

## Opening verse:

Joy is a Song

## Gathering

Helen

We are about to start our Worship Service so please find a place to sit. Quiet our minds, breathe in, breathe out, feel the our connection the land, to this place, as we stand and sing

VU010 *Prepare the way of the Lord* (x3)

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*Prepare the way of the Lord! Prepare the way of the Lord!  
Make a straight path for him, make a straight path,  
prepare the way of the Lord!*

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SONG: Prepare the Way of the Lord, Michael Burkhardt (1990),  
Words and music copyright © 1992 MorningStar Music Publishers

## Greeting and Call to Worship

Helen

Good morning everyone. We do thank you for continuing to wear your masks to protect members who are vulnerable. We also invite you to join us in the Hall after the service to chat, do some Christmas shopping, and for morning tea or coffee. Today we will light our third candle, the candle of Joy. Joy is very present in scripture, in singing, dancing, clapping, laughing. There is joy to be found in sorrow, in grief, in anticipation. Now let's stand as we bring in the Word and sing with Joy, our song of praise.

## Song of praise

TIS 268 *Joy to the World*

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- 1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her king;  
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*
  - 2. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns; let us our songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*
  - 3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*
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SONG: Joy to the world, by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748,  
from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

## Acknowledgement of Country

Helen

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

Helen

Welcome everyone to Worship on this 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sunday of Advent, whether you are here in the Church or watching online. My name is Helen and with Ian, our musicians, readers and technicians, we all come together to breathe in the Hope, the Peace and today the Joy of the coming of the Christ Child, God with us. Our readings today are from Isaiah 35, a great shout of Joy for the Glory and splendour of God. Our New Testament reading is Mary's wonderful song of Joy and Praise, the Magnificat. So now let us open our eyes to see, our ears to hear and our hearts to understand the unfolding of the never-ending story of creation, God with us.

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Helen

Holy one, Mother, Father, Jesus, Spirit.

You set the myriad stars in the sky, separated the land from the oceans, and everything that has life and breath on this earth sings a song of unending Joy and Praise. We are filled with wonder and awe at the majesty of creation, and yet, you still can find us, in our brokenness, and turn our sorrow, into Joy and gladness. So, with the whole of Creation, we are waiting, hoping, longing, for your Kingdom to come, for the birth of the child, who will turn our world upside down, bring Joy to the world, who is God with us.

Holy one, Mother, father, Jesus, Spirit.

Forgive us, when we exploit your creation rather than nurture it.

Forgive us, for the wars we fight, both physical and financial, for our aggression, greed, and violence.

Forgive us, when we fail to recognise the humanity of those who are different. When we discriminate because of colour, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, or religion.

Forgive us when our eyes are blind, our mouths stay shut, and our ears are deaf, to injustice abuse and discrimination.

Forgive us when we ignore your light on the path you set before us.

Forgive us when we don't recognise joy, look for joy, create joy, bring joy, search for joy in our world where we need it so much.

Joy to the world,

God with us

Amen

## Word of Grace

God comes, in a humble place, to humble parents, in the frailty of a baby. So through the Grace of God we can say, with great joy, that in Christ, through Christ and because of Christ, our sin is forgiven. Thanks be to God

## Advent Candles – With the Children

Ian

*Images of Joy*

Here we tell the ancient tale,

coming to the story circle of lights.

This third light is to bring delight and rejoicing.

**This is the candle of Joy.**

**Let us honour the Light!**

## Song

Online Resource [Hope is a light](#) (Daniel Damon) – Call and Response – Verses 1, 2 & 3 only

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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.***

*Peace is a prayer,  
**peace is a prayer.**  
Peace is a prayer that starts with me,  
**peace is a prayer that starts with me.**  
Light the candle of peace,  
**light the candle of peace.***

*Joy is a song,  
**joy is a song.**  
Joy is a song for all to sing,  
**joy is a song for all to sing.**  
Light the candle of joy,  
**light the candle of joy.***

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WORDS and MUSIC: Daniel Charles Damon, 2004

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## From the Prophets – Isaiah 35:1-10

Julie

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.]],  
Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.”  
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;

the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

**Thanks be to God**

## Song

*The Kingdom of God* MV146 (x3)

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*The kingdom of God is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit  
Come, Lord, and open in us the gates of your kingdom*

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SONG: The Kingdom of God © 2001 Taize Community, Ateliers et Presses de Taize  
from More Voices (146) United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.

## The Gospel – Luke 1:46-55

Peter

And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for she has looked with favor on the lowly state of her servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is her name;  
indeed, her mercy is for those who fear her  
from generation to generation.  
She has shown strength with her arm;  
she has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
She has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
she has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
She has come to the aid of her child Israel,  
in remembrance of her mercy,  
according to the promise she 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**

Reprise:

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*The kingdom of God is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit  
Come, Lord, and open in us the gates of your kingdom*

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## Reflection

Ian

### Offering with Song

MV120 Canticle of the Turning

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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*
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SONG: [Canticle of the turning](#), from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.  
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## Dedication of Offering and Christmas Bowl Story

Helen, Ian

Zimbabwe is suffering from critically low food reserves, as climate change brings harsher and more frequent drought. The impacts of the climate crisis, rising inflation and the ongoing war in Ukraine are making the economic situation worse by driving up food prices. Families already living in poverty and hunger are now being plunged further into crisis.

Priscilla's community has been severely affected by years of drought which decimated her crops and left her unable to feed her family. Priscilla would spend the whole day without food and have just one meal in the evening which she would share with her children.

Act for Peace's local partner, Christian Care, with support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), is working closely with communities like Priscilla's to provide training in the latest climate-resilient farming techniques. The farmers are also receiving basic seed and grain packs, fertilisers, and small livestock that are helping them grow food sustainably.

Through your gift this Christmas Bowl, families like Priscilla can now be more food secure and can better withstand the climate and economic shocks facing the country.

Preparing for Christmas, we plan for gift-giving  
and we may even be asked what we might like ourselves.

We are challenged when we consider the cost of food for those who are hungry.

Reminded of the work in Zimbabwe, we say Jesu tawa pano –  
Jesus we are here for you – take what we offer.

And may this sharing bring joy. Amen

## Prayers of the People

Natalie

O God, we pray that you will bring joy to the world.

We give thanks for the joy we have in our secure lives,

and pray for people in those places where life is hard, and it is difficult to be joyful.

For places at war or of political unrest: Ukraine, Ecuador, Israel and Palestine,

for places where famine is leading to extreme hunger: Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

We pray for all those who have lost their joy

due to displacement, intergenerational trauma and domestic violence.

We pray for those living in places where public expressions of joy can lead to imprisonment:

for women in Iran, and for gay and lesbian people in those many countries w

here their love cannot be celebrated publicly.

We pray for those parts of our earth where the joyful song of birds

has been silenced by deforestation or pollution.

Bring joy to the world.

God, we pray that you will bring joy to the church.

We pray that we, as your people, will make this church a place where joy is found.

We pray that you will bring joy to all who serve this church,

the communities that are part of our church, and to those who serve the wider church.

We pray that all your churches throughout the world

will receive joy enough to share with others during this Advent season.

We pray especially for those congregations and denominations

where there is conflict or hardship, that this will be a time when they can,

with common purpose, open their doors and hearts to all who seek you.

We pray for interfaith dialogue, and that through it,

all people of faith can find common joy.

Bring joy to the church.

O God, we pray that you will bring joy to all people.

For those who are lonely, bring the company of good friends,

For those who have ill health or are in pain, bring healing and good humour,

For those who are distressed, bring peace, so that joy may come.

For those who mourn, bring comfort and memories of shared joy and laughter.  
For all of us, give us the joy of faith, and the courage  
to be a source of joy to those around us.  
Bring joy to us all,  
That may we celebrate together, dancing, singing and clapping,  
in the light that is to come.

Amen.

## Notices

Helen

It's now the time to share the news of our very busy community, so if you have something to share, please come and line up to my right. Of course you can find all the news on our Facebook group or on the Website.

## Sending Song

TIS 755 You shall go out with Joy.

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*You shall go out with joy  
and be led forth in peace  
And the mountains and the hills  
shall break forth in singing.  
There'll be shouts of joy, and the trees of the field  
Shall clap, shall clap their hands,  
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,  
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,  
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,  
And you'll go out with joy.*

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SONG: The trees of the field, by Steffie Rubin, from Together in Song, Harper Collins; Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502 ALSO Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

## Blessing and Sending

Ian

Go out with joy to join all creation  
celebrating the coming of transformative love  
in the birth and death of Christ.

Go with the blessing of God,  
from the Source of Life,  
through the Child of Love,  
by the Spirit of Peace.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

## Thank yous

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

Liturgist:  
Helen Burnham

Acknowledgement of  
Country:  
Helen Burnham

Bible readers:  
Julie McKinnon  
Peter McKinnon

Children's time:  
Ian and Helen

Reflection:  
Ian Ferguson  
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:  
Natalie Sims

Musicians:  
Alistair Hunter  
(coordinator)  
Daniel Broadstock  
Brad Coath  
Hudson Coath  
Sam Coath  
Joanne van Ravenswaaij

Images: Ian Ferguson

Editing / Production:  
Ray Cameron  
Saide Cameron  
Jane Allardice  
Alistair Hunter  
Dave Miller

Postlude Song: Joy to the  
world, by Isaac Watts,  
1674-1748, from Together  
in Song, 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

## Closing verse:

Joy is a Song