

## > Advent News 2018



During Advent 2018 there were many opportunities to explore the themes of hope, peace, joy and love over the four Sundays. At the heart of our worship were three images - the star, the rainbow and a collage 'The Waiting Earth'.

We followed the star across the emerging rainbow sky adding the same colours to our book mark each week. Our thanks to Amelia Ware for her artistic draping of our rainbow cloths. We listened to the voices in our Bible readings, reflecting on what they were waiting and hoping for and what we also were waiting and hoping for through the seasons. These reflections shaped our Advent litany which accompanied lighting the Advent Candles with the children. We sang a verse of 'The Universe is bending' each week with gestures to add extra depth to the words.

The collage 'The waiting earth', created by Richard Phelan and Ann Soo was used on the Advent bookmark and also as a focus for the Blue Christmas and late Christmas Eve worship services. We created our own rainbow on the bookmarks adding pieces of coloured wool each week during Prayers of the People.

We watched videos and shared prayers for the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal. We offered donations and made many purchases from the stalls offered after worship to support the vital work done by partner churches supported by this appeal.



The earth waits and hopes  
John prepares the way for Peace  
Mary's spirit rejoices  
Elizabeth and Zechariah  
celebrate the gift of love

Collage by  
Richard Phelan  
and Ann Soo

### Rainbow bookmark

On the first Sunday in Advent the rainbow sky began with purple and green. We began with **purple wool** for Advent, the new beginning of hope and tied a piece of purple wool to our bookmarks reflecting on places, people and situations in need of a fresh start of healing and peace. We held all these things in prayer.

We tied **green wool** reflecting on the needs of the waiting earth – soil, water, air, plants and animals, atmosphere and oceans, forests and reefs, mountains, plains, bush, cities ... We held the earth in prayer.

On the second Sunday we remembered that blue reminds us of peace, of the waters of baptism and the water of the creation. Inspired by John the Baptist we prayed for the transformation of the world starting with our own lives.

We tied **blue wool** to the bookmark reflect on the blue earth and the water that gives it life. We prayed for those people and places that need the refreshment of water, the cleansing spiritual rain of grace, the stillness of peace. We held the earth and its peoples in prayer.

On the third Sunday we tied **red wool** for joy to go with the hope and peace already represented there. We reflected on the places that we find joy and prayed for people and situations in need of joy.

On the fourth Sunday our worship was shaped a little differently providing space for an extended reflection for the final two colours. Ian commented *Through Advent we've been adding coloured threads to these bookmarks, weaving a rainbow – we'll be adding two more colours today. The rainbow is a biblical image of God's covenant with creation, God's promise of love for the whole world. In this church we particularly think of God's love for LGBTIQ+ folk when we weave a rainbow – and we reaffirm that today as we rejoice in God's rainbow love and affirmation for the whole world – God's love is for all, especially those rejected by others, and God's love comes to us through the birth of these two children (Jesus and John), one preparing for the other.*

Responding to the stories of Elizabeth and Mary we tied **orange wool** reflecting on how the promise of love might be nurtured, grown and born in our lives this Christmas. We concluded by tying **yellow wool** reflecting on the places into which we prayed for new life, justice and peace to break through.

## Advent Litany

The litany, written by Saide Cameron, was offered by young people from the Year 7-10 SMP program - Nina van Ravenswaaj, Astrid Gemmel, Daniel Whelan, Leo Gemmel.

### Advent 1

The earth waits  
The earth waits and hopes  
We wait and hope with the earth our home  
We wait and hope, lighting this first candle for hope

### Advent 2

The earth waits and hopes  
We wait and hope with the earth our home  
We lit the first candle for hope  
  
John the Baptist cries out  
John the Baptist cries out Prepare the Way  
We are following the way, the way of the Prince of Peace  
We wait and hope, lighting this second candle for peace

### Advent 3

The earth waits and hopes  
We lit the first candle for hope  
John the Baptist cries out Prepare the Way  
We lit the second candle for peace  
  
Mary's spirit rejoices  
Mary's spirit rejoices in God  
We rejoice in the coming birth  
We wait and hope, lighting this third candle for joy

### Advent 4

The earth waits and hopes  
We lit the first candle for hope  
John the Baptist cries out Prepare the Way  
We lit the second candle for peace  
Mary's spirit rejoices in the Lord  
We lit the third candle for joy  
  
Elizabeth and Zechariah celebrate  
They celebrate the gift of love  
We wait for the fulfillment of God's promises  
We wait and hope, lighting this fourth candle for love



## Tower Room Window

Helen Burnham created a travelling Nativity journey in the Tower Room window to accompany our Advent wreath. Each week new characters were added as Mary and Joseph drew closer to Jerusalem.

(We decided to use non-wax candles to avoid dramatic melting of candles in the hot afternoon sun.)

For people new to the congregation here is the story of the Advent wreath. Ian's brother Alastair made the wreath from an old hot water service and offered it to Ian as a gift in his first year of ministry (2013) with us. It's remarkably heavy and another unique and special piece of artwork that helps to shape and guide our worship.





## > Christmas worship 2018



### Blue Christmas

Our worship for this service was shaped by the collage 'The Waiting Earth' which also featured on our Advent bookmark.

The worship committee invited Ann Soo to create an image for Advent. Leading up to and during Advent members of our congregation had been participating in a series of collage workshops offered by Priscilla Manthey. Arising from this Ann invited Richard Phelan to collaborate with her on creating an image. The outcome was a lovely example of how the creative life of our congregation intersects with and supports our worship life.

The Blue Christmas liturgy prepared by Saide Cameron and Ian Ferguson sought to respond to the image. The liturgy responded to each part of the image in turn. We prayed and lit the Advent candles. The [prayers and candle litany](#) are available [here](#).

- We considered the weaving of the green and black shapes and wondered how they might speak of life and beauty, of suffering and endings. We prayed in word and song of this weaving of life and struggle, beginnings and endings.
- Next we paid attention to the brown weaving and wondered about the story told here. We remembered that God enters our world through the manger, fully human - embracing our joys and our griefs. We listened to the gospel story.
- We noticed the three crosses, their colours and placement at the centre of the image. We wondered if the colours spoke of life amidst the starkness of ending and death marked by the cross. We wondered if our stories, our griefs might be transformed at the cross.
- And finally we arrived at the space at the top, the waiting earth, the earth as God dreams it, a place of hope, peace and joy. We wondered about the colours of this part of the image, the feelings they evoked. We reflected on the question 'What are you waiting for, longing for, hoping for this Christmas.'

At the conclusion of this time of reflection we moved to the Gathering Space taking a copy of the image printed on card and created our own collages on the back before returning to our seats to celebrate Holy Communion around the table. Inviting us to the table Ian said *'Here at the table all the different elements of this artwork come together. Here we bring the joys and the struggles of our lives; here we give thanks for the entering in of God's love bringing hope; here we remember Christ's own self offering in love for us all; and here we share the presence of God's reign of love in the world. All are welcome here, all God's beloved children.'*





# Pageant - Leading the Way

Our Christmas Eve pageant, written and directed by Caitlin Mullen-Beagley, was a joyful celebration of the birth of Jesus. Harry, Ron and Hermione, three sheep from the 'Angel Assistance Program', were sent by the Angel Gabriel to guide and lead the shepherds, Mary & Joseph, the innkeeper and the Wise Ones to the places they needed to be just to make that everything happened as it was meant to be. Welcoming everyone to the Pageant Ian invited us to listen for the message of hope and joy. He spoke about the special qualities of the prophetic sheep - they flock together pointing us towards community, togetherness at the manger, they are good followers with a very strong instinct to follow the sheep in front of them and at Christmas Jesus is born, to call us to follow him and even though sheep are lowly creatures the Christmas Angel comes to the shepherd and the sheep because the baby Jesus is born to raise up the lowly.



B: Daniel Clough, Thomas Dan-U'ren, Tameka Brown, Hoth Beny, Rowan Drimmel, Hamish Moorhouse, Amelie Brown  
F: Matilda Brown, Felix Tall, Greta Drimmel, Anye Kvanskul, Lily Saunders



Finding out how the story is supposed to happen

Ready to go down to earth



Definitely the cutest sheep ever



One shepherd is a teensy bit afraid ...



Mary is not at all convinced that Joseph knows where he is going. She decides to trust him even though he is allowing the sheep to guide him on the way



The Angel Gabriel checks in with the sheep and gives them further instructions



The sheep encounter King Herod





King Herod is not impressed



The Wise Ones don't trust him



The innkeeper offers Mary & Joseph space in the stable



The choir, led by Elaine Potter offered two items: 'Light of the World' (at the start) and later 'The Stars point the Way'.



The Holy Family



Everything has worked out beautifully. The Angel Gabriel is very pleased with the sheep and promises to call on their magical assistance again. The cast is joined by all the sheep, angels, shepherds, wise ones and other holy families.



The pageant was videoed with thanks to Adrian Brown. DVDs can be made on request or please provide your own USB. Contact Saide, 0407 096 743

Ian offers thanks to everyone who helped to make the pageant possible and so delightful:  
the cast (of course)  
Caitlin Mullen-Beagley - script writer and director  
Saide Cameron - producer  
Elaine Potter - choir director  
Julia Potter - music director  
Richard Potter, Bronte Potter, Maggie Somerville, Michael Cameron - musicians  
choristers (too many to name)  
Ray Cameron - audio visuals  
Meg Orton & Julie Perrin - catering crew





## Christmas Eve

Worship on Christmas Eve provided us with an opportunity to engage with Christ's nativity through 'The Waiting Earth' collage.

Our candle lighting litany recalled the season of Advent:

- We lit the first candle for hope, listening for the earth's voice, waiting and hoping.
- We lit the second candle for peace, listening for John the Baptist's voice calling out to prepare the way for the Prince of Peace
- We lit the third candle for joy, listening for Mary's voice as she rejoiced in the strange and difficult message brought to her by the angel.
- We lit the fourth candle for love, listening for Elizabeth and Zechariah's voices celebrating the gift of love, of new birth and new beginnings.



The liturgy wove wonderings about the elements of the collage with the familiar gospel reading from Luke, prayers and the carol 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. Ian lit the Christ Candle as midnight approached and we passed the flame from the candle through the congregation to bring us to a time of worship by candlelight.



We prayed for the people and situations supported by the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal and celebrated Holy Communion, coming forward in quiet lines to receive the elements. Our worship concluded with 'Joy to the World'.



The [prayers of adoration & confession](#) and [prayers for the people](#) are available on the website.