

Blue Christmas 16/12/2020

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign.
Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14a

Gathering

Song: While shepherds watched, TiS 299

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around.
 2. 'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind),
'glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and humankind.
 3. 'To you in David's town this day is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:
 4. 'The heavenly baby you there shall find to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling clothes and in a manger laid.'
 5. Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
 6. "All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to all begin and never cease.'
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SONG: While shepherd watched, by Nahum Tate, 1652-1715,
from Together in Song, Harper Collins *Religious*, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Song: Once in Royal David's city, TiS 312

1. Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
 2. He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, despised and lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.
 3. And through all his wondrous childhood, day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feels for all our sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.
 4. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.
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5. Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him: but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high,
when his children gather round bright like stars, with glory crowned.

SONG: [Once in royal David's city](#), by Cecil Frances Alexander,
from *Together in Song*, Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Greeting

Ian

The God of all grace, mercy,
peace and compassion be with you all.
And also with you.

We gather on the land of a dreaming people,
the Wurundjeri of the Kulin Nation.

Breathe...

Our worship this evening will include a meditation on the traditional themes of Advent – God's Christmas gifts to us of hope, peace, joy and love. This evening after a year like no other we will pause in the stillness. We will gently acknowledge the months of waiting and celebrate the hope that we have in God's future, a future of hope, peace, joy and love, always love.

Let's sing '[Flame of Love](#)'

*1. Flame of love come
Holy Spirit
Make in us your
Cradle home
For the Christ child
Who will meet and
Walk with us til
We are grown*

*Flame of love
Holy Spirit
Make in us
Your cradle home*

*2. Light of laughter
Balm in sorrow
You have been our
Cradle home
Called our names in
to the Silence
Flame of love by
You we're known*

*Flame of love
Holy Spirit
Make in us
Your cradle home*

SONG: [Flame of Love](#), Words: Julie Perrin, Music: Helen Burnham & Julie Perrin,
Arranged: Julia Potter & Elaine Potter

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Jenne

with SONG: Silent Night, TiS 311

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. Joseph went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

*1. Silent night, holy night: all is calm, all is bright
round the virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:8-11)

*2. Silent night, holy night: shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, 'Alleluia;
Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.'*

The angel said, "This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" (Luke 2:12-14)

*3. Silent night, holy night: wondrous star, lend your light;
with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King;
Christ our Saviour is born, Christ our Saviour is born.*

SONG: Silent night, by Joseph Mohr, from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Meditation

Ray and Saide

with SONG: He came down that we may have love, GA 293

Hope

The psalmist cries out
*Restore us, O God of hosts;
Let your face shine, that we may be saved.*

Ray

Psalm 80:7

We pause, we wait, we hope.
In the darkest of times we glimpse God's future.
We look for signs of hope.
We claim this hope for ourselves
and for all the earth.

God's future is a future of hope.
We light this candle for hope.

Through the long months of winter this year we waited, and we hoped
We waited for the next announcements, for the daily news
We hoped for lower numbers, for fewer deaths
We waited for an easing of restrictions, opportunities to reconnect
We hoped for a time when we could see and touch loved ones again.
God waits with us, holding us in our hoping
Shining the light of hope into the darkness of our longings.

Saide

1. He came down that we may have hope (x3)
Hallelujah for evermore.

Peace

The psalmist declares
*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.*

Ray

Psalm 85:10

We pause, we wait, we hope.
We walk together through the wilderness of loss.
We listen for the voice of peace.
Help us to work for peace
for all people and all creation.
God's future is a future of peace.
We light this candle for peace.

Through the clamour of voices raised in conflict we worked for peace.
Held in God's steadfast love we turned our attention to justice
We listened to the roaring flames and the groaning of creation
We listened to the growing silence of species lost to extinction
We raised our voices in solidarity with all who suffer.
God works with us, showing us the way
To be a people of righteousness, faith and peace.

Saide

2. He came down that we may have peace...x3)
Hallelujah for evermore.

Joy

The psalmist exults
*Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy*

Ray

Psalm 126:2a

We pause, we wait, we hope.
We emerge from a long time of sorrow
We are called to a time of rejoicing
Let us lay down our burdens
and sing out with joy.
God's future is a future of joy.
We light this candle for joy.

In our time of long separation from friends, family, loved ones
We sought out new ways to connect, to be together,
We laughed into our loneliness, sharing conversations and virtual meals
We discovered joy and beauty in our neighbourhoods as we walked
We worshipped God in our homes, by rivers, out on our streets.
God laughs with us in the joyful abundance of creation
Newly discovered in this time of long sorrow.

Saide

3. He came down that we may have joy...x3)
Hallelujah for evermore.

Love

Ray

The psalmist sings
I will sing of your steadfast love ...
Your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens

Psalm 89:1a,2b

We pause, we wait, we hope.
We hear Mary's song of love in our hearts
We are caught up in that love.
May our spirits rejoice
and our hearts sing with her.
God's future is a future of love.
We light this candle for love

And now as we turn our attention to the birth of Christ
We are reminded of love, always love.
We are created in love, for love, to love.
We acknowledge that too many people do not know love
And so we sing with the psalmist, with Mary
Of justice for the lowly, of faithfulness, of steadfast love.
Let us be a people of love, a people of God's future now.

Saide

4. He came down that we may have love...x3)
Hallelujah for evermore.

SONG: [He came down](#); Cameroon Traditional, transcribed & arranged by John L Bell
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Response

Dance: 'Does your heart break?' by the Brilliance

Hannah Friebe

Today I will be dancing for you, an offering to God on our collective behalf, that captures some of the grief that I've felt this year, that I believe we carry with us but that God transforms in through us. I believe there is growth coming so please join with me in this prayer.

Song: [Infant Holy](#), TiS 292

1. Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all;

swift are winging angels singing,
nowells ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, head the story,
tidings of a gospel true;
thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow,
Christ the babe was born for you,
Christ the babe was born for you.

SONG: [Infant Holy](#), from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502. ALSO Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

Candle lighting

Ian

In a moment you will be invited to come and bring the prayers of your hearts forward to this table and to light candles here.

Perhaps yours is a prayer for hope.

Paul writes, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." Rm 12:11

Ian places a cross on the table as a sign of hope

Perhaps yours is a prayer for peace.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Jn 14:27

Ian pours water into a bowl as a sign of peace

Perhaps yours is a prayer for joy.

Jesus said, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." Jn 15:11

Ian places a flower as a sign of joy

Perhaps yours is a prayer for love.

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." Jn 15:12

Ian places the empty communion plate and cup as signs of Christ's self-giving love

Perhaps your prayer is for all four. Whatever the case, if you would like to, come to the table and light a light for your prayer here amidst the promises of God's hope, peace, joy and love.

All come forward. Followed by

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

SONG: Born in the night, TiS 323

1. Born in the night, Mary's child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need, Mary's child,
born in a borrowed room.
 2. Clear shining light, Mary's child,
your face lights up our way;
light of the world, Mary's child,
dawn on our darkened day.
 3. Truth of our life, Mary's child,
you tell us God is good;
prove it is true, Mary's child,
go to your cross of wood.
 4. Hope of the world, Mary's child,
you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth, Mary's child,
walk in our streets again.
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SONG: [Born in the night](#), by Geoffrey Ainger, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502; ALSO Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

Blessing

As we celebrate the birth of Christ again this year
may God uphold you with hope,
bless you with peace,
fill you with joy,
and nurture you with love.

From the Source, through the Son, by the Spirit.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Ian

Thank you

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Bible reading:
Jenne Perlstein

Advent litany:
Ray Cameron

Meditation:
Saide Cameron

Response:
Hannah Friebel
a prayer offered in
response to
'Does your heart break?'
by the Brilliance
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uP-g3hqAeg&feature=youtu.be>

Candle lighting:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Musicians (on site):
Natalie Sims (co-ordinator)
Shawn Whelan

Christmas Carol
Co-ordinators:
Elaine Potter
Natalie Sims
Shawn Whelan

Musicians & vocalists
(for video):
Simone Alesich
Jane Allardice
James Balsillie
Hazel Bluer
Helen Burnham
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Brad Coath
Glenice Cook
Stephanie Dykes
Ian Ferguson
Alistair Hunter

Ryan Kambouris
Jess Kvensakul
Catherine Leslie
Bronte Potter
Elaine Potter
Annie Quail
Courtney Rohde
Natalie Sims
Dan Whelan
Shawn Whelan

Advent Song:
Flame of Love
Julie Perrin
Helen Burnham
Julia Potter
Elaine Potter

Images:
Ian Ferguson

Production:
David Cameron
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron

Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:
to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,
who is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:10b-11