



Leigh Fijian
Leigh Memorial
Combined Service



1 January 2023

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/95778738282>

LALI

WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As we pause to acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation of the Parramatta City Region as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Now we light our candle
in the first week after Christmas.
It continues to bring
the light and love of Jesus' birth.

*Once upon a time
a little baby was born
who taught us to love and understand one another.
And they called his name, Jesus.*

Adapted: Rev Rex A E Hunt

The Christ candle is lit

OPENING SENTENCES

In your ever-always love,
Steadfast Grace,
you hear the cries
of all the two-year-olds ...
*those cast aside by
a self-contained world,
and the weeping of their mothers
who cannot feed them
because there is no hope.*

Wrapped in an old blanket
to keep you warm in a cold stable,
and smuggled into Egypt
to keep you safe, Marginalised Messiah,
*the searching of all refugees
is known to your heart,
yearning for a place to call home,
for a life to call safe.*

Cradling the innocents killed in war,
remembering those
driven from their homes
by fear, or greed, or power;
singing laments with the parents
who cannot give their children
the lives they should have,
*you proclaim God's name for us,
Spirit of Sanctuary.*

God in Community, Holy in One,
you fill our hearts
with infinity's courage,
for you continue
to come into this world.
*Give us the peace, the joy,
the hope that we may share this
with all who cry out in despair. Amen*
Thom Shuman

SONG

Morning has broken (156 TiS)

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the One Light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day

PRAYER

Dweller in eternity,
you have been born among us.

We chase down the corridors of power,
*... you enter the hallways
where humanity struggles
and suffering resides.*

We grasp and desire more and more,
*... while you let go of glory
to become one of us.*

We reduce the birth of Jesus Christ
to tinsel, toys, and accumulation,
*... you widen your embrace
welcoming those cast out
by each society.*

Forgive us, Love born among us.
Come among us,
open our hearts and minds
with your grace and truth.

*Send us forth with the shepherds,
to live and celebrate the birth
of the One who brings us life,
Jesus Christ, the sign of God among us.*

ASSURANCE OF GOD WITH US

The good news
fills the hunger of our lives;
that God is always born in the world
The One who is our hope has arrived;
the One who adds to our life
has come to us;
Peace is in our midst:

Thanks be to God!

Amen!

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

(Inclusive Text)

After the astrologers had left, the angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him'.

So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead.

This was to fulfil what God had spoken through the prophet: I called my child out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, the angel of God appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said:

'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and go back to Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.'

So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel.

But when Joseph learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream, left for the region of Galilee.

There they settled in a town called Nazareth.

In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: He will be called a Nazarene.

RESPONSE *O God our nurturer,*

may your word live in us.

And colour our living.

Amen!

REFLECTION

SHARING TOGETHER, COFFEE AND TEA

CAROL *O come, all ye faithful, (continued)*

2 True God of true God,
Light of Light eternal,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
begotten, not created:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

6 Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God,
glory in the highest':

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

PRAYING TOGETHER FOR PLACES AND PEOPLE

O God, may we be gifted with an abundance of love,
so that, as each need arises around us,
we may bear witness to the life of Jesus Christ.

***May we see when the threats to justice and peace
move into new places,
so that we may protect the forces of good,
no matter how vulnerable they may be.***

May the spirit of Christmas stay with us now,
even if others move on,
so that we both give to those who are in need
and go on celebrating the coming of the Christ.

We remember these people before you now, O God:

The people pray

Hear these our prayers, O God.

Sustain in us the wonder of the hope
which we felt yesterday,
so that we act like people for whom the Good News
has come in power and promise.

May we be wise in knowing when to move on,
setting free our life as your church
to follow where you lead us,
so that each precious part of Christ's life
may be enacted and sustained.

***Lift our spirits as we go, Jesus Christ,
and fix our eyes on the things that really matter
as we try to be your faithful friends.***

This we pray in your name.

Amen.

COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

May the God of silent nights be with you.

May the God of holy nights be with you.

Come in thanks to God as we open our hearts.

We pray that God will fill our hearts with joy and wonder.

At this, Christ's table, all are welcome.

The bread and wine will become
the source of Christ's life for us.

OUR THANKSGIVING

In the bleak mid-winter of chaos,
where empty winds moaned,
your heart sang new songs, God of great joy,
and creation tumbled forth:
stars which guided wise ones to a stable.

All that was good and beautiful was shaped
for those created in your image ...
but we had no room in our hearts for your grace,
and sent your hopes away empty-handed.
So, you became one us, taking on
our birth, our life, our death
so we might know your love for us.

As we join in the joy that has come to the world,
as we look for your light in the shadows of our lives,
we come with warmed and grateful hearts:
We join with all creation giving you thanks,

God of silent nights.

Blessed is the One born into the nights of our world.

We give you thanks!

It was in David's hometown
that your holiness became humility,
your power turned into weakness,
your glory transformed in humanity
as a baby took its first breath.
Placed in a feeding trough,
Jesus came to feed us
on life-giving bread;
with animals as his midwives,
Jesus came to offer all creation
new hope and wonder;
born into poverty,
Jesus came to share with us
the abundance of God's love;
As we celebrate Christ being born among us,
we remember ...
... Jesus knew the hurt of rejection
and the welcome he offered others;
dying, Jesus knew our deepest fear
and the moment of separation from life;
being raised, Jesus knew God's love
and faithfulness being fulfilled.

Here, God-who-is-our-life,
the broken bread gives us the strength
to share hope with those in despair,
to challenge the injustice all around us,
to rebuild neighborhoods others rush past.

Here, God-who-is-our-grace,
the cup is poured into our souls so we may
offer a welcome to all who are forgotten,
embrace those who grieve amidst so much joy,
reconcile with those from whom we are estranged.

THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Christ is the bread of life; child of Mary, child of God.

Christ is the cup of salvation; humbled for a time,
now revealed to all.

Let us receive the gifts of God.

SHARING THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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

FINAL PRAYER

O God we give you grateful thanks
for all that lies within this sacred feast.
May we carry into this New Year
the bread which brings life
and the wine of compassion
for all who wait in longing.

***This we pray in your name,
Amen.***

CAROL *As the old year passes*

*(Tune: As the Green Blade Rises/Jesus Christ is waiting – Noel Nouvelet;
Words: David MacGregor)*

As the old year passes
we look back, reflect:
times of joy and promise,
times we'd best forget.
God of the ages
help us walk your way.
Help us greet your future,
seize tomorrow's day

As the old year passes
sorrow wells within:
loved ones no more 'round us,
all that could have been.
God of compassion,
heal each ailing heart.
Guide us to your future
where new life may start.

As the old year passes
we cry for our struggling world.
Climate ever-changing,
fighting too often heard.
Jesus, you call us
to cherish all you give.
Call us to your future
where all in peace might live.

As the new year dawns now
we would give you praise.
Faithful God, come lead us
onward in new ways.
We'll love and serve you
in the faith of Christ,
in your Spirit's future:
people of new life.

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BLESSING

And may the God of Christmas

fill your hearts with all joy and peace in believing!

As this year draws to its end,
We give thanks for the gifts it brought
And how they become inlaid within
Where neither time nor tide can touch them.

Days when beloved faces shone brighter
With light from beyond themselves;
And from the granite of some secret sorrow
A stream of buried tears loosened.

We bless this year for all we learned,
For all we loved and lost
And for the quiet way it brought us
Nearer to our invisible destination.

*(Source: John O'Donohue, Excerpt from 'At the End of the Year'
in the publication 'To bless the space between us').*