



Parramatta City  
Uniting Churches

# Epiphany 2



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

"We must work unceasingly to uplift [our society] that we love to a higher destiny, to a higher plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humanness."

January 15, 2023

## WELCOME

### LIGHTING OF THE EPIPHANY CANDLE

As we light this candle, let us pause  
and become enlightened and empowered  
in this period of Epiphany:

The message of Epiphany  
is that you are God's beloved child  
and that God is moving in and through your life  
to bless the world.

... the season of Epiphany is no "ordinary time,"  
but the time of surprising inspiration  
and lively revelation and the reminder  
that the ordinary is extraordinary  
for those persons who pause  
and awaken to God's presence in their world.

*The candle is lit*

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As we pause to acknowledge the Burrumattagal 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.

### GATHERING

Come and see surprising grace  
and a love  
which knows no ending.

***Come and see a Christ  
who longs peace  
to replace division,  
hunger to be ended,  
suffering transformed  
into the promise of a new day.***

Meet the One who is to be trusted,  
who embraces the stranger

and welcomes the excluded.

***This is our friend, Jesus Christ.  
We celebrate the life  
which lifts our hearts.***

**HYMN**     *Christ, be our light*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDPd8d3oOE>

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,

light for the world to see.

*Refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has pow'r to save us.

Make us your living voice.

*Refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

*Refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,

walls made of living stone.

*Refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

*Refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

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## **A LITANY**

Fishers once heard the Voice  
when a young man bid them follow;  
And still the Voice beckons today...  
can you hear?

***Here I am. Send me.***

Mary stood amazed  
as the Voice proclaimed  
impending birth;  
And still the Voice beckons today...  
can you hear?

***Here I am. Send me.***

Rosa Parks followed the Voice  
to the front of the bus;  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
heard the Voice  
as the bullet shattered;  
And still the Voice beckons today...

can you hear?

***Here I am. Send me.***

The Voice beckons  
from humble places...  
in the tears of hungry children,  
in the cries  
of the frail and frightened elderly,  
in the pleas of those whose dreams have been too long deferred;  
And still the Voice beckons today...  
can you hear?

***Here I am. Send me.***

A timid believer pauses  
to listen to the Voice;  
A struggling church hears the Voice  
and turns;  
And still the Voice beckons today...  
can you hear?

***Here I am. Send me.***

*Adapted: Katherine Hawker: liturgyoutside*

## **READINGS**

**Martin Luther King, "I have a dream"**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

### **John 1:29-34 (Inclusive Text)**

Seeing Jesus coming toward him, John said,  
'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.  
'This is the one I spoke of when I said, One is coming after me

who ranks before me and existed before me. Who it was, I did not know, and yet it was to reveal the one coming to Israel that I came baptising with water.'

John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove and resting on this one. 'I myself did not know who it was, but the one who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptises with the Holy Spirit.

'Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that this is the Chosen One of God.'

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

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

## **REFLECTION**

**HYMN** *"Now The Star Of Christmas"  
(Tune: 'Kupe', Colin Gibson OR 'Noel Nouvelet')*

1. Now the star of Christmas  
shines into our day,  
points a new direction:  
change is on the way -  
there's another landscape  
to be travelled through,

there's a new-born spirit  
broadening our view.

2. When the Christ of Christmas  
speaks to heart and mind,  
clears the clouded vision  
hurting humankind,  
kindred spirits gather,  
drawn toward the light,  
sharing revelation,  
joyful at the sight.

3. If we choose to follow,  
we may yet be wise.  
Where the three kings travel,  
three great faiths arise:  
Jesus Christ for Christians,  
Jesus, Judah's son,  
Prophet for the Muslim,  
wisdom in each one.

4. Where the star enlightens,  
light is shared around.  
God has drawn no borders,  
faith sees common ground:  
Peace the hopeful journey,  
justice without bar,  
God's illumination  
from a Christmas star.

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## **NOTICES**

## **OFFERING**

Let us remember the gifts which others brought to the  
Christchild!

O God, we bring you what we have to give this day.



Show us those who long for our help,  
so that we may truly be their friends.  
Guide us now, Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

### **PRAYING TOGETHER FOR PLACES AND PEOPLE**

O Jesus Christ, call to us  
in the streets around us  
and beyond.

***Enable us to see where you wait  
on the margins of life,  
with those who are pushed  
to the edge of hope.***

Guide us towards  
wise decisions and actions,  
so that we truly share true life,  
rather than charity and dependencies.

We pray for these issues and people:  
*Prayer is offered*

May we walk with them,  
Jesus Christ,  
because we are faithful  
to your dreams for them  
and as the witnesses to your being.

***Create here,  
a community of prophetic life  
which announces  
to this community  
that your friends embrace  
all who come in humility and love.***

Stand in our midst,  
we pray Jesus Christ,  
warming us with your encouragement  
and inspiring us towards  
living out your Gospel.

***Then make us brave enough  
to walk into the unknown,***

***confident that you will  
never leave us alone.***

Build up this trust among us,  
so that our life and prayers  
come from the depths of our hearts  
and give us strength in all we do.

This we pray in faith.

***Amen.***

**SONG**      *May the feet of God walk with you (TiS, 779)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rw1sjc3JVrw>

May the feet of God  
walk with you,  
and God's hand hold you tight.  
May the eye of God rest on you,  
and God's ear hear your cry.  
May the smile of God be for you,  
and God's breath give you life.  
May the Child of God grow in you,  
and God's love bring you home.

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**BLESSING**

Let us go into the world in faith,  
inviting others  
to come and see the Christ.

And may the light of Christ  
shine within our lives,  
the loving hand of God the Parent  
be beneath us  
and the Holy Spirit  
guide and guard us as we go.

***Amen.***