

> Advent 2017



Worship during Advent was an opportunity to reflect on the messages that we receive from the stories in the lectionary and how we are called to be messengers. Our services were a visual feast with hanging windows (our thanks to Helen Burnham), beautiful artwork which became postcards and posters (our thanks to Ann Soo and Melanie Drury), a beautiful sculptured Christmas Bowl (our thanks to Colin Hunter for loaning us this work) and the now traditional Advent Wreath. For the first three weeks we sang Tune In to remind us to listen to God's message, Listen to the Word which God has spoken before and after the readings each week and 'Sent out in Jesus name' to simply remind us of our calling. Advent 4 offered a different shape, an opportunity to learn about meditation and time to meditate before the Christmas Eve services later that day.



Sanctuary, Mel Drury



Christmas Lily, Ann Soo



Advent Seedling, Ann Soo



Rainbow Wings, Ann Soo



Contemplation, Mel Drury



Crown, Ann Soo



Guiding Light, Mel Drury



Holy Family, Ann So

> Blue Christmas 2017



Our Blue Christmas service was offered on **13th December**. We gathered for worship on a very warm evening for a quiet service of reflection & meditation claiming the space to grieve, remember loved ones who have died, look back over a difficult year, seek peace in troubled times or simply take some time away from the busyness of this particular time of the year.

We lit the Advent candles remembering the messages from each week praying for the light of Christ to shine in the darkest places, for peace that is deep and lasting, speaking into the deepest heart of grief, for the gift of Christmas joy, the joy of the Holy Spirit that bubbles up, refreshing our souls, setting us free, and for love grounded in the reality of a harsh and brutal life, fighting for survival, making all the difference.



After listening to the Christmas readings from Isaiah and Luke we created a space to listen, responding to the Advent paintings with words and symbols asking where we do we find hope, peace, joy and love in our grieving and affirmed that the grace of God has appeared in the form of a vulnerable fragile baby who grew to be a man, the one in whom we find hope, peace, joy and love.

Ian lit the Christ Candle and offered a time for people to walk, look at and engage with the paintings, taking a card to write or draw on and an opportunity to light tapers from the Christ Candle.



We gathered round the table to celebrate Holy Communion and left quietly, rested in body, mind and soul.

Read the [prayers and meditation](#) here.

> Christmas Eve Pageant 2017 - A message of hope and joy



Our pageant told the story of the Nativity with a Trumpian twist abounding with declarations of Fake News and hilarious tweets. In the company of angels, shepherds and wise ones we found ourselves at the manger celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. King Herod found himself sidelined brought down from his high place to sit alongside those who gathered around the manger in the low place. Mary's tweet summed up the message *'So blessed to have the most beautiful baby that brings hope and joy to many'*.

Thank you to Caitlin Mullen-Beagley who wrote the script & directed the pageant. Thank you to our wonderful cast of young people, to the little ones (Matilda, Anye, Michelle and Hamish), not yet confident readers who memorised their lines, to the older ones (Amelie, Daniel and Hoth), who took on two roles, to our leads Thomas and Tameka and to Michael and Genevieve, returning from pageant retirement to once again be Joseph and Mary, and to Nathaniel starring as a delightful Baby Jesus.

Thank you to the members of our production team, to our musicians, to Julia for leading the musicians, to the choir, to Elaine for leading the choir and especially to the parents who brought children along to rehearsals during busy pre-Christmas season.

Saide Cameron, Producer



Ian offers a welcome and invites us to reach up to the high places and down to the low places.



The choir sang 'Gabrielle's message' and 'Gloria'.



The teeny-tiny angels brought their message of great joy to the lowly shepherds.



King Herod's Chief of Staff brings news of rumours of a new king that is to be born. King Herod is not impressed, declares it #Fake News and fires his CoS.



The inn-keepers wait



I'm sorry, I don't have any rooms left. Finally the third innkeeper says yes.





King Herod @realKingHerod
 Babies are just babies. This is a FAKE king. I am the Real KING!!
 12:23 PM · 4 BC

King Herod @realKingHerod
 No #FakeKing can stay hidden from me HAahahaAha
 1:02 PM · 6 BC



The Wise Ones realize that King Herod wasn't telling the truth.

The Holy Family, full of hope & joy.



Tilda B @tinnykeperLife
 SO COOL TO MEET BABY JESUS
 3:09 PM · 5 BC
 Wise Amieie.jpg

Niel C @NielCofWinnipeg
 This baby will be the #bestking there ever was
 2:48 PM · 5 BC

Anye <3 @KingofAnye
 This baby is very important <3
 3:11 PM · 5 BC

Amie B @mikesperAmie
 I wish I had let this family stay at my Inn...
 Wise Amieie.jpg
 3:01 PM · 5 BC



Very happy Producer & Director

> Christmas Eve 2017



We gathered before the high & low places of the pageant.



We offered the Meditation from the throne, the fields and the manger.



The Christ Candle was lit at midnight.

We listened to the story of the nativity as we sang and prayed in preparation for our celebration of the birth of the Christ child.

We lit the Advent candles for the messages of hope that comes to us in Jesus, of love and comfort that we heard from Isaiah, from John calling us to testify to the light and from the angel telling Mary 'The Lord is with you'.

The Christmas Eve Meditation began before the throne, the place of power remembering that the Christmas story turns this place upside down offering a rebirthing of hope.

In the fields with the shepherds we reflected on the familiarity of our lives and responsibilities and wondered if we are ready for the angels to enter in with a new story, ready to seek the face of Jesus in the lowly ones in the world.

And finally by the manger, the lowly place, a place of love we reflected on our questions, the injustices in the world, the despair that we feel. We named our burdens and laid them by the manger. Ian invited *'Come let us walk in this light (as described the prophet Isaiah) from the manger to the world, with hope filled hearts to reshape creation with love.*

Later we prayed for people throughout the world receiving the support of the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal.

You can [read](#) or [listen](#) to the Meditation.



Preparing to light the carol candles.



Worshipping by candlelight.



Celebrating Holy Communion.

> Christmas Carols - let's sing

Carols at the Manse

Our festival of singing Christmas Carols began with Carols at the Manse, a FUNdraiser for the Christmas Bowl, on **Sunday 10th December**. A big group of us crowded into the lounge room at the Manse to sing a selection of carols interspersed with poems and stories. We were privileged to listen to Tim Hoffmann offering his spoken piece 'No Way' which was written in response to Jony Salama's artwork 'No Direction' and enjoyed an abundant supper after all the listening and singing.



Advent & Pageant Choir

Our worship on Advent 3, **17th December**, was blessed with the offering of two items from our choir: 'Gabrielle's message' which is the story of the angel telling Mary about the birth of Jesus and 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' (Glory to God in the highest), by Vivaldi. If you missed the service you can listen to the recordings here. Gloria was sung to conclude our Christmas Eve Pageant. Thank you everyone who sang in the choir, the musicians and thank you especially to Elaine Potter for finding fabulous music to sing and for conducting the choir. We are so very blessed.



Singing on the Steps

We enjoyed gathering on the steps after worship on the same day to sing Christmas Carols on the Steps. It's a fun way to celebrate Christmas with the wider community, to receive waves and nods and the occasional person stopping for a few moments to listen.



Stewart Lodge Carols

On **Tuesday 19th December** a big group of us joined the residents at Stewart Lodge to sing Christmas Carols. After singing our way through the book gift bags were handed out and supper shared. Thank you to everyone who came along and/or supported the preparation of the gift bags.



Olive Way Christmas Lunch

And then on **Wednesday 20th December** the Olive Way celebrated Christmas in style with a delicious meal for over 100 people and carol singing led by Helen Burnham.

See Olive Way News, p 14 for the full Christmas lunch story.

And of course we sang Christmas Carols during worship at Blue Christmas (13/12) and then from Advent 4 (24/12) all the way through to Epiphany (7/1). A true festival of singing. We hope you got to sing your favourite one at least once.

