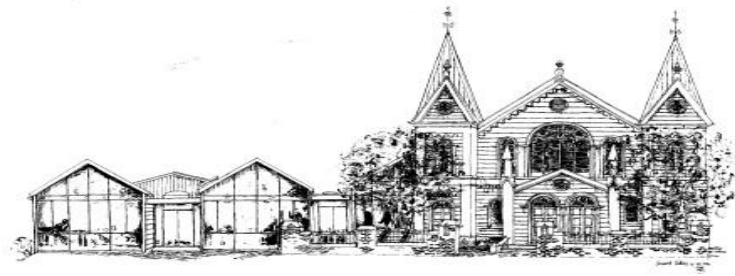


WESLEY



WELLINGTON
75 Taranaki Street
www.wesleychurch.org.nz

Sunday 18th December 2022
Advent 4 - LOVE

Haere mai ki tēnei Whare Karakia
Welcome to this House of Prayer



**We are a multi-racial Christian community:
Methodist in affiliation – Ecumenical in intention
Diverse in theology – Inclusive in outreach.**

**Kia ora koutou katoa — Talofa Lava
Malo e lelei — Bula Vinaka Greetings to you all!**

Order of Service - 10am Congregation
Wesley Methodist Church 75 Taranaki Street
18th December 2022 – 4th Sunday of Advent

Welcome to today's service. A special welcome to all visitors. Your presence enriches our gathering and contributes to the creative evolution of community.

WELCOME AND SAFETY BRIEFING

GATHERING

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE – 'The Advent of Love'

CALL TO WORSHIP

God, you came into the world weak:
A baby born in a stable,
Sleeping in a feeding trough
With animal sounds and smells all around.
This is how love came to earth.

God, you have made us vulnerable.
Our bodies can get sick and hurt.
Our hearts are easily broken.
Life is not always safe.
This is how love lives on earth.

God, you have also made us resilient.
Bodies can heal.
Hearts can mend.
Lives and communities can change.
This is how love heals us all.

God, your power is made perfect in our weakness.
For weakness breaks us open
and makes room for us to grow and flourish.
**So that we can be your love
today, tomorrow and every day.**
Let us worship our God.

ADVENT CAROL [*Tune: O Little Town of Bethlehem*]

Lord, give us HOPE this advent time,
that we may not despair
with tragedies and grief and pain
and sadness everywhere.
As we await Christ's coming
to live upon this earth,
may we find HOPE as we begin
to celebrate his birth.

Lord, give us PEACE this advent time,
that we may know as friend
those of another culture, creed;
that wars may have an end.
As we await Christ's coming
to live upon this earth,
may we find PEACE as we begin
to celebrate his birth.

Lord give us JOY this advent time,
that we may share your light
throughout our whole community
and make our small world bright.
As we await Christ is coming
to live upon this earth,
may we find JOY as we begin
to celebrate his birth.

Lord, give us LOVE this advent time,
that we may serve and care;
to treat our neighbours as ourselves
and all our bounty share.
As we await Christ's coming
to live upon this earth,
may we find LOVE as we begin
to celebrate his birth.

Jan Chamberlin

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God,
we have gathered in hope,
sought peace, and laughed with joy,
and now we come to share the great love that you have for us.
Be with us in our worship and
in our witness this week and every week.
Help us to bring your love to the world,
especially into broken and forgotten places
and to people who feel unlovable and unlovely.
It is for this that you came to us in Bethlehem
and for this that you continue to come again
this and every year. Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

HYMN: 'All who would see God's greatness'

All who would see God's greatness,
draw near, bend down, look low:
see how love appears among us
as small as a child. Then go,
tell of the greatness made so small,
tiny and hidden, God of all.

If you would share God's riches,
draw near, reach out and touch:
God has only love to offer,
enough for us, and too much.
Take up God's treasure, made so poor,
naked the God that we adore.

Would you receive God's power?
Draw near, find strength in this:
laid open to all our violence
is love that will not resist.
This is our God, who chose to be
tied with our bonds to set us free.

Stand in the holy silence
while earth with heaven sings
that here in our hands for holding
is love that sustains all things.
Strange is this love that draws us near:
Glory of God, among us here.

Words: Marnie Barrell; Tune: Colin Gibson

PRAYER OF AWARENESS *(Based on Psalm 80:3)*

In a few days' time
we will be celebrating
the birth of Christ,
so let us restore our souls and refresh our spirits.
Restore us, O God, let your face shine that we may be saved.

Though we are complicit
in the frenzy of consumerism,
the unreality of expectations,

the tension of gift giving,
and the pressure to attend gatherings:
Restore us, O God, let your face shine that we may be saved.

Though we would like
to be more Christ-centred
in our daily lives,
we know we can turn to God and be restored. So, we ask:
Restore us, O God, let your face shine that we may be saved.
Amen.

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Psalm 80: 1-7 & 17-19

Turn our way, Good Shepherd,
you who muster your people.
You who rule in radiance
among the saints and martyrs,
unfurl your mighty love
and come to our rescue.
**Revive our hopes, God of the stars,
show us your face and we shall be healed.**

Lord of the sparkling night sky,
don't rebuff our foolish prayers.
Too long we eat the bread of sorrow,
and drink the cup of sour tears.
Our ineffectiveness makes us a joke,
our enemies can't stop laughing.
**Revive our hopes, God of the stars,
show us your face and we shall be healed.**

Put your hand on the person at your side,
the true Child who shares your strength,

then we will never turn our backs on you;
as you give life, so we will sing your name.
**Revive our hopes, God of the stars,
show us your face and we shall be healed.**

Paraphrased by Bruce Prewer, Australian *Psalms*

Matthew 1: 18-25 [The Message]

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they enjoyed their wedding night, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus— 'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic revelation to full term:

Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son;
They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").
Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

REFLECTION

HYMN 'Carol our Christmas' [AA9]

Carol our Christmas,
an upside down Christmas;
snow is not falling and
trees are not bare.

Carol the summer, and
welcome the Christ Child,
warm in our sunshine and
sweetness of air.

Sing of the gold and the
green and the sparkle,
water and river and lure
of the beach.

Sing in the happiness
of open spaces,
sing a nativity summer
can reach!

Shepherds and musterers
move over hillsides,
finding, not angels,
but sheep to be shorn;
wise ones make journeys
whatever the season,
searching for signs of the
truth to be born.

Right side up Christmas belongs
to the universe,
made in the moment
a woman gives birth;
hope is the Jesus gift,
love is the offering,
everywhere, anywhere,
here on the earth.

Words: Shirley Murray, Music: Colin Gibson

OFFERING AND DEDICATION

God is at work in the world, renewing, remaking, resurrecting, bringing hope through the faith, the gifts, and the work of the church. We trust in God, and together we work for peace and justice through God's Spirit. Let us rejoice in our God-given opportunity to share in God's work

We acknowledge offerings made by automatic payment and on-line banking.

Thank you, God of Love, from the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity aroused in us by Christ's coming into the world. May these gifts represent a new spirit of joyous sharing among us, for the sake of all people, everywhere. Amen.

COMMUNITY TIME

Let us take a moment to celebrate each other.

Sharing the Peace

Let us greet each other saying: **"God's peace be with you."**

Notices

Sharing our joys and concerns

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In the darkness we wait for the coming of the Light:

In the darkness faith is formed, love takes shape and hope is born.

With the world we wait for your coming:

Let us wait with the hungry, the homeless, the poor,
the oppressed;

let us wait with the peoples of warring nations
and with all who long for peace;

let us wait all who carry heavy burdens of responsibility.

Incarnate God, come to us wisdom, in justice and in peace,
that we may rejoice at your presence.

Come, Jesus, come, and in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

With your church we wait for your coming:
let us wait, open and receptive to your love;
let us wait, aware of the quickening movements of
new life within;
let us wait, ready to experience the pains of birth
and the joy of new life.
Incarnate God, come to us in wonder and in
Mystery, that we may rejoice at your presence.
Come, Jesus, come, and in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With the people of this city, we wait for your coming:
let us wait with our families and friends.
let us wait with those who are hurt, rejected, estranged.
let us wait with the unemployed and with those for whom
we find no room.
Incarnate God, come to us in forgiveness, in reconciliation
and in love, that we may rejoice at your presence.
Come, Jesus, come, and in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With those who suffer we wait for your coming:
let us wait with the confused and the fearful.
let us wait with the lonely and the grief-stricken.
let us wait with the sick and with those who are dying.
Incarnate God, come to us in healing, in reassurance and in
hope that those who suffer may rejoice at your presence.
Come, Jesus, come, and in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With all your faithful servants we wait for your coming.
we give you thanks for all who have recognised your presence
and for all who have opened themselves to your purpose and power:
the prophets, John the Baptist, Joseph and Mary.

Incarnate God, come to us, that, rejoicing at your presence,
we may dwell for ever with you and you with us.
Come, Jesus, come, and in your mercy,
hear our prayer. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite anō ki to te rangi.
Homai ki a mātou āiane
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Murua o mātou hara,
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i o te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nou hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te kōroria,
Ake ake ake.
Āmine.**

HYMN Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (inclusive lyrics)

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven that fills the Earth.
Fix in us thy humble dwelling; in thy Love we find new birth!
Jesus thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation, filling every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit; let us find that second rest.

Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its Beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, O Healer, to deliver, let the whole Earth life receive.
Let us join in Love's endeavour, living out what we believe.
Ever singing, ever blessing, with the Earth and skies above,
Work for justice without ceasing, sheltered in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation; lives of justice, let us lead.
Let us see thy great salvation: Earth renewed, healed, and freed!
Let us tell our wondrous story, far abroad or face to face.
Sing of hope and sing of glory; tell of wonder, love, and grace.

Source: Tallessyn Zawn Grenfell-Lee

PARTING WORDS

Grace (*we say the grace together*)

**Kia tau ki a tātou katoa,
te atawhai o to tātou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga
ki te Wairua Tapu. Amine**

* * * * *

Liturgy for this service was sourced from:

The Gathering – The United Church of Canada,
Bruce Prewer, Australian Psalms
Janet Nelson, Let us Prayer

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Visit the parish website. <https://wesleychurch.org.nz/>
Or the 10am Facebook Page to keep up to date with services and news:
<https://www.facebook.com/wesleywellington.methodistchurch.10am>