

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH GEELONG

CHRISTMAS 1 (YEAR B)

SUNDAY DECEMBER 31st



Rev. Lorene Day

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.

ENTRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As we gather, we acknowledge the Wadawarrung people. They have tended this land since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their elders, both past and present, and commit to listening to their voices and working towards reconciliation together.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Hear the words of the psalmist:

Praise God!

Praise the Creator from the sky,
Praise the Eternal from the heights,
Let all the angels sing out in praise.

Praise God, great dome of the sky,
Along with the water above even that.
Praise the name of God.....

You lift up a ray of strength for your people,
Bringing out praise from all who love you,
From the children of Israel with whom you are close.
Praise God!

Pamela Greenberg,

The Complete Psalms: The Book of Prayer Songs in a New Translation
[New York: Bloomsbury, 2010] p.316-317

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,
As we gather,
we are thankful for all there is to praise.
Let us celebrate these things together.
(A time of silence)

As we gather,
we bring all there is to mourn.
Let us sit in these griefs together.
(*A time of silence*)

As we gather,
may we know and share loving-kindness,
hope and peace that will carry us through
into the new year. **Amen.**

HYMN Morning had broken (Tis 156)

1

Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing
fresh from the word.

2

Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung from completeness
where his feet pass.

3

Mine is the sunlight;
mine is the morning
born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,

God's recreation
of the day.

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION TO THEME

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

Holy God, source of life, we praise you!
We praise you for all that is: in the heavens and on earth,
in waters and on land,
from the skies, and the mountain tops, to the ocean depths.
We give thanks, and we will sing our praises into another year.

But as we stand at the close of a year,
this is also a moment to reflect with honesty.
And so we name:

Disappointments and delights	<i>Pause</i>
Gifts and griefs	<i>Pause</i>
Losses and love	<i>Pause</i>
Our turning from you	<i>Pause</i>
Our turning towards you	<i>Pause</i>
And our attempts to follow your way.	<i>Pause</i>

We say a heartfelt 'thank-you' for all that has been good,
and sorry, when we are sorry.
Help us to let go and enter new life.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, let us look back without regret.
What we are sorry for is forgiven, and we may let this go,
so as to move into the tomorrow with hope and in peace.
Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL Luke 2: 22-40 (NRSV)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

CONVERSATION

HYMN O bless the God of Israel, who comes to set us free (TiS 284)

1.

O bless the God of Israel
who comes to set us free;
who visits and redeems us,
with love for all to see.
The prophets spoke of mercy,
of rescue and release:
God shall fulfil his promise
and bring our people peace.

2.

He comes! The Child of David,
the Son whom God has given;
he comes to live among us
and raise us up to heaven:
before him goes his servant-
forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation,
the herald of the Day.

3.

Where once was fear and darkness
the sun begins to rise-
the dawning of forgiveness
upon the sinner's eyes.
He guides the feet of pilgrims
along the path of peace:
O bless our God and Saviour
with songs that never cease.

SECOND READING: Galatians 4: 4-7 (NRSV)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

After the readings:

In this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

REFLECTION

HYMN Born in the night, Mary's child (Tis 323)

1.

Born in the night,
Mary's child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need,
Mary's child,
born in a borrowed room.

2.

Clear shining light,
Mary's child,
your face lights up our way,
light of the world
Mary's child,
dawn on our darkened day.

3.

Truth of our life,
Mary's child,
you tell us God is good;
prove it is true,
Mary's child,
go to your cross of wood.

4.

Hope of the world,
Mary's child,
you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth,
Mary's child,
walk in our streets again.

NEWS AND CARING

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Merciful God,

There are many who today long for consolation. There are many who carry wounds in their hearts. There are many who continue to grieve.

May they know you are with them, and may we all be vessels of consolation.

Gracious God,

There are many today who seek salvation. There are many who long to know truth. There are many who desire wisdom.

May those who seek find the mystery of God, and may we all be willing to walk beside them.

Loving God,

There are many today who are waiting. There are many who long for revelation. There are many who hope for an answer to their prayers.

May all who are with us today, and those who we remember in our hearts and carry in our minds, know the peace that passes understanding and find rest in your loving goodness.

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 for ever. Amen.**

OFFERING

Creator God,

We give thanks for these good gifts that are given to further your work in this place. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

As we leave this place, we remember the words of Simeon, Go now in peace, according to God's word,

In the knowledge of the salvation which has been prepared for all peoples, a light of revelation and the glory of God. Now and forevermore. Amen.

SUNG BLESSING Shalom to you, now. (TiS 778)

Shalom to you now,
shalom, my friends.

May God's full mercies bless you,
my friends.

In all your living
and through your loving,
Christ be your shalom,
Christ be your shalom.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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



Daily Diary

Sunday	7th January	10.00 am	Church Service
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Rosters

	Today	Next Sunday
WELCOME	Judy Berridge	Betty Backwell
READER		Judy Berridge
Camera Operator		
Data Projection	Keith Fagg	Patrick Puckett
Morning Tea		Shirley Ogle
Offering Counters	Lauris and Keith	Vicki and Ian
Communion		Denis Tomlins, Michael Nolan, Judy Berridge

MINISTER & CHURCH COUNCIL CONTACT

MINISTER: Rev. Tupe Ioelu	0448 415 656
CHURCH COUNCIL CONTACTS: Chairperson: Graeme Harris Secretary: Heather Cooney	0429 415 613 0477 805 234
Pastoral Concerns: Lauren Woolnough Jan Watson	0428 365 910 0421 320 296

CHURCH OFFICE:

Phone: 5229 8866 email: office@wesleychurchgeelong.net

website: www.wesleychurchgeelong.net