



Pitt Street
Uniting Church

founded 1833



ON GADIGAL LAND

always was, always will be

CONTEMPORARY FAITH – JUSTICE – ENGAGING – COMMUNITY

22 December 2024

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



image: The Annunciation by He Qi

from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

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WELCOME TO PITT STREET UNITING CHURCH

This is a place of welcome for all people regardless of race, sex, creed, age, cultural background, sexuality, gender identity or intersex status.

Wherever you are on your faith journey,
wherever you have come from and wherever you are going to,
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe, you are welcome here.

All we ask for is mutual respect.

Please join in the congregational responses printed in ***bold italics***.

We will sing the hymns without announcement. Stand if you are able, but feel free to remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.

A quiet activity area is available at the north side of the church for young children.

MUSICAL PRELUDE

A gong sounds – centring prayer / meditation

We gather as the people of God

PROCESSIONAL HYMN Canticle of the Turning Tune: Star of County Down

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great
and my spirit sings of the Wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight
and my weakness you did not spurn;
so from east to west shall my name be blest,
could the world be about to turn?

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring,
let the fires of your justice burn;
wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near
and the world is about to turn!*

Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame
and to those who would for you yearn:
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring ...

From the halls of power to the fortress tower
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for the justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more
for the food they can never earn.
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring ...

Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast.
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God
who is turning the world around.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring ...

CALL TO WORSHIP

In joy I will call to the God of Love:

the God of Love is in our midst.

Sing praises to God

shout aloud and sing for joy.

Rejoice and exult with all your heart.

The birth of Christ is near!

God of Love,
in the hope of Your beloved community,
and in the peace of Your beloved community,
we pray for the joy of Your beloved community
to fill this world with Your love. ***Amen.***

ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY – TOWARD JUST RELATIONSHIPS

As we gather we especially acknowledge the original custodians of this place, who have cared for the land and waterways for tens of thousands of years.

We grieve the unjust taking of their land,
and commit ourselves to just reconciliation and renewal of Creation.

***We honour the Gadigal of the Eora,
pay our respects to their elders past and present,
and pledge to walk together for justice.***

Please be seated.

GREETINGS

Budyeri gamarruwa (greetings)

Josephine

ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

We light four candles today as we come close to Christmas.

We add the fourth Advent candle for Love:
for love, that comes in unexpected ways
and through surprising people;

for love that comforts and disturbs,
for the love that comes to us as Emmanuel, God with us.

We light this candle for Love.

We hold silence as the candle is lit

In the stillness of this place and of this moment,
we light this flame of love.

May it be a sign to us of the love
that springs forth from the wells of salvation,
and may it guide us in the way of Christ.

***As the light of this candle grows,
so may the love in our hearts shine,
reflecting the goodness of our Creator. Amen.***

SONG

Hope Waits for us at Advent

Words & Music: Amanda Udis Kessler

Hope waits for us at Advent. Hope waits for us to trust.
Hope waits for our commitment
to a land that's kind and just.
In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world that heals the ones in pain,
Hope is born in us again.

Peace waits for us at Advent. Peace waits for us to rest.
Peace waits for our acceptance
of the truth that we are blessed.
In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world of gentleness and play,
Peace is born in us each day.

Joy waits for us at Advent. Joy waits for us to sing.
Joy waits for our amazement
at the grace in everything.
In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world where wonder is restored,
Joy is born in us once more.

Love waits for us at Advent. Love waits for us to care.
Love waits for our compassion, freely offered, fully shared.
In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world where faith shapes all we do,
Love is born in us anew.

Hope waits for us at Ad - vent. Hope waits for
 Peace waits for us at Ad - vent. Peace waits for
 Joy waits for us at Ad - vent. Joy waits for
 Love waits for us at Ad - vent. Love waits for

us to trust. Hope waits for our com - mit - ment to a land that's
 us to rest. Peace waits for our ac - cep - tance of the truth that
 us to sing. Joy waits for our a - maze - ment at the grace in
 us to care. Love waits for our com - pas - sion, free - ly off - ered,

kind and just. In this time of pre - par - a - tion
 we are blessed. In this time of pre - par - a - tion
 e - very - thing. In this time of pre - par - a - tion
 ful - ly shared. In this time of pre - par - a - tion

for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing
 for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing
 for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing
 for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing

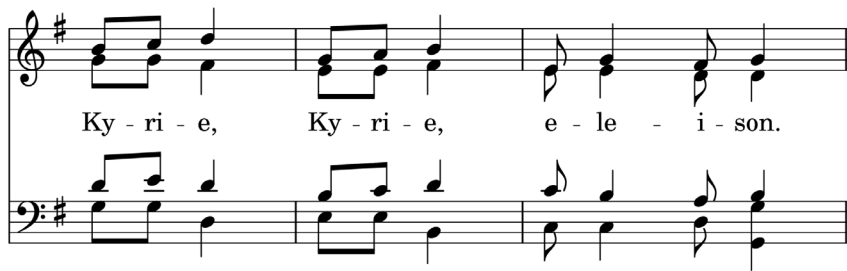
of a world that heals the ones in pain,
 of a world of gen - tle - ness and play
 of a world where won - der is re - stored.
 of a world where faith shapes all we do,

Hope is born in us a - gain.
 Peace is born in us each day.
 Joy is born in us once more.
 Love is born in us a - new.

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

As we reflect on the gift of love born at Christmas,
 let us pray for healing and renewal,
 that Christ may be born in us again once more:

We share a time of silent reflection.



For healing of the past, let us pray:

(we sing the Taizé response) ***Kyrie, kyrie, eleison***

For peace in the present, let us pray:

(we sing the Taizé response) ***Christe, Christe, eleison***

For hope for the future, let us pray:

(we sing the Taizé response) ***Kyrie, kyrie, eleison***

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God's love embraces and renews us:
 Through the peace of Christ,
 may we know God's mercy and renewing grace,
 now and always. ***Amen.***

SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE

May the peace of God be with you now and always!
And also with you!

We are invited to greet those around us, sharing a sign of peace.

We listen for God's Word

FOR WISDOM FOUND IN TEXTS

A Contemporary Reading: from 'On Hope' by Walter Brueggemann

For hope and love in contemporary expression

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

Star Child, earth Child

Words: Shirley Erena Murray

Music: Carlton Raymond Young

Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God,
love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,

*This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
hurt child, used child no one wants to know,

*This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

Grown child, old child, mem'ry full of years,
sad child, lost child, story told in tears,

*This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

Spared child, spoiled child, having, wanting more,
wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store,

*This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine,

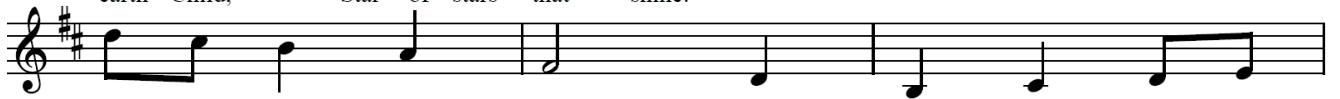
*This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*



1. Star - Child, earth - Child, go be-tween of God; Love Child,
 2. Street child, beat child, no place left to go; Hurt child,
 3. Grown child, old child, mem -'ry full of years; Sad child,
 4. Spared child, spoiled child, hav - ing, want - ing more; Wise child,
 5. Hope for peace Child, God's stu - pen - dous sign; Down to



Christ Child, Heav-en's light - ning rod: This year, this year
 used child no one wants to know:
 lost child, sto - ry told in tears:
 faith child know - ing joy in store:
 earth Child, Star of stars that shine:



let the day ar - rive when Christ - mas comes for



ev - 'ry - one, ev - 'ry - one a - live.

A Reading from the Gospels: from Luke chapter 1 verses 39-45

For the Word of God birthed among us
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Josephine Inkpin

so, what about the Virgin Mary?

We respond in love

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND SOLIDARITY

Let us pray:

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We pray in silence for the needs of the world

A period of silence is shared

Let us call to mind the people across the globe who live in fear of oppression and violence.

Let us pray for women and children subjected to abuse and assault. Let us seek inspiration for all who govern and administer the law, that they may pursue peace, mercy and justice.

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We pray in silence for the needs of the Church

A period of silence is shared

Let us give thanks for the various expressions of Christ's Church. Let us pray for church leaders and for ministries undertaken in Jesus' name. Let us seek blessing upon all people of faith, that they may be generous ambassadors of God's love.

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We pray in silence for the needs of our communities.

A period of silence is shared

Let us give thanks for the many communities into which we are called.
Let us pray for those among us who are here seeking solace and support.

Let us seek mercy for those returning to their homelands
and those yearning for reconciliation with enemies and strangers.

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We pray in silence for the needs of those in pain.

A period of silence is shared

Let us remember those who need healing.
Let us pray for those carrying the visible and invisible scars
of trauma.

Let us seek peace and relief for all who are suffering.

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We pray in silence for the love of God across time and space

A period of silence is shared

Let us rejoice for all the good things
we have received from the people who came before us.
Let us give thanks for the lives of the faithful resting in peace.
Let us pray that the hope of heaven and the joy of resurrection
may continue to transform our lives.

Loving God, hear us:

Loving God hear our prayer.

We also pray in silence for all that rests upon our hearts and minds ...

*Please offer your own prayers in silence
(or, if online, use the chat facility on Zoom)*

PRAYER OF JESUS

In the spirit of Jesus, in these words, or in those of our own language or tradition, we gather together all our prayers.

Emmanuel, God with us, holy be your Name.

May your Love be born everywhere:

as it was in Mary, so in all time and space.

Give us today the warmth of your embrace,

and the milk of deep compassion,

that we may truly flourish.

Free us from fear and hurt,

as we free others who create fear and hurt us.

Strengthen us in our times of testing

and deliver us from evil.

For your new life continually breaks forth,

in unfolding universes, unfathomable mysteries,

and in the wombs of new beginnings,

full of grace and loving power, now and forever. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE OF LYNNE LANCASTER

OFFERING

In this season of bearing of new life,
we especially remember the works of hope and compassion
through the aid and development agencies of the Church,
and particularly our calling to share in the Christmas Bowl.

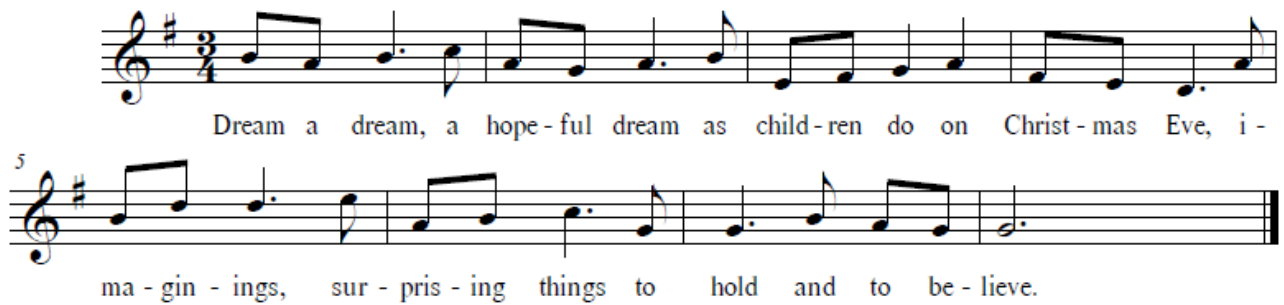
Let us share our offerings
as an expression of our love for the world God loves.

HYMN

Dream a dream

Words: Shirley Erena Murray

Music: Nigel Eastlake



The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures of the melody, and the second staff contains the next four measures, starting with a measure rest marked with a '5'. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Dream a dream, a hope-ful dream as child-ren do on Christ-mas Eve, i -
ma - gin - ings, sur - pris - ing things to hold and to be - lieve.

Dream a dream, a hopeful dream,
as children do on Christmas Eve,
imaginings, surprising things
to hold and to believe.

Dream a time, this Christmas time,
when no one's hungry or afraid;
that weapons go and harvests grow,
that friends are met and made.

Dream a peace, our planet's peace,
the greening of the earth at play,
the holy ground where life is found,
where God has touched the clay.

Dream a gift, the Christmas gift
that changes everything we see:
the shimmering of angel wing,
the Child, the Mystery.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*We give thanks for the gifts brought to the table, and gifts given
to support the mission of the church through automatic payment.*

We offer these gifts in thanksgiving for God's grace
and as signs of our commitment to the fullness of God's love.

***Giver of life may our offerings contribute
to the coming of your vision in all its fullness.
In Jesus' Name. Amen.***

COMMUNITY GREETINGS

We go out to the world God loves

PRAYER OF COMMISSIONING

God our deliverer,
whose approaching birth
still shakes the foundations of the world:
*may we so wait for your coming
with eagerness and hope
that we may embrace without terror
the labour pangs of the new age,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

PRAYER OF SENDING OUT & BLESSING

CAROL

Little Donkey

Words and Music: Eric Boswell
(*music over page*)

Little donkey, little donkey
on the dusty road
got to keep on plodding onwards
with your precious load.
Been a long time, little donkey
through the lengthy night
don't give up now, little donkey
Bethlehem's in sight.

*Ring out those bells tonight
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Follow that star tonight
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Little donkey, little donkey
had a heavy day.
Little donkey
carry Mary safely on her way.*

Little donkey, little donkey
on the dusty road.
There are wise folk waiting for
a sign to bring them here.
Do not falter, little donkey
there's a star ahead.
It will guide you, little donkey
to a cattle shed.

Ring out those bells tonight ...

$\text{♩} = 120$ C To Coda G9 C G7

1. Lit-tle don - key, litt - tle don - key on a dust - y road.
 Been a long time, lit - tle don - key, thro the win - ter's night.
 2. Lit - tle don - key lit - tle don - key had a heav - y day
 Do not fal - ter lit - tle don - key, there's a star ahead -

5 C C7 Dm G7 C

Got to keep on plodd - ing on - wards with the prec - ious load.
 Don't-give up - now lit - tle don - key Beth - le hems in sight
 Lit tle don key, car - ry Mar y safe ly on her way..
 It will guide you lit - tle don - key to a cat - tle shed.

9 Chorus Am Em D7 G D7 G

Ring out those bells to - night. Beth - le - hem Beth - le - hem

13 Am Em D7 G D7 G

Fol - low that star to - night Beth - le - hem Beth - le - hem

17 C G7 C

Lit-tle don - key Lit-tle don - key car-ry Mar - y safe-ly on her way -

23 C 2. G7 C

car - ry Ma - ry safe - ly on her way.

*Everyone onsite is welcome to stay for morning tea and coffee,
and all on Zoom are invited to stay on for community time
together.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Christa/community is used in our liturgy to point to the reality that the risen Christ is beyond gender and evidenced in communities following the Way that the human Jesus chartered.

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Call to Worship, prayer for Advent Candle of Love, and Prayers of Thanksgiving and

Solidarity adapted from Dr Peter Stuart in Christmas Bowl Toolkit resources 2024.

Commissioning Prayer by Janet Morley in *All Desires Known*

Other prayers and adaptations by Josephine Inkpin.

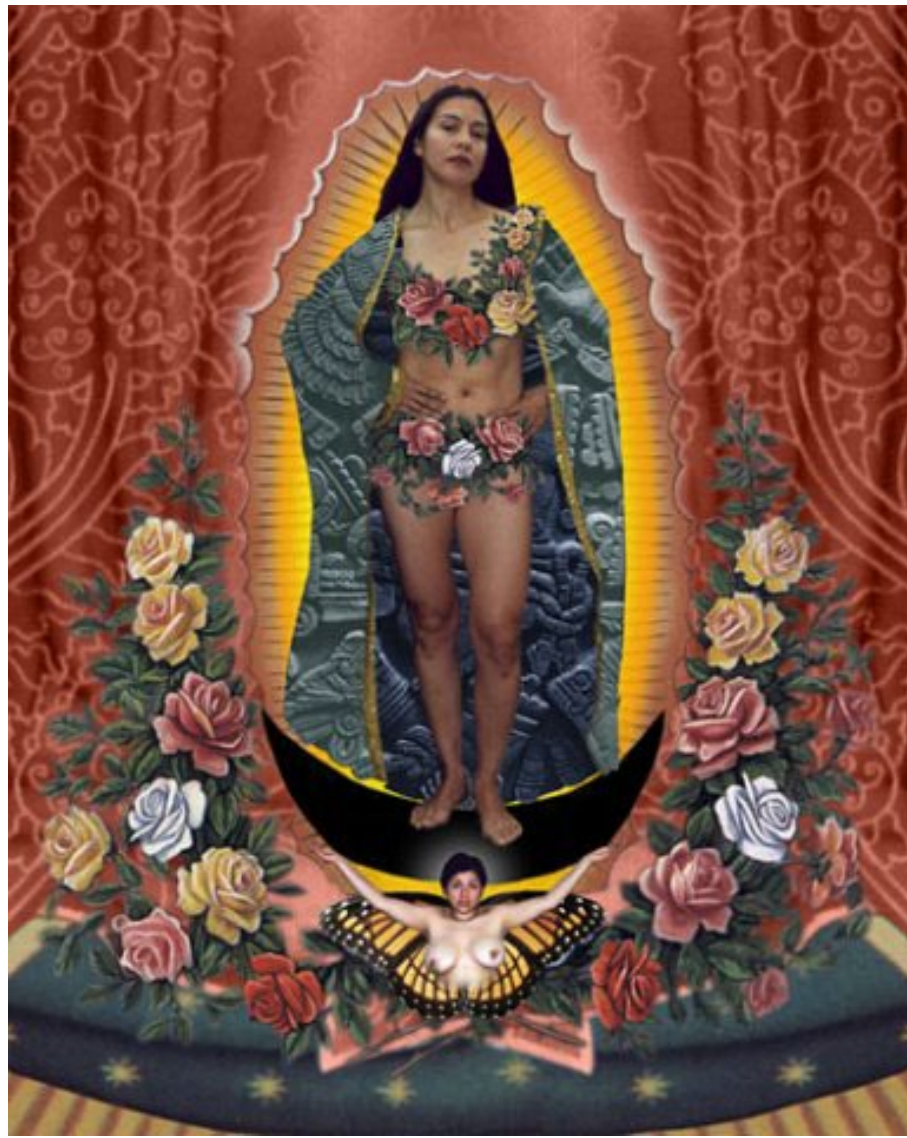


Image: 1999 Our Lady



CELEBRATE
CHRISTMAS
MCC Sydney with
Pitt St Uniting Church

 **CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLS SERVICE**
8pm at Pitt St Uniting Church

 **MCC**
METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCH
SYDNEY



Christmas Day
Wednesday 25 December at 10am

Carols, music, and sacred story.
Love is all around!
Everyone Welcome!
