

## Opening verse

Love is a gift

## Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

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***

Breathe...

Look, the young woman is with child  
and shall bear a son  
and shall name him Immanuel. (Isaiah 10:14)

Let us invite this child to be God with us today.

Remain seated to sing Come, come Emmanuel as the living word is opened before us.

## Gathering Song

*Come, Come Emmanuel* MV11

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*Come, come Emmanuel.*

*Come Emmanuel.*

*Cantor verses:*

- 1. Leave your struggles behind you, and come.*
  - 2. Put your trust in God's future, and come.*
  - 3. Celebrate with the angels, and come.*
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SONG: Come, come Emmanuel, © James J. Chepponis, from More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502,

## Acknowledgement of Country

Wominjeka

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.**

## Song

TIS317 *Love came down at Christmas*

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- 1. Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
star and angels gave the sign.*
  - 2. Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus:  
but wherewith for sacred sign?*
  - 3. Love shall be our token,  
love be yours and love be mine,  
love to God and neighbours,  
love for plea and gift and sign.*
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SONG: Love came down, by Christina Rossetti, by permission Oxford University Press,  
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## Welcome and Introduction

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Welcome in person and online...

Advent 4, the Sunday of love, the Sunday of Emmanuel, God with us. We meet Emmanuel through the prophet Isaiah and again through Matthew's gospel who quotes Isaiah. We'll reflect together on Matthew's version of the Christmas story which focusses on Joseph – what can he teach us about love today?

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

### Adoration and Invocation

Creator God, Source of Christmas love,  
you speak all the wonders of the universe into being.  
And most wonderful of all, you spoke into Mary's womb  
and your word was born to create us anew.

Come Emmanuel, be born in our lives.

Child of Mary,  
you grew in the peace of your mother's womb,  
you who are the Prince of Peace.  
You were born into the dawning day,  
you who are the light of the world.  
You were gathered into the love of your mother and father's arms,  
you who are love incarnate.  
May we, like Mary and Joseph,  
embrace you with our lives and  
sing for joy at your coming.

Come Emmanuel, be born in our lives.

Holy Spirit, breath of life on wings of love,  
you conceive the life of God in the womb of our hearts.  
Stir with hope and leap for joy in us until the time is right.  
Then break through the membranes of our pain and doubt  
and bring to birth the living Christ through us.

Come Emmanuel, be born in our lives.

## **Confession**

Now let us hold before the gracious healing mercy of our God those moments in our own lives, in the life of the church and of the world, when we have experienced the life-giving movement of the Holy Spirit within and have failed to nurture her to birth.

We pray in song, calling on Emmanuel, God with us, to bring compassionate forgiving renewal to our lives:

Reprise: *Come, Come Emmanuel* MV11

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*Come, come Emmanuel.  
Come Emmanuel.*

*Cantor verses:*

- 1. Lord, have mercy upon us and come.*
  - 2. Christ have mercy upon us and come.*
  - 3. Lord, have mercy upon us and come.*
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Come Emmanuel, be born in our lives. Amen

## **Word of Grace**

God is with us, we need never be afraid.  
We are healed and made new by grace  
through the living word, Christ Sophia Jesus Emmanuel.  
Hear them again as if for the first time:  
Your sin is forgiven.

***Thanks be to God***

## **Advent Candles**

Lighting the Candles with the Children

Images of Love...

We continue the story of generations,  
Telling a story into the circle of lights.  
This fourth light is for compassion and heart.

***This is the candle of LOVE.***

***Let us honour the Light!***

## **Song**

*Hope is a light* (Online Resource by Daniel Damon) – verses 1-4

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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.*

*Love is a gift,  
love is a gift.  
Love is a gift our hearts can give,  
love is a gift our hearts can give.  
Light the candle of love,  
light the candle of love.*

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WORDS and MUSIC: Daniel Charles Damon, 2004  
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## **From the Prophets – Isaiah 7:10-16**

**Lyn Anderson**

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

***Thanks be to God***

## **Gospel Reading – Matthew 1:18-25**

**Ralph Eduardo**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

***Thanks be to God***

## **Song**

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*Who is the child that is to be born,  
who is the child?  
Less than a wisp of straw in a stable,  
brighter than sun, the light from his candle,*

*this is the Christ,  
this is the Christ,  
this is the Christ!*

*Who is to sing the song of his birth,  
who is to sing?  
All who the story touches and changes,  
hopeful and healed, whom love rearranges,  
these know the song,  
these know the song,  
these know the song.*

*Who is to dance the dance of his birth,  
who is to dance?  
Limbs that are leashed a life into freedom,  
hands that will hold the world in a welcome,  
these know the dance,  
these know the dance,  
these know the dance.*

*Who are to be the bearers of Christ,  
who are they now?  
All who give birth to lively compassion,  
carrying peace as dearest possession,  
these bear the Christ,  
these bear the Christ,  
these bear the Christ.*

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## **Reflection**

### **Offering Song**

TIS318 *Away in a manger* – alternative words by Jenny Gordon

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- 1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.*
- 2. An innocent stranger, this boy-child so near  
brings blessing to those who are living in fear  
brings hope to the weary and love's burning light  
to all who are lost or afraid in the night.*
- 3. From here at the manger, we ask you to stay  
close by us as we try to walk in your way;  
confronting the powers and growing in grace  
as those who most need you, come bearing your face.*
- 4. Let us who have plenty, give those who have less;  
an offer of shelter, a friendship to bless,  
asylum for refugees, food for the poor,  
shared tables of comfort and wide open doors.*

5. *From manger to marketplace, Jesus come near  
and whisper your wonder to our waiting ears.  
Bring healing and freedom, bring hope and release  
so all of creation can breathe in your peace.*

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SONG: [Away in a manger](#), alternate words by Rev. Jenny Gordon, Uniting Church in Australia.  
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## Christmas Bowl Story

Xmas Bowl resources:

?: Many Sri Lankan refugees living in exile in India are finally ready to make the journey home to the country they love. But the current economic crisis and food shortages in Sri Lanka means it's not safe for them to return, leaving many still needing support in the refugee camps.

Kavitha lives in a camp with her husband and two young children. She has suffered two miscarriages and was diagnosed with a blood condition during her pregnancy.

Thankfully our local partner, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR), with support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), has been providing vital medical care for refugees like Kavitha. She received injections that meant she could safely carry her baby to term.

Through the Christmas Bowl you are helping OfERR continue to provide lifesaving medical care for refugees while they wait for Sri Lanka to be safe again. Once the crisis ends, families like Kavitha's will finally be able to find a safe place to belong in their homeland.

Ian: The hungry have been fed with the bread of tears. (Psalm 80:5)

May our tables expand to feed people from our own plates.

May our hearts break open as we break bread,  
so that sharing with others is our spiritual fulfillment.

And may this sharing bring your sacred love into your world once more. Amen

## Prayers of the People

Peter Blair

## Notices

## Sending song

TIS307 *The Virgin Mary had a baby boy*

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1. *The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

*He come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom,  
He come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom,  
O yes, believer, O yes, believer, he come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

2. *The angels sang when the baby born,  
the angels sang when the baby born,  
the angels sang when the baby born,  
and proclaim him the baby Jesus.*

3. *The wise men saw where the baby born,  
the wise men saw where the baby born,  
the wise men saw where the baby born,  
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

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SONG: The Virgin Mary, West Indies spiritual, from Together in Song,  
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## **Sending and Blessing.**

Xmas Bowl resources alt:

With hearts full, go into Christmas week,  
prepared to see all of creation embodied in a tiny child.  
With generosity and compassion,  
see beyond tinsel to the stars that guide us.

Listen for the voice of angels,  
look with the eyes of angels,  
to see the coming of God's new creation,  
and to live it with joy.

Do not be afraid, but be blessed  
by the God who comes,  
again and again to be with us:  
Emmanuel born to set us free.  
Amen

## **Thank yous**

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

Liturgist & Reflection:  
Ian Ferguson  
(Minister of the Word)

Bible readers:  
Lyn Anderson  
Ralph Eduardo

Advent candles:  
Ian Ferguson

Prayers of the People:  
Peter Blair

Musicians:  
Natalie Sims  
(co-ordinator)  
Mikul Denison  
Andrew Dickinson  
Nicole Lowe  
Bronte Potter

Editing / Production:  
Martin Brown  
Ray Cameron  
Saide Cameron  
Shawn Whelan

Postlude Song:  
Amen, go tell it  
Musicians: Saide  
Cameron, Ian Ferguson,  
Jessica Kvensakul,  
Catherine Leslie, Jason  
Minator, Elaine Potter,  
Natalie Sims, Amelia Ware,  
Shawn Whelan

Images:  
Ian Ferguson

## **Closing verse:**

Love is a gift