

Opening verse

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord. Luke 1:45

Call to Worship

They were waiting (ATE221 Refrain only)

*Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come, Lord Jesus?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?*

Words and music: Robin Mann © 1989 Robin Mann, 19 Vine Tce, Klemzig SA 5087.
Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Every year at Christmas we welcome the Christ Child into our lives again. Born, not in a palace to comfort and riches, but in a stable where the animals are kept. A child, toddler, teenager, young adult, knowing the joy, pain, hunger and loss of our lives.

Come Lord Jesus, won't you come.

*Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come, Lord Jesus?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?*

The sun rises on the wonder of a new day, new life, potential and promise opening before our eyes.

Come Lord Jesus won't you come.

*Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come, Lord Jesus?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?*

We have come from Jingle Bells and tinsel, to find the wonder, and the miracle of God with us.

Come Lord Jesus won't you come.

*Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come, Lord Jesus?
Come, Lord Jesus, won't you come?*

So with the earth, sea, and skies, let us speak, sing and move, all to the Glory of God. Letting our voices and our dance fill the silence, as we stand, bring in the Bible and sing.

Song Tis 302 The Angel Gabriel

1. *The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady, Gloria!*

2. *'for known a blessèd Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!*

3. *Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy name':
most highly favoured lady, Gloria!*

4. *of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
'most highly favoured lady'. Gloria!*

SONG: [Gabriel's message](#), from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*

Acknowledgement of Country

Brad and Sam

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

Good morning everyone, I am Helen, your Liturgist for today, and together with Ian, Beth, Dave, all the musicians and technicians, we welcome you, whether you are here in the church or watching online, we are all speaking, singing and moving to the Glory of God. Today we will hear from Luke 1: 39-45. Here we find Elizabeth, well past the age of child bearing, and Mary, a teenager. This is "secret women's business". Both with the miracle of particles joining together to form babies who will turn the world upside down. The second reading is again from Luke 1: 46-55, Mary's wonderful song to God, known as the "Magnificat."

Prayers of Adoration and Confession including Word of Grace

Mother and Father, God of miracles, great and small.

We sing to you like Mary. To You, who set the planets spinning in the infinity of space. Formed the earth, the waters and the skies. Filled our world with astonishing plants and animals.

You created us with the capacity for great intelligence, we can send rockets into space and walk on the moon, but have trouble comprehending that the God of Creation, would come to an obscure town, in an obscure country and be born to an unimportant girl. Jesus, your new Covenant. God with us.

Mother and Father, God with us.

Forgive our self importance, our arrogance, when we think we are better than others, our selfishness, when we fail to share our abundance, our indifference, when we ignore need, exploitation, and suffering, our ignorance, anger, and intolerance, for we are all guilty. Faithful God, forgive our faithlessness, and in your love, forgive us when we see the tinsel and ignore the Baby and the Cross.

Amen

This is the word of Grace.

Mother, Father, God of Miracles, great and small.

You have given us a miracle, a new Covenant in the birth, life and death of Jesus. And we know that through Grace, our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Amen

Advent Candle Lighting

Invite children down the front.

We light this candle for love.

God of love guide us as we seek to reshape the world with love.

Song: 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 Reading – Luke 1: 39-45, 56

Lucy

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Dave interrupts here: "Sorry to interrupt, but I think we might need two adults here to volunteer, please – one as Elizabeth, and one as Mary?"

Chairs set up in front of the communion table, cups of tea.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

...and Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

With the Children

Has anyone got relatives coming to stay over summer? How long are they staying? How long would be too long? Three months! Or are you going to stay with relatives? How long is too long?

Mary stays at Elizabeth's house for three months while they were both pregnant for the first time... but the Bible doesn't tell us anything more... So, let's use our imagination – I wonder what they did... what they talked about... (adults encouraged to call out here)

I was also really interested that Elizabeth felt it in her body first, before her mind... The first time Jesus came close to her, she felt it in her guts – I think a lot of people had that experience when they first met Jesus – gut flipping, butterflies.

Have you ever felt things in your belly first, before your brain?

Eg. when the dog runs across the road, or the first day of school, last day of school, before a game of sport. Butterflies, gut flipping. Somersaults to finish.

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*,
Reproduced with permission ONE LICENCE # 604502

SMP lighting of Christ candle – probably only a Primary school age group

Gospel Reading – Luke 1:46-55

Maxine

And Mary sang,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

Thanks be to God

Reflection

Ian and Beth

Ian introduces Beth.

1. **Image 1 – TV Annunciation** I know that the stories of the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Magnificat have always been very important for you. Why?

Connection to feminine spirituality.

2. **Image 2 – medieval tapestry** When Mary and Elizabeth meet, the child in Elizabeth’s womb “leaps for joy” – a beautiful visceral image of life – the quickening. What does that feel like?

The experience of the quickening and what it can mean for women.

3. **Image 3 – tablecloth** Mary and Elizabeth spend 3 months together (months 6-9 of Elizabeth’s pregnancy). I imagine this is a relatively unusual scenario – two pregnant women living together and sharing the experience of being pregnant day to day. The artist Kerry Holland has painted this image to represent it – a tablecloth to evoke 3 months of cups of tea, meals, and conversations. Rather than focus on their bodies, the work shows the kind of space Mary and Elizabeth’s bodies might have inhabited. What do you think they might have shared?

The power of storytelling between women, particularly post birth, to help process and make meaning out of what is happening/has happened.

4. **Image 4 – Annunciation** The story of the visitation is recorded in the gospel partly to affirm Mary’s faithfulness: “blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by God.” Elizabeth’s words hark back to the annunciation when Mary says, “Yes”, to the angel’s message, “Here I am – let it be”. Now we begin to see the implications of that “Yes”. Mary and Elizabeth’s pregnancies are presented as models of faithful living for all of us. So, for those of us who will never experience pregnancy or childbirth, what are some of the things we might learn about faith from those who have?

All mothers are called to say “yes” in pregnancy and childbirth – yes to all that it could mean for their lives including fear and suffering.

Offering with Song: Turning point of Time, SSSL 51

*1. The stillness of anticipation cradles tiny Bethlehem;
silent now in preparation for the miracle of birth.
All creation, hushed, expectant, waits a baby’s cry;
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

*2. Be silent, earth, before the myst’ry of the long awaited birth.
All the hopes of human hist’ry – longings, yearnings, dreams, desires –
gathered in a single moment, focused in a child;
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

*3. A nascent star, in celebration, blazes over Bethlehem;
crucible of all creation, where the human and divine
are refined in simple beauty in the new-born child;
born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.*

SONG: [Turning Point of Time](#), by Neil Quintrell, 1973 from [Songs from the Still Strange Land](#), Joint Board of Christian Education; Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

From 'With Open Arms' - Cooking with Katerina

Over the past few years we have gotten to know a lovely Greek lady who comes to Olive Way semi-regularly. I'll call her Katerina. She is elderly but you probably wouldn't guess her age. Although she is in her 80's she seems to have boundless energy and a great sense of humour; she always makes me laugh when we chat. Not to mention she's an amazing cook!

Almost every time she comes she brings some traditional Greek delights that she has made such as koulourakia biscuits, tsoureki (traditional Greek easter bun), dolmades, or even pickled olives that she has harvested from the olive trees in the back yard of BUC. She rarely comes without some kind of goodies to share.

Recently I shared how the idea of 'neighbourliness' was something that I found helpful in describing the kind of hospitality we want to demonstrate in Olive Way. I shared how the idea of neighbourliness suggests something of the shared resources we draw upon. One aspect of neighbourliness is about giving from our own resources. But another, equally important aspect of neighbourliness is about receiving.

For Katerina, giving is about sharing something of herself. She feels pride and joy in being able to share her cultural heritage and to show off her amazing cooking skills, and this is something we should be able to honour. Another lady from Malaysia and also in her 80s has a custom of bringing gifts every time she comes. These usually consist of the Coles or Woolies magazines that are given free at the cash registers of their respective stores or odd little nick knacks that she comes across for my girls. I know that in her cultural background, when you visit someone you never come empty handed. For her it is her tradition and her custom that has not left her despite her many years in Australia. This too should be honoured.

The Bible is filled with stories of hospitality, both given and received. It is the living out of the command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' and receiving is an equally important part of neighbourliness. Quite often the things we receive in Olive Way are odd and not particularly useful, but that is never the point. For me, receiving is a crucial part of our hospitality as it completes the cycle of neighbourliness and restores dignity.

Let us pray

God beyond time and space,
Beyond the strictures of human existence,
We come to you in this season advent,
This season of expectation,
Of hope,
Of anticipation,
Of Your breaking in to time and space,
Into lives and life as we know it.

In this season of advent our hearts and minds are expectant,
Like the two expectant mothers,
Mary and Elizabeth
We are filled with anticipation in the season advent,
As we contemplate the birthing of your kingdom,
Into the world as we know it.

We pray for the activity and life of this church,
For all the arms of outreach that extend to the community that surrounds it:

We pray for the arts,
That the creativity, imagination, and love of the arts community

Would extend with open arms to the community

We pray for the Olive Way,
That the gestures of hospitality, welcome, acceptance and healing,
Would extend with open arms to the community

We pray for the children and youth families,
As they are held in open arms,
We pray they would find support, comfort and peace.

We pray that our expression of worship on Sunday mornings,
For it's faithful witness,
To the miracle of advent,
To the presence of God amongst us,
To the resurrected Christ,
Would extend with open arms to the community.

We pray for the many other expressions of love,
welcome,
and the search for justice that come from this place.

In this season advent, we pray that our voices may be heard,
For the voice and the witness of this church,
And the church around the world,
For the voice of justice,
For the voice of reconciliation,
For the voice that pleads for climate justice,
For the voice that pleads for economic justice,
We pray that this voice, this call,
Would be heard amongst the cacophony of other voices.
We pray that your church would be faithful to it's calling,
Ignoring and shunning the seduction of power and influence.

Lord, where there is pain
 We pray for healing,
Where there is violence,
 We pray for peace,
Where there is destruction and degradation,
 We pray for restoration.

In the name of Jesus we pray,

Amen

Notices

Helen

Sending Song Canticle of the Turning. MV120

1. *My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?*

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

2. *Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.*

3. *From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.*

4. *Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around*

SONG: [Canticle of the turning](#), from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Blessing and Sending

May love quicken within you like a child kicking in the womb,
And may you live with the faith of Mary and Elizabeth
towards the fulfilment of what God is doing among us.

Ian

Go with the blessing of our God
Mother of Creation,
Child in the Womb
and Spirit of quickening love.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Closing verse

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord. Luke 1:45

Thank yous

Liturgist:
Helen Burnham

Acknowledgement
of Country:
Brad and Sam Coath

Bible readers:
Lucy Hardman
Maxine Loynd

Children's time
Dave Hall
(Pastor: Children, Youth
and Young Adults)

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)
Beth Shelton

Prayers of the People:
Peter Blair
(Olive Way Pastor)

Pre & Postlude:
SONG: Joy to the world,
by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748,
from Together in Song,
(268) Harper Collins
Religious, PUBLIC
DOMAIN

Musicians: Shawn Whelan
(co-ordinator), Simone
Alesich, Helen Burnham,
Saide Cameron,
Brad Coath, Glenice Cook,
Stephanie Dykes, Ian
Ferguson, Georgie Fraser,
Alistair Hunter, Jessica
Kvansakul, Catherine
Leslie, Annie Quail,
Helen Rowe, Natalie Sims,
Amelia Ware, Daniel
Whelan

Musicians
Elaine Potter (co-ordinator)
Glenice Cook
Joel Hallinan
Nicole Lowe
Maggie Somerville

Images:
Mary & Elizabeth series -
Soo Lai Yin (Ann)

Editing / Production:
Jane Allardice
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ben Hon
Dave Miller
Owen Sun