

Parramatta Community  
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church



The Advent of an  
Alternative Way of Being

---

10 December 2023

## WELCOME

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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that we are on the land of the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation and that the Spirit was in the land revealing God to them through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the Burramattagal people and gave them particular insights into God's ways. Therefore, we honour the wisdom of the Burramattagal Elders and their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

*(Using words from the Preamble to the Uniting Church Constitution)*

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

We gather around the Advent wreath  
to pray for our lost hopes,  
broken peace, limited joys,  
and love so hard to find and share  
in our world today.

We affirm that our candles mean  
we claim the power to call this season Advent  
when God's light illuminates the shadows.

***We light the first candle of hope.***

We now light the candle of peace  
in spite of so much that disturbs peace.  
God's peace illuminates the possibility  
of reconciliation and healing  
and brightens the path to joy.

***We light the first candle of peace.***

Emmanuel, God be with us,  
lighting hope and peace on the wick of our lives  
so that we may shine as we meet others in our world,

and discover the light in the stranger. *Amen*

**SONG**     **We Will make no Peace with Oppression**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxU7Xs1TpCc>

**GATHERING PRAYER**     **Shalom**

We celebrate the dream of peace:  
Not only the absence of conflict,  
but the presence of true compassion  
and community;

*We celebrate the dream of justice:  
Not only appropriate consequence,  
but radical, inclusive dignity  
and equality;*

We celebrate the dream of goodness:  
Not only an end to corruption and evil,  
but the nurture of extravagant integrity  
and love;

*We celebrate the dream of salvation:  
Not only life beyond the grave,  
but present wholeness  
and restoration for all;*

Here and now, O God, we, your people,  
give you thanks for the dream, and the reality,  
of Shalom.

*(Source: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

**HYMN**     **Praise with joy the world's Creator** (*TiS 179*)

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  
Goose Publications) With permission One License A6044575  
All rights reserved*

## PRAYER

O God,  
Sometimes silence in the world can be deafening;  
Oh, there is a lot of sound as noise,  
but without any sound that makes sense.

***In all the noise of human wrong-doing and pain,  
we miss the sound of your voice.***

So, we pray for Messengers to speak again your word of Restoration,  
that prepares us  
to welcome again your visitation to us and our world.



Messengers of listening and forgiveness

***to silence the noise of conflict and hatred;***

Messengers of seeing and empathy

***to silence the noise of stereotyping and disengagement;***

Messengers of hope and responsibility

***to silence the noise of negativity and apathy;***

Messengers of faith and perseverance

***to silence the noise of resignation and expediency.***

In every place where anyone needs hope and peace!

May your Messengers speak,

in friend, the child, the stranger, the enemy, the Other,

and if need be,

give us the courage to be the Messengers.

***Amen.***

*(Source: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **John 1:1-5, 10-11, 14**

Before the beginning of time and space was the Word, and the Word was turned toward God, and what God was the Word was also. 2. And the Word was with God. 3. All things were made through the Word, and without the Word nothing was made. What took place In the Word was life, and the life was the light of humankind. 5. And the light shines in the darkness, and darkness has not overcome it.

10. The Word was in the world ... yet was not known in the world. 11 (The Word made flesh) came to his own home, and his own people received him not.

14. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the fullness of a gift that is truth ...

### **Mark1. 1-8**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Child of God.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way' <sup>3</sup> 'a voice of one calling in the

wilderness, “Prepare the way for Yahweh, make straight paths for our God.”

<sup>4</sup> And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of change for the forgiveness for wrongdoing. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their wrongdoing, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And this was his message: ‘After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

## RESPONSE

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

## SONG      **Illuminate the Shadows**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IbUus9b5Tk>

## MISSION FROM THE INSIDE HYMN

### **Child in a Manger (TiS 319)**

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

## 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**     **'Til All, In Truth, Are Free"** (Tune, TiS457 'Aurelia' 76.76D)

1. If truth still guides our journey,  
where does it lead from here?  
Our world lies there before us  
but nothing seems that clear.  
We used to think we knew things,  
that all had been revealed,  
but now all truths we question,  
and much is yet concealed.

2. Our faith in higher powers,  
our confidence in love,  
our hope for bright tomorrows  
our trust in things above –  
each must be proved and tested:  
what's fantasy, what's truth?  
It's while we're on this journey,  
we one another soothe.

3. If we would share with others  
the way we choose to live;



if justice and compassion  
inspired us all to give,  
we would not need to worry  
that truths do not agree  
for all could live together  
in love and harmony.

4. So walk with me in courage  
across truth's great divides.  
We'll listen to each other  
until the hate subsides.  
Together we'll speak boldly  
of what the world still needs  
and speak a truth to power  
'til all, in truth, are free.

*(Gretta Vosper/2015) With permission One License A6044575 All rights reserved*

## 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.***