ever discovering us
always emerging,
with mercy flowing towards us.

***Craft us
new hearts
from the fragments
of your Calvary-broken own.***

Grasp us
with your life-giving embrace,
feed us
with the Spirit's peace.

***Buoy us
in the sustainable wonder
of your evolving dreams for us,
Holy in One.
Amen.***

Adapted: Thom M Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies

HYMN *Praise with joy the world's Creator (TiS 179)*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_24IIs80Bo

1. Praise with joy the world's creator,
God of justice, love and peace,
Source and end of human knowledge,
Force of goodness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory,
Power to rescue and release.
2. Praise to Christ who feeds the hungry,
Frees the captive, finds the lost,
Heals the sick, upsets religion,
Fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence -
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.
3. Praise the Spirit sent among us
Liberating truth from pride,

Forging bonds where race or gender,
Age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure -
Foolishness none dare deride.

4. Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
One God in Community,
Calling us to leave behind
Faith's ghettos and obscurity.
Thus the world shall yet believe
When shown Christ's vibrant unity.

*(Tune: Praise my soul the king of heaven. J Goss c. 1986 Wild
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PRAYER

Where there seems to be no way
to end the conflict and violence in our time,
***we pray that you would teach us, O Christ,
to prepare the way;***

Where we can see no way
to provide for the needs of all people,
***we pray that you would show us, O Christ,
how to prepare the way;***

Where we can find no way
to work together for justice,
***we pray that you would change us, O Christ,
until we prepare the way;***

Where we are unable to believe in a way
to live simply, responsibly and mindfully,
***we pray that you would inspire us, O Christ,
to faith that prepares the way;***

In a world where we are tempted
to see so many of our challenges as dead-ends,
we pray for a new vision, a new heart and a new commitment
to prepare the way for your reign,
your grace,
your shalom
and for the liberation, justice and peace that you bring.

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WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God in Christ Jesus
is a God of everlasting hope.
When we turn
and open ourselves to new life
there is grace waiting for us
and the gift of a new day before us.

***Thanks be to God,
we are forgiven! Amen.***

SCRIPTURE READINGS Matthew 3:1-8, 10-11 (Inclusive Text)

In due course John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea and saying: 'Change your whole way of life, for the reign of heaven is close at hand.'

This was the one the prophet Isaiah spoke of saying: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God, make straight God's paths. John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts with wild honey.

Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to John, and as they were baptised in the River Jordan they confessed their sins.

But when John saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? 'But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit...

'Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire.

'I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and whose sandals I am not fit to carry; this one will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire...'

RESPONSE

*O God our nurturer,
may your word live in us.
And colour our living. Amen!*

REFLECTION

SONG *O come, O come, Emmanuel, Enya*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01BcaggibDw>

OFFERING PRAYER

Receive and bless these gifts and our lives, O God,
which we offer in response to your love
revealed so clearly in Jesus.

As he planted the seeds of love and life in our lives,
strengthen us to nourish others with the fruits
of our faith made visible through these gifts,
our love and our witness.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

O God, gift us the words
for calling out
your love to the world
and announcing the promises
which you inspire in our lives
as we try to work for the good of all.

***Speak through us in each day,
for the adding of good to life.***

Carry our lives

into the wildernesses of our day,
where we see more clearly
the emptiness,
and the hard questions
before us and others.
Give to us a passion
for justice and peace
to challenge the powers
which would overcome
those hopes, we pray.

We pray now for all people
who long for voices
to be raised on their behalf:

The people pray

Sound within our hearts
a greater promise, Holy Spirit.

Enable us to listen to melodies
of truth and love, we pray.
Bring our prayers alive
with a new purpose
for the creating of a world
which truly belongs to you.

***This we pray in humble faith.
Amen.***

HYMN *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry* (TiS 270)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8POKmbK5lF4>

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh.

Awake and harken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!

2 Then cleansed be every life from sin:
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward.
Without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.

5 All praise to you, eternal Son,
whose advent has our freedom won,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

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COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

All are welcome
to share in this table
of Holy Communion,
all who come in humble faith.

***In eating and drinking
this life-giving sacrament
we are all fed by God's love.***

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Christ be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

***It is right to give
our thanks and praise.***

God of grace and tenderness,
Jesus offers bread of life to all of us;
though we offer the cross to him,
he graces us with life;
though we would divide each other
by class, race, gender, or condition,
he calls us to oneness in you.

Holy God of wonder,
feed us with the bread of life,
so we might share food with those
who know true hunger;
as your justice shines
in the shadows of our hearts,
may we light the way
for the lost and despised;
as you reshape our brokenness
into wholeness,
may we bind up
the wounds of our world.

And so we give you thanks,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

***Holy, holy, holy,
compassionate God,
heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,***

*God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.*

THE BREAKING OF BREAD/ POURING OF WINE

Long ago,
Jesus came
in the humble birth of a child,
a child of amazing and divine love,
a child of our humanity.
We pledge ourselves
to be embodiments
of the dream Jesus lived.

Long ago,
Jesus took bread,
gave thanks, broke it and said:
‘This bread is broken,
as my body will be’.

And he handed it to his friends,
and invited them to eat, saying:
‘Remember all
that I have been to you’.

Long ago,
Jesus poured a cup of wine,
offered thanks for it,
gave it to his friends and said,
‘This wine is poured out
as my life will be poured out.
As you drink give thanks
for all I have given’.

Loving God,

it is through your unceasing love
we have this bread and wine to offer.

May this gathering
of your community of faith, O God,
be fed, comforted and empowered.
May we as your people express
the courage and the generosity
that characterised Jesus' life.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup we take
is a sharing in the life blood of Christ.

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

God of mercy and amazing grace,
in the warmth of Summer
we are grateful
for your presence, enlivening us.
We pray your presence
will feed and sustain us
to follow in the way of Jesus,
Amen.

HYMN *Child in a Manger (TiS 319)*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoOYruvK-Dc>

1. Child in the manger, infant of Mary

Outcast and Stranger, Christ of us all
Child Who inherits all our transgressions
All our demerits upon Him fall

2. Once the most holy Child of salvation
Gently and lowly lived here below
Now as our glorious mighty Redeemer
See him victorious over each foe

3. Prophets foretold Him, Infant of wonder
Angels behold Him on His throne
Worthy our Savior of all our praises
Happy forever are His own

BLESSING

Go into the world
with a new sense of determination
as we move closer
towards the promise
of Jesus' birth.
And may our voice for the Christ
be full of grace,
our celebration of the Creator
be enlivened with hope
and the Holy Spirit
lead us from the future
and out of unexpected new life.
Amen.