**Pilgrim Uniting Church**

**12 Flinders Street, Adelaide**

***8.00am MORNING WORSHIP***

**Advent 2C 6th December 2015**

**WELCOME and GREETING**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

We come from hills:   
the ups and downs we face daily; peaks of joy we celebrate sometimes.

We come from plains;   
flat routines that eat up days; fertile valleys of care that nourishes us.

We come from woods:   
confusing labyrinths of everyday obstacles; fragrant spots of rest.

**We come to this sacred space to meet God.**   
Here we renew our hope together. **Draw near to us, hovering Spirit!**

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING** *(words: Rev Christine Gilbert)*

It has been said that God comes to us disguised as our own life. In this truth a door is opened and we see the Divine pulsing in and through all:   
In lilac blossoms on Jacaranda trees, and the bees that hide in fallen blooms threatening summer-bared feet; In the ripening fruit on trees in our yard, and the birds that gulp at ripening flesh leaving behind inedible fruit.   
In summer days filled with play and light, and the sun’s piercing heat that sets skin and bush ablaze. These Advent days remind us that God came to us most fully as Jesus, perfectly disguised in human form. A Heavenly One of earthly flesh – seeming opposites made whole and held in peace for love’s sake. Spirit of Christ, enable us to discover you in the common, accessible things of life. May we not sort, judge and evaluate but receive all as possibilities for encounter with you. We light a candle for hope, for peace, for Reconciling Love that was, and is, and is to come. (*light* *candles*)

**READING**: Malachi 3:1-4

**HYMN**  *(words: Sue Wickham © 2010)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and fill our lives, all dark and fear dispel,  
as once an exiled Israel you found,  
redeemed, restored and set on holy ground.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!   
Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.   
  
O come, O light of Christ, so bright and clear  
and lift our spirits by your advent here.   
In all who gather, show us your face,  
that we may know the warmth of your embrace.   
Rejoice! Rejoice!   
Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

O come, O Wisdom, mind and heart divine,  
help us restore a world we've let decline.  
Enlighten us; your way we would know  
and show us where new seeds of hope to sow.   
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.   
  
O Advent God of hope, joy, love and peace,  
in you we pray our sad divisions cease.  
Bind us as one, a people of grace,  
for at your table each one has a place.   
Rejoice! Rejoice!   
Emmanuel shall come to us and in our hearts will dwell.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

To be here is to be willing to face ourselves with honesty and confidence, trusting that in this safe place we will find portals to our better selves.  
*A silence is kept*  
We bring to mind times when we have not trusted love: we are so hard on ourselves, paralysing our lives with unforgiven failures, anxious about our questions and complexities, unable to face who we are in a given moment.  
*A silence is kept*  
We know there are times when we judge others: offering no space, no grace. It is our own fear that shrinks us.  
*A silence is kept*  
  
**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**   
In truth, we are never condemned - only loved. Through love, we are released to be who we are and to allow others to shine.   
**Thanks be to God.**

**BIBLE READINGS:** Luke 1: 68-79   
 (the child John, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth)   
 Luke 3: 1-6 (the adult John the Baptist)

**REFLECTION**

**HYMN:** TiS 282 The voice of God

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

Prayer is an act of love: love of God; love of self; love of neighbour. We enter a time of prayer to recall, collect and expand our love for the world. These are those who move our hearts in concern today:  
*Prayers are shared* (this is my prayer/ **this is our prayer**)  
In this season of waiting, our God comes to us.   
**Come suddenly, Holy God, into our slow expectations**  
**and fill us with your urgent hopes for justice.**  
In this holy season of delight and wonder, Jesus comes to us.  
**Come suddenly, Companion of the poor,**  
**and challenge us to share in the gospel of welcome for all.**  
In these days of remembering what our lives are to be,   
God’s Spirit comes to us.  
**Come suddenly, Preparer of the way, to take us by the hand**  
**to walk with our sisters and brothers down the path to service.**   
We offer our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:   
**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.**

**HYMN:** TiS 677

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

O God, you invite us to share from the abundance of our lives, so others might be filled with life, with hope, with love, and with grace.    
**Bless these gifts we offer, so they may be used to share the gospel of wholeness and welcome for all.  Amen.**

**COMMUNION**

**THE INVITATION**

**THE NARRATIVE OF THE LAST SUPPER**

**THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

May the God of every mercy be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts to the One who looks with grace upon us.

**Confident of God’s love,**   
**we open our hearts to the One who comes to us.**

Sing glad songs of praise in this moment.

**We join our sisters and brothers in joyful thanksgiving.**

We offer our thanks and praise to you, O God. You alone are holy, God of our hopes, and Jesus is your glory made flesh. He came with tender mercy in his hands, to soften hardened hearts. He came to transform fuller’s soap\* into the waters of baptism.   
As we draw ever closer to Bethlehem, as we prepare to journey with Jesus from birth to new life, we declare that mystery we know as faith:  
**Christ died, preparing the way for salvation;**  
**Christ was raised through the baptism of the resurrection;**  
**Christ will come, Dawn from on high of every time and place.**  
And so we lift our voices, filled with joy, joining them with the glad songs of every place and generation, all creation praising your name:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might**  
**Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**  
**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord**  
**Hosanna in the highest.**

**PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

Pour out your Spirit on us and on these gifts of joy and wonder.  
Though broken, the Bread makes us strong enough to not only cry out for justice, but to sacrifice for it; to not only notice the poor, but to discover what they have to teach us.

Poured out, the hope of the Cup can flow through us, to feed the hungry, to be reconciled to those we fear, to welcome all cast aside by the world.  
May these elements become for us the life of Christ. May the life of Christ grow and flourish within us. Amen. *Communion is shared*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of grace, you renew us at your table with the bread of life and the cup of compassion. May this strengthen us in love and help us to serve you as we serve each other. We pray in the name of Christ. Amen.

**WORDS OF MISSION AND BLESSING**   
*The candles are extinguished.*   
May the whole earth be restored with peace: in us, through us, sometimes despite us. May our lives be signs of God’s love, symbols of hope and carriers of grace. **Amen**.   
God’s peace be with you. **And also with you.**

*The sign of the peace is exchanged*

* Fuller’s soap (Malachi reading): A fuller was someone who cleaned and thickened (to make it "full") freshly-woven (usually woollen) cloth. The process involved **cleaning, bleaching, wetting and beating** the fibres. Fuller's soap was an alkali made from plant ashes which was used to **clean** and **full** new cloth. Fullers required plenty of running water to do their work.
* The resources for this liturgy include prayers from Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon and Rev Christine Gilbert, Thom Shuman, and new words to ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel by Sue Wickham.