

Order of Service 16/12/2021 Blue Christmas

Front cover - Opening verse:

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. (Luke 2:6)

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship and Acknowledgement of Country

Ian

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

And also with you

Welcome...

This is the place of Christmas – the land of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people of the Kulin nation. As we gather to enter into the mystery of the incarnation tonight, we acknowledge and honour their elders and ancestors – all those who have called this place home, who live on it now and who may be our partners of reconciliation in the future.

Come as you are, with all that you are. Amidst the bustle of the Christmas season may you find a place of peace here tonight.

Song: Gabriel's message, TiS 302

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,
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Introduction to reading, artwork reflection and candle lighting

Ian

Tonight during our service we will focus our reflections on 4 artworks from the Emergence exhibition. Each of these works will speak to an aspect of our spiritual journey through this season, especially in the light of our struggles with the pandemic.

We will hear the Christmas story read in 4 sections, we will reflect on 4 artworks, we will light 4 Advent candles for hope, peace, joy and love.

May God's Holy Spirit be with us to guide us.

Breathe deep...

Gospel reading

Saide

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)

Honouring Reality

Ian

Image - Horizon

Mary goes with Joseph on a long and uncomfortable journey to the birth of her son – a journey she did not choose for herself, but which was dictated by the powers of the world.

What has brought you to this place tonight? What has this year been for you? Jesus is born into the reality of life in the world with all its disruption. What has been that reality for you this year? - more COVID lockdowns, and what else?

I draw your attention to the first image, Horizon. What do you see here? What touches you? What connects with your journey to Christmas this year?

Take some time now to reflect and write whatever you are moved to in the space provided in your worship book.

Advent candle prayer

Ian

We light this candle for hope.

God of hope give us your strength for the days to come.

Song: Silent Night, TiS 311

*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.*

*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.'*

*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

Gospel reading

Jenne

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)

Lament - Practicing Honesty

Saide

Image - Affinity

As we look back over these last 12 months let's create space now for looking deep within ourselves, for lamenting all that we have lost.

What do you see? What is going on inside you now? What have you been holding on to? What and who have you let go of, said goodbye to?

The angels appeared to the shepherds bringing good news of great joy - upending cultural expectations, turning their reality upside down. They were terrified.

How are you feeling? Has your reality been turned upside down? Does the face you show to the world mirror your reality? Does your reality align with the cultural expectations of this time of the year?

As you reflect on Mike's artwork Affinity, take some time now to note your reflections in the space provided in your worship book.

Advent prayer

Saide

We light this candle for peace.

God of peace may we offer your mercy on the way to peace

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, heard 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

Gospel Reading

Saide

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)

Embracing Paradox

Jenne

Image – Alongside

What do you see, feel emotionally & in your body, each alongside the other as you meditate on this image ?

.....There maybe many emotions, thoughts, conflicting within as you grieve, deal with loss & change..... Anxiety about being alone, but now connected. Feeling joy in grief, relief in guilt.

Spirit says feel what you feel, not others expectations, no fixing or shoulds.

Neither one or the other, but both Acceptance

Who are our real companions? Who is alongside? Is it Others? Jesus, Creation, Spirit? Who is the listener? Who is the sharer?

Advent Prayer

Jenne

We light this candle for joy.

God of joy let us rejoice as we reach out to each other with gentleness.

Invitation

Ian

Come forward and light tapers for the people and situations on your heart, gathering around Christ's table as we sing.

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.*

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

Advent Candle prayer

We light this candle for love.

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

Eucharist

Ian

First we say thank you to God.

*[practice saying words, **Thank you God!**]*

For everything you have created:

Thank you God!

For loving the world so much that you came to be with us in Jesus:

Thank you God!

For guiding us through each day by your Holy Spirit in us:

Thank you God!

Next remember Jesus by telling the story of his last meal. In it Jesus says: **Remember me**

*[practice saying words, **remember me**]*

On the night before he died, Jesus was having a meal with his disciples.

He took a loaf of bread from the table, said thank you to God,

broke it into pieces and gave it to his friends saying,

This is my body given for you. Whenever you eat it,

remember me.

Break bread

After they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and shared it with them saying,

This is my blood poured out in love,

so that no one will ever be separate from God.

Whenever you drink it,

remember me.

Raise cup

Next we pray that the Holy Spirit will come and unite us with Jesus and one another.

*[practice saying words, **Come Holy Spirit**]*

On this bread

Come Holy Spirit

On this cup

Come Holy Spirit

On us all

Come Holy Spirit

Make us one -

one with Jesus,

one with each other,

one family of God.

In the name of God who loves us: **Amen!**

In the name of Jesus who is with us: **Amen!**

In the name of the Holy Spirit who helps us every day: **Amen!**

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.**

Serving

Ian, Saide and Jenne serve bread then glasses.

Borrowing Hope with Christ Candle

Ian

Image - The Birth of Jesus

As we come to the end of our service, the final image we will reflect on is entitled “The Birth of Jesus”

What hope can we borrow from the story of this child’s birth? What is there in it that you might take away with you tonight to help carry you through this season?

What do you see in Christina’s image?

Reflection time followed by lighting of Christ Candle

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*

Blessing and Sending

Ian

May there be a place for you
at the side of the Christ Child this Christmas:
a place of hope,
where you are
encompassed by love,
filled with joy,
and moved to peace.

Go in peace with a blessing
from the Source of Christmas love
through the child in the manger
by the Spirit who sings joy in us.

Amen.

Closing verse:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!” Luke 2:14

Thank yous

Liturgists:
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Jenne Perlstein

Musicians:
James Balsillie
Glenice Cook
Courtney Rohde

Editing/Production
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron