

**Christmas Day Service:**

***We are now welcoming God thru seeing the Christ Child***

25 December 2021, 9:30AM

Boronia Park Uniting Church

Lead: Mrs. Robyn Harvey

Piano: Miss. Bianca Lee

**GATHERING AND GREETING**

The peace of the Christ Child be with you all.

The heart of the Christmas,  
despite Mary's obedience and all the pretty angels,  
is the birth of the Christ Child  
for you and I, and for many.

Jesus' birth and its greatest power  
to save His people  
is still the core belief in this Christmas,  
which is offered to us  
as gift and blessing.

**ASSEMBLY SONG: Joy to the World (TIS 268)**

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
let earth receive its king;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;  
let us our songs employ;  
while fields and streams,  
rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

Words: Isaac Watts

## **OPENING PRAYER: Advently Thinking About Love**

*Let us pray:*

**A brief silence.**

Love.

Love didn't come at Christmas,  
for you were always here.

You have always been present.  
You have always been at work.  
But your love took radical form in the incarnation,  
God, you embodied love for us.

In the Christ  
we met you face to face.  
In Christ  
we meet you face to face,  
Immanuel - God with us,  
love as we had never known it,  
humble, sacrificial love.

All given for all.  
We are at the penultimate point in our Advent.

Love is the focus,  
wrapping hope, peace and joy,  
in meaning and purpose,  
and opening us to the deep,

leading us to the manger,  
that we might wonder anew  
and learn what love calls us to,  
that we might appreciate anew life lived for love.

Lead us to the manger and beyond,  
into greater faith and discipleship,  
into the way of the cross which draws us into the hardships of love,  
but also teaches us the rightness and fullness of your positive vision,  
taking your love, joy, peace and hope  
with you into the world.

This is prayed.

Amen.

*Attributed to Jon Humphries*

## **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.

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CHRIST CANDLE

Robyn: We will light candles this Christmas.  
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.  
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.  
Candles of love to inspire all of my living.

**All: Candles that will burn all the yearlong.**

*Attributed to Howard Thurman*

### THE FIRST CHRISTMAS STORY: Luke 2:8-20 (New International Version)

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE:     The Minister and Robyn Harvey**

Robyn reads the Minister's Christmas message and may add her own reflection on what it means to celebrate Christmas this year.

**Seung Jae's Message:**

Christmas is the celebration of the truth that God is always with us 'Immanuel' in every event of life. Sometimes God is called *Strong Father* to do perfection in life as we plan or wish. Most of the time God is like the poor baby in a manger, vulnerable, unstable and uncertain.

However, when you think about what he has done for us, God is always accessible within whatever happening to us. God holds us in our sin and shame. God is always touching us in our weakness and attached to us in all our worries and concerns. God never let us go alone. God looks after us always by love from parents, siblings, friends, neighbours and our fellow Christians here at Boronia Park Uniting Church. We may fall but we never fail to love and to be loved. In the presence of the powerless baby, we are able to find the truth of God, the power of God shimmering among us this day.

Saying or believing that God is with us is a miracle for everyone. We all are unknowingly as full of God's beauty as the baby is. And if we really believe that all of this is true, how dare we keep hurting each other, and destroying peace? Please remember that we, people of God who hold hope, peace, joy and love of the Christmas, are called to mend our world and all God's creation.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, may this Christmas be your true gift in life which transforms deeply your heart to have new vision of the beauty and bright wonder of God. And this Christmas, please allow yourself to welcome others and the new things to happen as God welcome you and answer your prayer. You and I are all equally graced by the Christ Child who was born for us all today.

Amen.

## **Robyn's Message:**

After the extended lockdown during this year we were all looking forward to celebrating Christmas together. A time of joy, peace, hope and love among our family and the community around us. A time when we love singing the carols that have so much history and meaning for all of us. A time of giving and receiving of gifts among our family and friends. A time of holidays from school and work. A time of much cooking and eating of special foods we tend to only cook and eat at Christmas. A time when we put the beautiful Christmas bush in our vases to bring that lovely red and green colour into our homes. A time when we decorate our homes inside and outside often depicting the birth of Jesus. How many of us have a nativity scene on a table in our homes. I have the one I bought in Israel made of the wood from an olive tree. We sit and look at these scenes and ponder on Jesus' coming into this world.

It is this time when we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This little babe who came into our world over 2000 years ago and transformed the lives of billions of people. I wonder if Mary and Joseph realised the impact of this little baby born so humbly in a manger.

Do we look at every newborn and think - "What impact will you have on this world??" The miracle of a birth is always a time of great joy, love and hope. So it was when Jesus was born. The world has not been the same since that day.

My prayer for you all is that this Christmas you will know that Jesus is in your homes. He is celebrating his birthday and also his ministry to us that has changed our lives forever. He brings love, joy, hope and peace to yours and every house he enters.

Amen.

### **CHRISTMAS PRAYER:      A Circle Prayer**

**Robyn says, "Imagine throwing a pebble into the centre of a pond, and the circles of ripples that move out from the centre."**

*Let us pray:*

We pray firstly for those closest to us,  
our immediate family and closest friends  
– for their health, needs, joys and fears.

[Silent prayer]

**All: God of creation, God of Salvation  
In the name of Lord Jesus, hear us.**

[Brief pause]

We pray for our extended family and friends  
who we might not see each week –  
for their love and concern,  
for their wellbeing.

[Silent prayer]

**All: God of creation, God of Salvation  
In the name of Lord Jesus, hear us.**

[Brief pause]

As the ripples reach out toward the land  
we pray for those who we only have contact  
with annually or less –  
for a blessing this Christmas-time.

[Silent prayer]

**All: God of creation, God of Salvation  
In the name of Lord Jesus, hear us.**

[Brief pause]

And as the ripples reach their furthest point  
we pray for this world and its people –  
for the needs of this week and the future.

[Silent prayer]

God of creation,  
God of Salvation  
Who speaks to us  
through thunder and whisper  
Who loves us as if there were  
but one of us to love  
In the name of Lord Jesus, hear us.

Lord,  
thou hast given us thy Word  
for a light to shine upon our path;  
grant us so to meditate on that Word,  
and to follow its teaching,  
that we may find in it the light  
that shines more and more  
until the perfect day;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Jerome, c 342 - 420)

**Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

May the gifts we share be from the heart,  
just as yours was that day, God of Bethlehem.  
May our offering serve those who look for welcome,  
those who struggle with loss and grief,  
those who need to be blessed by hope  
This we pray in the name of your Child, Jesus.

**Amen.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC:**

**Bianca Lee**

[Piano instrumental] Who is this man? AND God be with you till we meet again

**Who is this Man?**



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.

Words: Mary Pearson

Music adopted from Londonderry Air

## **God be with you till we meet again**

God be with you till we meet again;  
holy wings securely hide you,  
daily manna still provide you;  
God be with you till we meet again.  
Till we meet, till we meet,  
till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.

Words: Jeremiah E. Rankin  
Music: William G. Tomer

### **EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLES**

This candle is for hope,  
God's promise.  
We will put the wrong things right  
and bring the hope of love and light.

**Robyn extinguishes the candle for hope.**

This candle is for peace, representing  
the prophets, the people of God.  
We will proclaim that Christ would come  
with good news for many.

**Robyn extinguishes the candle for peace.**

This candle is for joy  
and calls us to remember the shepherds.  
We will teach our children  
about watching for God in the darkness.

**Robyn extinguishes the candle for joy.**

This candle is for love and for Mary  
who mothered God's own son,  
We will sing  
how God's justice and righteousness  
is meant for everyone.

**Robyn extinguishes the candle for love.**

This candle (Christ candle) is our Lord Jesus Christ,  
We will continue to shine bright  
for Jesus, for neighbours and for family.

**Robyn extinguishes the Christ candle.**

### **CALL TO ACTION AND BLESSING**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,

the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.

The blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us, and remain with us always.

**Amen.**

**SUNG BLESSING:**

**Go in peace, go in love**

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 Edelwiss  
Words: Mary Louise Bringle

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