

Christmas Day

Emmanuel: God's Holy Darkness

Brougham Place Uniting Church

December 25, 2024. 9.00 am

Christmas Day

Preacher: Rev Linda Driver

Liturgical colour: White

Kardlayirdi Karnungga

A Light on the Hill

We acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional carers of the land on which our church is built.

Welcome! As you wait for worship to begin, please turn your phone to silent.

Prelude

Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country

Naa marni?

(Are you all good?)

Marni Ai!

(Good I am)

When we look to the night sky,
we see stars beyond our counting.

Their light brings us joy in the darkness,
and keep us company
as we travel or rest in the deep of night.
They have shone on nations
before our ancestors have lived.
In South Australia,
the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains
travelled by and lived under these stars.
We acknowledge their living history,
the wisdom of the Elders
passed down over centuries,
their knowledge that has guided them
by the celestial map
as they travel over their lands
and the love and generosity with which they have shared
with all whom have come travelling on their land.

Introit

Love Came Down at Christmas. - TIS317. *R. Morris. C. Rossetti.*

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Psalm 97

(verses 1-2, 6, 11-12 The Voice translation)

The Eternal reigns powerful over all;
let the earth sing with joy;
let the distant islands celebrate.

Clouds and deep darkness encircle Him;
righteousness and justice are the bedrock of His rule.

The heavens display His order and perfect justice;
all peoples witness His magnificence.

Light is sown in the just;
as it grows, it brings joy to the pure of heart.

Celebrate the Eternal God, all you who are faithful;
offer thanks to His holy name.

We sing: *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:
Refrain
3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God,
glory in the highest':
Refrain
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesus to thee be glory given;
Word of the father
now in flesh appearing:
Refrain

Lighting of the Christ Candle

It is this moment that we have been waiting for – when we celebrate the Christ child born in the night!

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world'.

On this Christmas Day, we celebrate that Jesus is the light of the world, come to us in the form of a newborn baby.

Jesus, Emmanuel, we celebrate your presence in the light and in the holy darkness.

We sing: *The Light of Christ*

The light of Christ
has come into the world,
the light of Christ
has come into the world. *(repeat)*

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We greet one another

The light of Christ is in you!

And in you!

Choral Anthem

The Light, the Christmas Light - *C. Gibson. Shirley Murray.*

Scripture Reading 1: *Luke 2: 1-7*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

We Sing: *O Little Town of Bethlehem #1*

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 you tonight.

Scripture Reading 2: *Luke 2: 8-20*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

From this shines forth the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

We Sing: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

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. 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.

Together in Song 316. Phillip Brooks 1835-93. Public Domain.

Children's time



We Sing: *Glory to God on High*

1. The lambs were guzzling their nightcap and nuzzling
their mothers on that chilly night.
The day was over for this band of drovers,
they rested by campfire light.
The wind was whispering down from the hills,
the stars shone through indigo sky,
when out of the blue, came a melody true,
it was, "Glory to God on high!"
It was, "Glory to God on high!"
2. They stood in awe at the vision they saw –
hosts of angels all dancing in light.
"Now, don't be scared," a bright messenger said,
"for the Christ-child's been born in the night.
You'll find him laid in a manger of hay,
in swaddling bands tucked up tight,
and if you go down into Bethlehem town,
you'll sing 'Glory to God on high!'
You'll sing 'Glory to God on high!'"
3. These eager folks grabbed their crooks and their cloaks
and raced off to find God in a shed.
They gathered 'round the small newborn they found;
it was just as the angels had said.
A mother nestled her nursling in straw,
while murmuring creatures stood by.
They dropped to their knees, and a song came with ease.
It was "Glory to God on high!"
It was "Glory to God on high!"
4. Rejoice you lowly, the simply is holy,
a stable's where Word became flesh.
So still today God sends my'stries our way,
and grace comes to God's people afresh.
And so we dance with the angels and sing
or fall on our knees with a sigh,
'cause this life comes anew,
and it's born deep and true,
to the glory of God on high.
To the glory of God on high!

Scripture Reading 3: *John 1:1-14 (selected verses)*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of Christ, Light of the World.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection

We Sing: *Blessed Night, Blessed Light*

1. Holy is the light illumining
Holy is Creation's dark
Blessed be the night for birthing
Blessed be the Maker's spark
Holy are the heavens shining
Holy is the inky space
Blessed be the twilight dreaming
Blessed be the gleaming grace
Blessed night, blessed light
Holy One, Holy Christ

Please stand

2. Holy is the word unspoken
Holy the deep mystery
Blessed cloud of our unknowing
Blessed be the sight unseen
Holy is the truth revealing
Holy promise, prophets tell
Blessed angels voices singing
Blessed gift, Emmanuel
Blessed night, blessed light
Holy One, Holy Christ

3. Holy is each heart now beating
Holy every breath we take
Blessed be the soul still weeping
Blessed every healing space
Holy is the night of mourning
Holy is the cross laid bare
Blessed be the morn of rising
Blessed be the hope we bear
Blessed night, blessed light
Holy One, Holy Christ
Blessed night, blessed light
Holy One, Holy Christ

Words by Craig Mitchell, (c) 2024 Music by Allan D. Hoare.
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Christmas Bowl

To read more about The Christmas Bowl, go to:
<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/>

Prayers of the People

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.**

We sing: *Joy to the World*

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns;
let us our songs employ,
while fields and stream, rocks, hills, and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. 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.

Isaac Watts, 1674 – 1748 alt. based on Psalm 98. Public Domain.

Sending Forth and Benediction

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

And we, the people of God, are to be bearers of that light.

As the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard, let us take the good news with us to our community, to our world, to bring messages of hope and love and peace and joy and light in all that we say and do.

May the peace of God go with you,
may the love of God surround you,
may the grace of God live in you,
and flow out to all you meet.

Amen.

Sung Blessing

The Miracle of Christmas. - *A. Till. R. Nairn.*

Extrait

**May you know God's hope and love,
joy and peace, this Christmas!**

This service has been prepared with assistance from:
Michelle Eastwood: L3 Liturgical Resource.
Rev Anne Hewitt: Acknowledgment of Country



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