

**Opening verse:**

Hope is a light to show the way

**Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship****Kirsty**

Let us worship God!  
Let us come in hope,  
Looking forward and preparing for the coming of the Christ child,  
And let that hope light our way.

**Song of praise****Kirsty**

**TIS 265** O come, O come Emmanuel – verses 1, 2, 3 & 5

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- 1 *O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*
  - 2 *O come, O come, great Lord of might  
who to the tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe.*
  - 3 *O come, O key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high  
and close the path to misery.*
  - 5 *O come, O dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.*
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SONG: [O come, O come Emmanuel](#), anonymous, tr. John Mason Neale,  
from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Acknowledgement of Country****Kirsty**

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

Kirsty

Good morning and welcome to worship this morning! It's good to be worshipping together whether here on Sydney Rd or online. My name is Kirsty. I am your liturgist for this morning, and will be leading worship with our minister Ian, Natalie and the musicians, Meredith, Meg, & Tim, and Michael, Dave & Martin who are working behind the scenes to make the sound, slides and livestream happen.

We'd also like to acknowledge the presence of Jenny Hunter's family. For those of you who don't know Jenny died on Friday. Jenny was a beloved long-term member of this congregation and we welcome you and hold you in our prayers today.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the Christian year. Yes, Christmas is coming once more, and so it is time for us to start preparing for the birth of the Christ Child. Today we will focus on hope, hope in the face of brokenness, hope in the face of grief and violence.

Let us begin our prayers of adoration and confession in song:

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Kirsty

**MV19** Maranatha Maranatha Come Lord Jesus Come

*Let us begin our prayers of adoration and confession singing the ancient biblical prayer in Aramaic 'Maranatha, Come Lord':*

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*Maranatha, maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come.  
Maranatha, maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come.*

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SONG: Maranatha is an Aramaic word meaning "Come, Lord." Words: traditional liturgical text. Music: Louise Skibsted. From More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.

God of Jacob,  
You invite us to come and learn your ways.  
You offer us a vision of a time when swords will be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks,  
a time when nations shall not lift up swords against nations.

Christ, light of the world,  
You shine a light into dark places  
showing us the way in the midst of violence and conflict,  
bringing hope, and a vision for peace and justice.

Spirit of life,  
You come to us as new born child,  
Fragile and precious, so small but full of so much potential and possibility  
Hope born into the world.

Forgive us when we do not grasp your vision  
when we do not answer your call,  
when we do not live in your light,  
when we do not celebrate life,  
when we lose hope.

**MV19** Maranatha Maranatha Come Lord Jesus Come

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*Maranatha, maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come.  
Maranatha, maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come.*

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## Word of Grace

Christ comes and brings hope into the world,  
 Christ's light shines, showing us a new way of being.  
 And so we can say with confidence  
 Our sin is forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## With the Children

Ian

*Offer of purple tea lights and small white candles to people to take home to light during the week and on Sundays when they are not able to attend worship.*

### *Candle Litany*

Anew we tell the ancient tale, coming to the story circle of lights.  
 This first flickering is to banish darkness.

**This is the candle of Hope.**

**Let us honour the Light!**

## Song

Ian

**Online Resource** [Hope is a light](#) (Daniel Damon) – Call and Response – Verse 1 only this week.

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*Hope is a light,  
**hope is a light.**  
 Hope is a light to show the way,  
**hope is a light to show the way.**  
 Light the candle of hope,  
**light the candle of hope.***

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WORDS and MUSIC: Daniel Charles Damon, 2004  
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## Isaiah 2:1-5

Meg

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come

the mountain of GOD's house

shall be established as the highest of the mountains

and shall be raised above the hills;

all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the ETERNAL ONE,

to the house of the God of Jacob,

that they may teach us their ways

and that we may walk in their paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction

and the word of the ETERNAL ONE from Jerusalem.

God shall judge between the nations

and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation;

neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the ETERNAL ONE!

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

**Thanks be to God**

## Psalm 122

Meredith

I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the ETERNAL ONE.”

Now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself;

to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the ETERNAL ONE,

the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the ETERNAL ONE.

For there are the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.

For the sake of my kindred and companions, I pray for your prosperity.

Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek to do you good.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

**Thanks be to God**

## Song

Ian

AoV1-190 [Let There Be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me](#)

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*Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.*

*Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.*

*With God our Creator, we are family.*

*Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.*

*Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.*

*With ev'ry step I take, let this be my solemn vow:*

*To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.*

*Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.*

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SONG: Let there be peace on earth, (adapted) by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson © 1955, renewed 1983 Jan-Lee Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission. from As One Voice, Vol. 1, Willow Connection Pty. Ltd. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE #604502

## The Gospel – Matthew 24:36-44

Meg and Meredith

Meg: “But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Tim: Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

**Thanks be to God**

**Offering with Song**

Gonna Lay Down My Sword and Shield / Down by the Riverside (African-American)

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1. *I'm gonna lay down  
my sword and shield,  
down by the river side,  
down by the river side,  
down by the river side,  
I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,  
down by the river side.  
And study war no more.*  
  
*I ain't gonna study war no more ... (x6)*
  2. *I'm gonna walk with  
the Prince of Peace ...*
  3. *I'm gonna beat  
my sword into a plow ...*
  4. *I'm gonna shake hands  
around the world ...*
- 

African American Spiritual. Public Domain.

**Offering Dedication: Including Christmas Bowl story**

When the war began in Ukraine, Eugene was in hospital with her 10-month-old son who was due to receive a heart operation. But when the fighting escalated, Eugene and her family were forced to make the heartbreaking decision to flee the country. They are just one of the millions of families who have been forced to flee their home in recent months, leading to the biggest displacement crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Thankfully, Act for Peace local partner, Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA), are providing vital food, shelter and medical supplies for refugees who have fled over the border to Hungary. Since arriving, Eugene has now been able to get medicine for her son and she is hopeful he can get the critical heart operation he desperately needs. Your gifts through the Christmas will help local partners, like HIA, respond immediately to emergencies like we are seeing in Ukraine, giving families like Eugene's safety in exile – and hope for the future – when they need it most.

Money, time, talents and  
other resources are unevenly  
Distributed around the world.  
We acknowledge and appreciate  
the abundance of blessings of this land and people.  
We offer ourselves, individually and collectively  
to bless the world of your creation.  
Where there is greater scarcity and need,  
may these gifts make a difference,  
especially to refugees and those who work with them.  
May this sharing bring hope.  
Amen

## Prayers of the People

Tim

*My name is Tim and I will be leading the Prayers of the People this morning. Our prayers today focus around a poem by writer and activist Barbara Deming, called Spirit of Love.*

*Please feel free to use the words of this poem as the basis for your own prayers, contemplation and communion with God.*

There will be a time of silence after the poem. In that time, you may choose to light a taper, either from the candle at the front or in the chapel space as a way of expressing and making your own prayer. So, after the poem, feel free to come down to the front to light a taper as a prayer or to use the chapel space as well.

The prayer focuses on love, on greater connections and the cry of the Earth. You may want to concentrate on some of these themes and words in your prayers, in particular as we all remember and hold the Hunter family in our hearts at this time and there may be other people and situations that are on your heart. Please bring them too as your prayer.

Let's pray: Spirit of love – Barbara Deming

Spirit of love

That blows against our flesh

Sets it trembling

Moves across it as across grass

Erasing every boundary that we accept

And swings the doors of our lives wide—

This is a prayer I sing:

Save our perishing earth!

Spirit that cracks our single selves—

Eyes fall down eyes,

Hearts escape through the bars of our ribs

To dart into other bodies—

Save this earth!

The earth is perishing.

This is a prayer I sing.

Spirit that hears each one of us,

Hears all that is—

Listens, listens, hears us out—

Inspire us now!

Our own pulse beats in every stranger's throat,

And also there within the flowered ground beneath our feet,

And—teach us to listen!—

We can hear it in water, in wood, and even in stone.

We are earth of this earth, and we are bone of its bone.

This is a prayer I sing, for we have forgotten this and so

The earth is perishing.

So please, as the musicians play, and in your own time and if you wish, feel free to light a taper as your prayer this morning

Notices

Kirsty

## Sending Song

TiS 666 We are marching in the light of God / Siyahamba (South African)

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*Siyahamb' ekukha-nyen' kwen-khos...*

*We are marching in the light of God...*

*We are living in the love of God ....*

*We are moving in the power of God ...*

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SONG: We are marching in the light of God, South African, from *Together in Song*, Harper Collins Religious, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## Blessing and Sending

Ian

Go now to live with broken hearted hope for peace for the world

Go with the blessing of God

Source of Life

Child of Love

Spirit of Peace

In the name of Christ. Amen

## Thank you's

Thank you for joining us, and thank you to...

Liturgist:

Kirsty Bennett

Bible readers:

Tim Budge

Meg Orton

Children's time:

Ian Ferguson

Reflection:

Ian Ferguson

Prayers of the People:

Meredith Budge

Musicians:

Natalie Sims

(coordinator)

Glenice Cook

Mikul Denison

Joel Hallinan

Nicole Lowe

Bronte Potter

Joanne van Ravenswaaij

Editing / Production:

Martin Brown

Michael Cameron

Ray Cameron

Saide Cameron

Shawn Whelan

Images: Ian Ferguson

Postlude Song:

O Come O Come

Emmanuel, anonymous,

tr. John Mason Neale,

from Together in Song,

(265) Harper Collins

*Religious*,

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Musicians: Alistair Hunter,

James Balsillie,

Courtney Rohde

## Closing verse:

Hope is a light to show the way