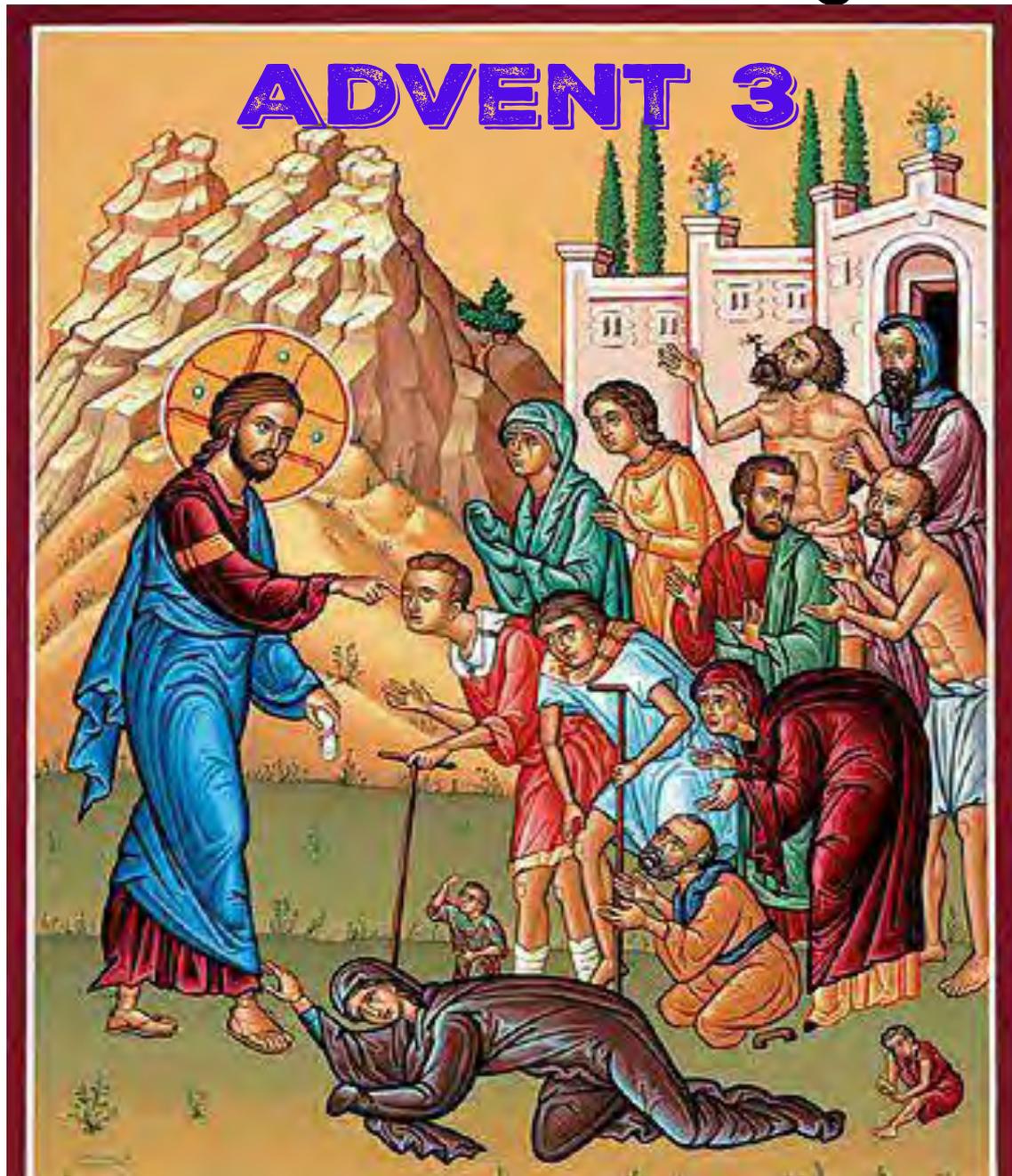




**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh Memorial Uniting Church



SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?

11 December, 2022

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5199089657>

Meeting ID: 519 908 9657

WELCOME

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burramattagal 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 Burramattagal 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 THE ADVENT CANDLE

GATHERING PRAYER

It may seem naive, in a world of grief, to choose to live in joy;

It may seem foolish, in a world where solemnity is power,
to sing and dance to a different tune;

It may seem cruel, in a world of suffering and injustice,
to speak of light and celebration;

But you have come, Jesus:

to bring joy into our grief, light into our darkness,

singing into our mourning;

and it is an act of healing and proclamation

to believe and embrace the joy you offer.

Let us give thanks for the One

who is the source of our faith and hope.

In God, we live and move, and have our being.

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

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

THE PRAYERS OF WHO WE ARE

We confess that we feel overwhelmed
when we see systems, structures and practices,
that leave us and others powerless.

We affirm again that to follow your way
is to seek the way of shalom,
that your reign, O God,
is found whenever domination is overcome,
whenever justice is experienced,
and whenever people are released from prejudice and
exploitation.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING **Matthew 11:2-11** (Inclusive Text)

John in prison had heard what Jesus was doing and sent disciples to ask him, 'Are you the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the one who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? 'One wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? 'To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: This is the one of whom

scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you who will prepare your way before you.

'I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the realm of God is greater than John is.'

Matthew 11: 28-29

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your inner being.'

RESPONSE

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

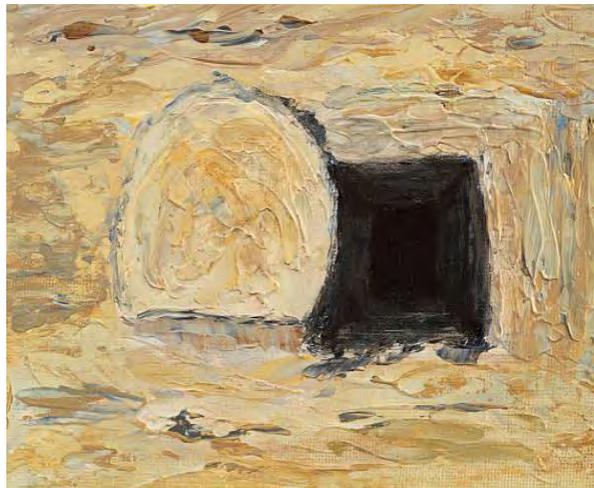
SONG *Walls and Doors, Jackson Browne*

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

Ever since the world's existed
There's one thing that is certain
There are those who build walls
And those who open doors
Ah but this my love
I'm thinking you already knew

For some it's always winter
While others have the spring
Some people find good fortune
While others never find a thing
Ah but this my love is something you already knew

That's how it's always been
And I know you know it
There can be freedom only when nobody owns it
I'm going to say that again
Because I know you know it
There can be freedom only when nobody owns it



Of what use is the moon if you don't have the night?
Of what use is a windmill with no Quixote left who'll fight?
Ah but this my love is something you already knew
At some point on the horizon
Sky can be confused with earth
Some people dream of God
While others dream of wealth
But of course my love this is what you see out on the street
It's how it's always been
And I know you know it

There can be freedom only when nobody owns it
Let me say that again
Because I know that we both know it
There can be freedom only when nobody owns it
When nobody owns it
When nobody owns it

Ever since the world's existed
There's one thing that is certain
Some people build walls
Others open doors

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REFLECTION

HYMN *Bring many names beautiful and good (TiS 182)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=treES3dAILE>

1. Bring many names, beautiful and good,
celebrate, in parable and story,
holiness in glory,
living, loving God.
Hail and hosanna!
bring many names!

2. Strong mother God, working night and day,
planning all the wonders of creation,
setting each equation

genius at play:
Hail and hosanna,
strong mother God!

3. Warm father God, hugging every child,
feeling all the strains of human living,
caring and forgiving
till we're reconciled:
Hail and hosanna,
warm father God!

4. Old, aching God, gray with endless care,
calmly piercing evil's new disguises,
glad of good surprises,
wiser than despair:
Hail and hosanna,
old, aching God!

5. Young, growing God, eager, on the move,
saying no to falsehood and unkindness,
crying out for justice,
giving all you have:
Hail and hosanna,
young, growing God!

6. Great, living God, never fully known,
joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,
closer yet than breathing,
everlasting home:
Hail and hosanna,
great, living God!

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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

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Matthew 11.2

Someone you may not have noticed is waiting,
longing for healing, for justice, for hope.

You only mean to be passing by,
but they see you.

And even if they don't know they are asking,
they are asking.

"Are you the one?"

Not necessarily the Messiah,
but perhaps one to bring hope,
to be a light in the darkness.

There may be someone in some kind of prison
looking for some kind of encouragement,
someone longing for healing or appreciation or forgiveness.
Will you be the one, or should they wait for another?

There may be people of color who see a white person
and assume racism, until they see otherwise.

There may be a non-conforming person
who assumes you will judge them
unless you clearly don't.

Will you be the one to shine light in their darkness,
or are they to wait for another?

Sit still in the grace of God.

Let the light that is dawning for the world
dawn in you.

Let that light grow and radiate.

Bear it with you through the day.

You will meet someone who seeks grace,
who longs for a sign of hope.

And for them

you will be the one.

(Source: Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Unfolding Light)

Prayers are offered for the people.

The people pray

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 in peace
to climb the mountain tops of life
as we continue our journey into Advent.

And may the winds
of God's creative freedom
breathe around us,

the light of the Holy Spirit
make things clearer as we look
and Christ Jesus
wait in promise ahead of us.
Amen.