

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH GEELONG

ADVENT 4B, DECEMBER 24th 2023



Rev. Tupe Ioelu

A WARM WELCOME to any who are visiting or worshipping with us for the first time today. Please make yourselves known. We trust you will enjoy this time of fellowship with us. You are invited to join us over a cuppa after the service.

We acknowledge the Traditional owners of the land on which Wesley is built. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We wait to celebrate the birth of the Christ-child,

We wait for Christ to enter our lives in a new way.

We watch for the signs of God's reign in our world

We are called to build up the reign of Christ on earth.

We wonder at God's work in our world,

And wonder what God will do next,

We rejoice that God sent the only Son to us,

We rejoice in the birth of the Messiah!

SONG TIS 216

Rejoice the Lord is King

1.

Rejoice, the Lord is King;

your Lord and King adore;

let all give thanks, and sing,

and triumph evermore;

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.

Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2.

Jesus the Saviour reigns,

the God of truth and love;

when he had purged our stains,

he took his seat above:

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.

Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

3.

His kingdom cannot fail,

he rules o'er earth and heaven;

the keys to death and hell

are to our Jesus given:

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

4.

He sits at God's right hand,
till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command,
and fall beneath his feet:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

5.

Rejoice in glorious hope;
Jesus the judge shall come,
and take his servants up
to their eternal home:
We soon shall hear
the archangels voice;
the trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!

PRAYER

Loving God, we gather in Your name as we do every Sunday, but this Sunday we know is special. In all the excitement and anticipation of Christmas, may we slow down and savour this moment of waiting. This moment of wondering what will be. This moment of knowing that You have already entered our hearts and lives long ago, but You are here now, and You will be made known to us in new ways. Help us to breathe deep, to hold on to the wonder and awe, and know You are doing something new, here and now.

CONFESSION

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. May we hear Your Christmas angels as they declare "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill to all." May we turn from our sinful ways and instead, be ready for what You are about to do here on earth as it is in heaven. May we open our hearts and minds to be transformed by You, the Word made Flesh, Savior

of us all.

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel! **Amen.**

SONG TIS 304 V1, 2, 6.

O come all ye faithful

1.

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2.

True God of true God, Light of Light eternal,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb,
Son of the Father, begotten, not created:

6.

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God, glory in the highest':

BIBLE READINGS

2 Samuel 7:1-9

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel,

did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

REFLECTION

OFFERING

SONG TIS 161

Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord

1:

Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

2:

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name – the Lord, the Mighty One.

3:

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

4:

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

NOTICES & CARING

INTERCESSION

Perhaps an appropriate response to use would be: "**Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.**"

We pray for peace.

In those parts of the world torn apart by war and injustice,
we pray for peace in the hearts of those who have it in their power
to bring change and reconciliation.

And we pray for justice, that as a baby could become a King,

all things are possible through You.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for our fragile and beautiful earth,
that amidst the consumerism of this time
we will grow in love and care for her,
and be a people willing to make sacrifices to care for creation.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for families,
in particular families struggling with rising living costs
and the extra pressures that this season brings.
We pray too for the elderly
and those particularly vulnerable to cold and illness at this time;
and we pray that we will form communities
which nurture and support the vulnerable.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

We pray for our church,
that we will always rejoice in Your stories,
and find new ways of telling them and sharing them
with a world so greatly in need of Your message.

Eternal God, in Your changing world, hear our prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.**

Amen

SONG TIS 316

O little town of Bethlehem.

1.

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet, in your dark streets shining
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2.

For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King
and peace to all on earth;

3.

How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.

No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

4.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
their great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel.

TIS 316

O little town of Bethlehem
Words in the Public Domain

BLESSING

As we leave this place, let us be confident of Your presence with us,
and commit to trusting You ever more deeply, today,
this Christmas, over the coming year and always.

Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 25th

Christmas Service

9.00 am



January 10th

Craft Group

10.30 am



January 23rd

Coffee and Chat

10.30 am at the Hub East
Geelong, All Welcome



February 5th

Evening Fellowship

7.30 pm



THANKYOU FOR CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

In my role as Chair of Church Council I wish to thank all who were associated in any way with the planning and presentation of our Carols by Candlelight service, and the supper that followed, last Sunday evening. There were some who played big leadership roles and many who did what might be called “small things”, all of which contributed to the great occasion. There are so many who had a part to play. If you appreciated the opportunity to celebrate the coming of Christ, please take the time to personally thank those who deserve to be thanked. My thanks extend also to all who came along; imagine what it would have been like without people in the pews.

We had a heart-warming response from a person who was present on Sunday evening. I quote part of that message that this person took the time to write and send:

“Good afternoon Yarra Street UC,

Could I thank you for the opportunity to be part of your carols service last night. I am in the With One Voice choir. I have told so many people how it was a great service with lots of singing and a minimum of talking.

I thank your minister for being in everyday dress and not distancing us from him by wearing clerical dress.

Thank you for gifting us the hall to sing in every Monday night.”

As I write this (Tuesday 19), there have been 86 views of the service on our YouTube channel.

Thankyou everyone,
Graeme.



Daily Diary

Monday	25th December	9.00 am	Christmas Service
Sunday	31st December	10.00 am	Church Service

Rosters

	Today	Next Sunday
WELCOME	Lorene Day and Judy Berridge	Judy Berridge
READER	Lorene Day	
Camera Operator		
Data Projection	Scott Barnes	Keith Fagg
Morning Tea	Jackson Bell	
Offering Counters	Graeme and Jenny	Lauris and Keith
Communion		

MINISTER & CHURCH COUNCIL CONTACT

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