



Sunday Worship Service

26 December 2021 (Christmas 1)

Joy to the world, the Lord has come. So, we rejoice in *Immanuel*, God be with us. Jesus in human form of God is always with us in our faith journey through the past year. As we conclude the year 2021, we are again finding where God's will be among us. Our God is giving and forgiving so that we are called to love God and our neighbour by loving and forgiving. This moment, wherever we worship God, may become an opportunity for all to wrap up all earthly things and prepare to unpack all God's love that has formed and transformed us. Isn't it great to have another year together as a Christ community at Boronia Park Uniting Church? Let us give thanks and praises to God in this time of worship.

Acknowledgement for the First Peoples

We acknowledge the Wallumettagal people of the Eora Nation, and their elders past, present and emerging, on which we celebrate Jesus Christ our Lord. We recognize their special custodianship and relationship with the land and all creation. And thank them.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be always with you.
And also with you.

Call to Worship

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
**My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.**

The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
**The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
**The LORD will keep
your going out and coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.**

Hymn: Joyful, joyful, we adore you (TiS 152)

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, God of love;

hearts unfold like flowers before you
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the dark on doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heav'n reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain
call to praise you joyfully.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest.
You our Father, Christ our brother,
all are yours who live in love;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to you joy above.

Henry Van Dyke
Arrangement © L. F. Barlett

Prayer of the Day

Wrap us in the scarf of compassion,
God of holiness,
so that this season of goodness and giving
might last longer than
the after-Christmas celebrations.

Slip our hands into the gloves of humility,
Brother of the ignored,
so we might join in your work of
rebuilding communities,
feeding the hungry,
embracing the outsiders.

Teach us your patient ways,
Wisdom from on high,
so we would learn to notice
what we have in common with others,
rather than what divides us;
so we might offer kindness
in the face of bitterness and hurt.

May all we do
with our hands, our hearts,
our minds, our feet, our lives
be done in the name of the Christ Jesus.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

**How patient You are with us,
Loving Creator,
and how hard we find it
to put up with the foolishness of others.**

**In humility, You became one of us,
and we keep wanting everything
to be about us.**

**You model a life of meekness
in service to others,
and we are convinced
life is all about power and success.**

All creation sings of Your kindness,
while we hurl angry words at those
we say we care about the most.

Yet, rather than becoming frustrated with us,
Joy of Christmas,
You continue to forgive us.

Clothe us with Your love, we pray,
so we might be more compassionate
towards others.

Touch us with Your grace,
so we might become more gentle people.
Fill us with that peace
which longs to reside in our hearts,
even as we seek to continue our journey
with the Child of Bethlehem,
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins
and cleans us from all unrighteousness.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:
'Our sins are forgiven'.
Thanks be to God.

Bible Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection: We are all equal before Christ Jesus

Everyone is equal in the sight of God. We all are different but, according to our creation story, we all are created in the image of God. The first human, Adam was made and came to this world from dirt. God used dirt to make body and then breathed His Spirit in him. The earthy thing, which is dirt, became a holy and sacred one by the breath of God. We don't know how Adam looked like or what his skin colour was. But we believe that he was made of dirt and had the image of God. So, in God's sight, there's no difference between humans, no matter what outer appearances they have.

There is another thing that everyone has in common. We all have the broken image of God because Adam and we disobeyed God. And we all have the single and One way of healing solution of the brokenness. The solution is

Jesus Christ. By the power of His name, we are able to be re-shaped God's image in us.

Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God adds an infinite value on each of us. Jesus accepts all of us as who we are, no matter where we come from, or what we have done so far. He took our broken image of God upon himself, bearing all our burdens and died in our place. Now in God's sight, we are all equal — and we will now have a choice to make: to be renewed in Jesus, or to continue to be where we used to be.

Paul, the author of the Bible passage, is addressing the recipients that they should see and understand themselves as "chosen, holy and loved." It sounds really cool as we hear it. But the passage doesn't teach about the lesson of 'how to be good'. Instead, Paul emphasizes that, only by the name of Jesus, we can become chosen, holy and loved. Paul mentioned some important points in 3:1-2. It says, "You have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." He speaks to us that when we believe, we have been raised with Christ." This is the beginning; we are raised with Christ Jesus. Then Something might happen to us. Those who believe that we are raised with Jesus are called to set their hearts on things above. It is a commitment to follow and let others know what Jesus did in his three years journey and even now, including his suffering and death for the sake of God. When we believe that we are raised with Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves and hearts to living out like Christ and looking to God. We are chosen, holy and loved when we believe in Jesus Christ and accept all that he has done for us.

Do you believe that you are chosen, holy and loved by God? Paul helps us answer the question. Number one, Paul emphasizes forgiving and putting everything in the love of God. Forgive and love. This year 2021, how many times have you forgiven people who were against you? This year 2021, how

much have you committed yourself to loving God and your neighbour? Paul's lesson here isn't just another set of commands to be good. But it is encouraging us to support the process of living from the basis of love not of fear. The bible lesson is to ask us to grow generosity and openness to others. Forgiving and loving has a great power to give up yourself and to let heavenly things happen among people. I would encourage you to forgive others before the new year 2022 comes and to love more in the new year.

Number two, please 'be thankful to God' as Paul emphasizes three times. Especially verse 17 is another famous verse. "And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father." Be thankful in the wonderful and beautiful name of Jesus! And in your everyday life, let a God you believe be the God, who sees us equally in his sight. In our ongoing relationship with God, what we will continue to do is that we look to God through thanksgiving and sharing love with our neighbours. I would encourage you to give thanks to God for all things done in the name of Jesus this year.

We are equal in Jesus' name indeed. When you call his name, God will always help you. God will keep your going out and your coming in forever. Why God keeps His people? That's because God sent His love for us through the birth of Jesus. Only Jesus and his sweet name can keep us looking to God.

Acts 4:12 says, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." As we are concluding the year 2021, another year with the disadvantage of Covid-19 and the pandemic, let us stand firmly together in the name of Jesus our Lord. Whether it has been a good year or bad year, what we shall do is to keep our faith alive with all our heart and mind. Jesus has never failed to love us. The great name 'the Lord Jesus Christ' is the song that we will sing forever until he comes back. Amen.

Prayers of Christmas

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving.

Attributed to Karen L. Oberst



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

Author Unknown

We thank you for the day. For our family and our friends. Gifts of grace that heaven lends. Living water, daily bread. Countless blessings our God sends. Thank you, Jesus, for them all. For the great ones and the small. When we're happy, when we're sad. On the good days and the bad. We are grateful, we are glad.

Attributed to Mary Fairchild

In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again. This Christmas, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed Your joy and peace more than now. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, our Immanuel, the Word made flesh. Forgive us for forgetting—that Your love never changes, never fades, and that You never abandon the purpose for which You came: to save us from our sinful condition, and to give us life eternal, the joy of relationship with a holy God. Your birth—and Your death—sealed Your promise to us forever.

Attributed to Rebecca Barlow Jordan



In a world where so many are hungry,
may we eat this food with humble hearts;
In a world where so many are lonely,
may we share this friendship with joyful
hearts.

Attributed to Mary Fairchild

Love came, held safely within a gentle womb
All the truth, majesty, and creativity of a living God
Poured into a tiny heart
Making a quiet entrance in a dark and uninviting shack
Just one star shone anew as a handful of people were brought
Led by angelic voices, and open hearts
A young mother
A faith-filled father
Men of wisdom who searched for truth
And a group of humble herdsmen
They came to bow before a new life
And acknowledge that the rescuer had arrived
That the Word of God had come alive
And that the extraordinary transformation of heaven and earth
Had begun.

Attributed to Julie Palmer



Dear Lord, don't let us miss You
this Christmas season. Help us to
simplify our activities and traditions
so we can focus our celebration on
Your birth. Thank You for being
the Prince of Peace, and I ask You
for that supernatural peace to reign
in our hearts. Thank You for the
simple but life-changing message of
Your love for us.

Attributed to Melanie Chitwood

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the angels,
The gladness of the shepherds,
And worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
And open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
And good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing, which Christ brings
And teach us to be merry with clear hearts.
May the Christmas morning make us
Happy to be thy children
And Christmas evening bring us
To our beds with grateful thoughts
Forgiving and forgiven
For Jesus' sake
Amen.

Attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson



God, our Creator, we offer this humble prayer on Christmas Day. We come to worship with a song of thanks in our hearts—a song of redemption, a song of hope and renewal. We pray for joy in our hearts, hope in our God, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. We ask for the salvation of all our family members and friends, and we pray your blessings on all people. May there be bread for the hungry, love for the unlovable, healing for the sick, protection for our children, and wisdom for our youth. We pray for the forgiveness of sinners and abundant life in Christ. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and power.

Attributed to Lia Icaza Willetts

My prayer for you this Christmas
Is like a special gift
I choose to ask for peace and joy
And there's more on this list!

I know you need both hope and love
To fill your life anew
And so I take these precious things
And wrap them up for you.

I ask that you would know how much
You're loved and held so dear
As I take a ribbon of grace
And tie a bow this year.

And on the label I will write
My promise new to you:
"You're in my prayers this Christmas time
and the whole year through." Author Unknown

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

Dedication of the Offering:

May our gifts, O God,
assist in the work of easing
suffering and pain
to the glory of Your name and
the offering of Your grace
in the hearts and minds of all people.
Amen.

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these changing times. Please make your offering through a Bank Deposit or a personal cheque whichever is convenient to you.

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church

BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering *OR Christmas Bowl 2021*

Mail to: Mrs. Robyn Harvey

96a Champion Rd. Gladesville NSW 2111

Please contact Robyn Harvey, Treasurer on 0418 783 290 or robyn.49@bigpond.net.au for more information about how to make Direct Debit.

Hymn **Who is This Man? (Londonderry Air)**

Who is this man, who gathered people to him,
and touched their lives along each dusty way;
who spoke to all with passion and with peacefulness
and valued all their ordinary days?

Who is this man, who, at the long day's ending,
would draw apart to wait on God and pray,
and, in that mystery that knows no ending,
would find God's wisdom and would know God's words to say?

Who is this man, who gave to women dignity
in partnership of worth and equal grace,
who listened to the stories that they told him
and honoured all, whatever was their place?
Who let them choose to come and join his company,
and learned with them God's love for every race,
who showed to each the courage of their nature
to care and tend each lonely and each suffering face.

Who is this man, who spoke to men of gentleness
and showed them all the children at this side;
who taught of love and justice for all people
and took a towel and washed away their pride?
In him they saw the strength of truth and mercy,
and how he trusted God to be his guide,
knew how he led them through misunderstanding,
and then forgave them when they ran away to hide.

Who is this man who calls us now to follow,
a shadow presence asking us to be
companions on the way through this life's journey,
to live in truth, to set our tired world free?

So let us find each other now in partnership
with ears to hear and eyes awake to see,
that we might grow in grace and understanding
and walk beside that man who comes from Galilee.

Benediction

We say this prayer of blessing with one voice.

**Almighty God,
Lord of the universe,
All love, strength and
understanding come from You;
so direct us and govern us
in body, mind and spirit
that we may strive to live
according to Your word
and to do everything that is
agreeable to Your will:
through Jesus Christ,
Your Son, our Lord.**

**The blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.**

Sun Blessing

Go in Peace, Go in Love
Let's find joy with each other.
Go in Peace, Go in Love,
We are sister and brother.

Fed by Spirit with strength each day
to find our way together
Go in Peace, Go in Love,
God be with us forever.

Music: Tune of Edelweiss
Words: Mary Louise Bringle

The Boronia Park Uniting Church communications team who recorded and edited the videos, ensured all the videos ran as they should and designed the invitation and order of service.

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