

Order of Service 3/1/21

Opening verse on screen:

Matthew 2:9: “there, ahead of them, went the star.”

Getting ready

Natalie

Welcome to Brunswick Uniting Church, my name is Natalie. Just a few housekeeping matters before we start:

- Sign in
- Spread out.
- Masks on (including for singing)

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Natalie

And now, we are ready, let's stand together to welcome the scriptures.

Let us join with the wise men who followed the star,
and saw within a newborn baby, the promise of a new future.
May we, like them, encounter the holy as we meet together today.

Let's join together in reminding each other of the Christmas story by singing a song from Trinidad: The Virgin Mary had a baby boy.

Opening song: TiS 307 The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy

*1. The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom,
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom,
O yes, believer, O yes, believer, he come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

*2. The angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
and proclaim him the baby Jesus.*

*3. The wise men saw where the baby born,
the wise men saw where the baby born,
the wise men saw where the baby born,
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

SONG: The Virgin Mary, West Indies spiritual, from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious,
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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation,
the traditional custodians of this land
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land
is not ours to own, but to look after;
and that if we listen,
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves
to work for justice, reconciliation,
and care of the earth.**

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to you all, whether you are here in person, or watching online at any time during this week. It's good to have you joining us as we meet together.

This morning much to celebrate.

We continue our celebration of the 12 days of Christmas by reflecting on John's gospel and his description of God's coming to earth in human form.

We will celebrate Epiphany, which is this Wednesday, by hearing the story of the wise men who followed the star to the infant Christ.

And, for the first time in many months, those of us who are gathered in person will receive communion together.

After the service, although there will not be morning tea provided, please do stay around afterward for a chat, especially if this is your first time here. We'd love to catch up and get to know you better.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession incl Declaration of Forgiveness Natalie

Let us pray:

God of all beginnings,
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,
One God in community, present from Creation, yet born in a manger,
All that is comes from you.

Open our eyes to see your presence all around us:

in the power of summer hailstones,
and in the warmth of the sun that melts them.
in the security of a satisfying meal,
and in a family's race to safety from danger.
in the miraculous complexity and magnitude of the Universe,
and in the softness of a baby's skin.

Open our eyes to see your presence

in the large, and the small,
in the loudness, and the quietness,
in the powerful, and the powerless,
in our neighbour, and in the stranger.

Life of the world, light in our darkness,

As we stand at the start of a new year, and reflect on the year that is gone,

We hold the past before you, with grief and sorrow for our world.

When we see health inequality and the growth of viral infections worldwide, we sorrow,

When we see racial inequality and the persistence of prejudice, we are moved to despair,

When we cannot see the way forward to bring your kingdom to earth, we grieve.

Restore us. Grant us your vision of the future.
Help us to see your light in times of darkness.
Help us to see new ways to bring life to the world.
Amen

Word of Grace

Ian

Sisters and Brothers,
What seems impossible becomes possible through God, who is stronger than all that is.
With the coming of the infant Christ from heaven to earth,
And through the work of the Spirit,
we can have confidence that a new world is possible.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ, our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Kenna Morrison

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Lighting the Candles with the Children

Ian

Lighting the five candles of the Christmas season for the gifts of the Wise Men.

The story says that there are three gifts and we assume that there were three Wise Men but we aren't sure.

First gift - Gold, a gift for a King. Jesus is not the sort of king we expect and we are going to follow his story through to Easter and find out what the special sort of king that he is

Second gift - Frankincense, incense which makes sweet smelling smoke that some people use to worship God. The wise men were saying this is a child that will show God to us.

Third gift - Myrrh, perfumed ointment. Myrrh is used when someone dies to help prepare a person for burial. They are saying that this child who is a kind of king who shows us God is just like us because he will some day die.

Fourth gift - for the gifts that we all bring, the gifts of ourselves that we bring to God, the gifts of our hearts that we bring to Jesus, gifts of all the people here and all the people who worship Jesus.

Fifth gift - the candle for the baby Jesus who is the greatest of gift of all, God's gift to the world.

Song: We Three Kings of Orient Are

*We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.*

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.*

*Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.*

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.*

*Frankincense to offer have I.
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising all folk raising,
Worship Him, God on high.*

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.*

*Myrrh is mine: it's bitter perfume
Breaths a life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.*

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.*

*Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Sounds through the earth and skies.*

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.*

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-14

Jamie Thom

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Sermon

Ian

<https://youtu.be/nf9Xyw3mwBg?t=1670>

Prayers of the People

Ian

We are struck by awe at the wonder of the universe our God.

And we sing your praise with the moon, the sun and the stars.

We give you thanks that you come to be with us in humility and insignificance

That we may live for you we thank you in Jesus Holy Name.

Amen

Including Song: ATFG520 Star Child

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- 1. Star-child, earth-child go-between of God,
love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,

this year, this year, let the day arrive,
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*
 - 2. Street child, beat child no place left to go,
hurt child, used child, no one wants to know,*
 - 3. Grown child, old child, mem'ry full of years,
sad child, lost child, story told in tears,*
 - 4. Spared child, spoiled child, having, wanting more,
wise child, faith child knowing joy in store,*
 - 5. Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
down-to-earth Child, star of stars that shine,*
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SONG: Star Child, © Shirley Murray, from Every day in your spirit, Hope Publishing Company;
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Offering and Holy Communion

Ian

Offering combined with Holy Communion – people bring their offerings forward when they come for communion.

Invitation

Thanksgiving

We are the body of Christ

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to God who is Wisdom and Love.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Father of goodness, Mother of kindness,
for creation in its wonder and mystery

We thank you

for Jesus your beloved Son in his compassion,

We thank you

for your Holy Spirit in her grace,

We thank you

And with the whole realm of nature around us,
with earth, sea and sky,

we sing to you!

With all the saints before us and beside us,
with brothers and sisters,
east and west, north and south,

we sing to you!

And with our loved ones,
separate from us now,
who yet, in this mystery are close to us,

we sing the hymn of unending praise:

Holy, holy, holy (TIS764)

*Holy (Holy), holy, (holy)
holy Lord of power and might.
Heaven (Heaven), earth (earth)
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
All glory to your name.
(All glory to your name.)
All glory to your name.
(All glory to your name.)
Blessed (Blessed), blessed (blessed)
is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*Blessed (Blessed), blessed (blessed)
is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
(Hosanna in the highest.)
Hosanna in the highest.
(Hosanna in the highest.)*

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who on the night of his betrayal
took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
***This is my body given for you.
Whenever you eat it, remember me.***

In the same way, after supper,
he took the cup saying:
***This is the cup of
a new covenant in my blood.
whenever you drink it, remember me.***

Come now, Holy Spirit of our God,
love us into the unity of peace
through this bread and wine. For:
***Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!***

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ
all glory be to you,
Source of all Being,
Eternal Wisdom and Holy Spirit,
one God and Mother of all creation.
Amen.

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***

Breaking of the Bread

Christ is the bread of resurrection:

new life for all.

Christ is the cup of life:

who revives the faint-hearted.

We who are many are one body,

for we all share in the one bread.

Let us receive what we are.

Let us become what we receive:

The body of Christ.

Distribution

All come forward to table. Each take bread and cup from plate and tray – no double handling.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

Exchange a sign of peace without touching – namaste

Notices

Natalie

Sending Song: Tune in: Making things new

*The desert will spring to life
A path will be made in the wild
- even now as you look I am making things new*

*The lion shall lie with the lamb
The day shall extinguish the night
- even now as you sleep I am making things new*

*Take hold of the hope that I give
Trust in me
Reach out for the love you can live
Eternally*

*The river of life shall flow down
The mountains shall break forth in joy
- even now as you speak I am making things new*

*The barren give birth, the lame walk
The deaf and the blind hear and see
- even now as you pray I am making things new*

Chorus x2

SONG: Making things new, by Sheree Anderson, from Tune In, Brunswick UC, Reproduced with permission

Blessing and Sending

Go in peace,
sing for joy,
live with hope!
Cradle the life that gives life.
And be blessed
from the Source of Christmas love
through the child in the manger
by the Spirit of the star's radiance.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Closing verse on screen

John 1: 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Worship Team

Liturgist:
Natalie Sims

Acknowledgement of Country:
Natalie Sims

Bible readings:
Kenna Morrison
Jamie Thom

Children's Time:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Reflection & Holy Communion:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Musicians:
Shawn Whelan
Jane Allardice
Helen Burnham
Brad Coath
Hudson Coath

Welcomers:
Tonia Beggs
Kirsty Bennett
Claire Foley
Michael Foley

Production:
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson

Audio-visual:
David Cameron
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