

Pilgrim Uniting Church
12 Flinders Street, Adelaide

8.00am MORNING WORSHIP

Advent 4C COCU4C

23 December 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND

WELCOME AND GREETING

COMMUNITY NEWS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We look for an extraordinary sign of hope for our world
but God's sign is most ordinary of all:

A young woman is with child.

We look to power for strength in our world
but God points to the most vulnerable:

She gives birth.

We look far and wide for a key to God's mystery,
but God points us home.

She calls this child Immanuel: God-with-us!

Let us rejoice, and worship our God
in our ordinary, vulnerable lives: God-with-us! *(Susan A. Blain)*

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

We hold our breath,
anticipating new depths of understanding
of your presence with us, O God:
the overturning, upending, uplifting Emmanuel.

We have held our Advent vigil,
preparing new responses to the truth of your love for us:
love made manifest in your word made flesh,
this child of Mary who moves within her,
inspiring her song of justice and joy.

**Move within and among us here, O God,
inspiring our songs of justice and joy. Amen.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.
As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.

Show us the creative power of hope.

Teach us the peace that comes from justice.

Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.

Magnify your love within us.

**Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,
That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

SONG: Love now ascending (Holy, Holy, Holy) *Tune: TIS 132, words: J Burklo*

Holy, holy, holy, love now ascending
Early in the morning our song shall rise to you.
Holy, holy, holy, joy that has no ending
Giving, forgiving, breathing life anew.

Holy, holy, holy, love without a limit
Care that binds creation in sacred unity,
Holy, holy, holy, birthing every minute,
Christ, Love's revealer, sets our spirits free.

Holy, holy, holy, infinite compassion,
Makes a place for every soul in God's eternal reign,
Holy, holy, holy, truth beyond religion,
Love that endures should nothing else remain.

Holy, holy, holy, raise your voice in singing,
Join the cosmic chorus in praise of Love divine,
Holy, holy, holy, God beyond all naming,
Echoes our song in harmony sublime.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess that at times we have remained unmoved
by your presence in our lives, Loving God.

**You have put a song of justice in our hearts
and we have, at times, refused to sing.**

At times, we are the proud:

**too scattered in our own thoughts
to recognise the needs of others.**

At times, we are the powerful:

**too caught up with getting ourselves ahead
to give a thought to those left behind.**

At times, we are the rich,

**too worried about filling ourselves
to remember those who are empty.**

Forgive us, loving God, and restore our voices;

**make us to sing out your promises
with gladness and rejoicing...**

the world waits, listening for our song of hope. *A silence is kept*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE: Modern Magnificat

My soul sings in gratitude. I'm dancing in the mystery of God.

The light of the Holy One is within me
and I am blessed, so truly blessed.

This goes deeper than human thinking.

I am filled with awe at Love whose only condition is to be received.

The gift is not for the proud, for they have no room for it.

The strong and self-sufficient ones don't have this awareness.

But those who know their emptiness can rejoice in Love's fullness.

It's the Love that we are made for, the reason for our being.

It fills our inmost heart space and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.

(Source: John Shelby Spong's website "A New Christianity for A New World" 19 Dec 2007)

Thanks be to God!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God be in our hearts and in our understanding

as we listen now for your Word of peace, joy, hope and love. **Amen.**

READINGS	The despair	Psalm 80: 1-7
	The future hope	Micah 5: 2-5a
	Hope that is coming	Luke 1: 39-55

SONG The Canticle of the Turning

(please join in as you wish)

1. 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?

Refrain

*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.

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your 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.

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.

SERMON

SONG: When out of poverty is born (*Words: Kathy Galloway, Tune: Kingsfold*)
(*The offering will be collected during the singing*)

When out of poverty is born
a dream that will not die,
and landless, weary folk find strength
to stand with heads held high,
it's then we learn from those who wait
to greet the promised day,
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart.
Be blest: prepare the way!'

When people wander far from God,
forget to share their bread,
they find their wealth an empty thing,
their spirits are not fed.

For only just and tender love
the hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

When God took flesh and came to earth,
the world turned upside down,
and in the strength of woman's faith
the Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low,
it pleased her to obey.
Rejoice with Mary in the call,
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Again at this Christmas, O God, we commit ourselves to carry your vulnerable life into the world which you so love, and to join the song of joy which rings down the ages. As those who have been touched by your life we celebrate your coming. (*Dorothy McRae-McMahon*)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The season has been building up,
a crescendo of hope, anticipation and joy.
Soon we will proclaim, "Joy to the world!"
But the whole world is not ready for joy.
There are those places and lives in which joy is utterly absent,
barely remembered, almost given up.
For these places and people, we pray:
Prayers are offered: This is my prayer/**this is our prayer**
Loving God, make this a season of renewal:
renewed hope, restored joy, reignited passion for justice.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

THE INSTITUTION

The Great Thanksgiving

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us lift up our hearts. **We lift them to God.**

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Out of the dried up well called chaos, Divining God,
you brought forth creation gushing with living waters,
that ran through valleys towards oceans, that sprinkled flowers on forest floors,
that gave nourishment to birds, to animals and to those shaped in your image
who were offered your gracious gifts.

But like our ancestors, we have not always chosen to follow your ways.

The prophets came, time and again to draw us back to your ways.

In your love, and with your hope, you chose hope to be embodied in Jesus.

We give thanks for the graciousness of his selfless life.

Rejecting power, his weakness raises the fallen to their feet; refusing to be afraid, he whispers to us to trust as deeply and faithfully as he did; unable to exclude the forgotten, he welcomes his sisters and brothers doing all he could for others, he finally let his executioners untie the thongs of his sandals, so that by his death and risen life, we might be shod in resurrection love, walking home to be with you at last.

With those who rejoice always and again, with those who long to be brought home, we lift our voices to you:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of power and light,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of God
Hosanna in the highest!**

May your Spirit fall upon those of us gathered
and on the elements of bread and juice of the vine.
May the broken bread feed us
and reshape our fragmented lives
Here, may we draw compassion
from the deep wells of the cup of grace,
so we may go forth to serve others. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the welcome we have received at this table be the welcome we extend to others. May the grace we have received at this table be the grace known by all in need. May the wholeness we find in Christ be the wholeness found by those diminished by the struggle.
May your peace prevail in all things, everywhere. Amen.

BENEDICTION

We carry the seeds of the Holy Spirit within us - seeds of peace, justice, compassion and love. As we go from this place, let us be bearers of God's Spirit, participating in the work of salvation. We bear in our lives the steadfast love of God, the compassion of Christ, and the empowerment of the Spirit. Let us go in peace to love and serve our world.

God's peace be with you. **And also with you.** *A sign of peace is shared.*

Please join us for light refreshments in the Lounge at the conclusion of this service.

Canticle of the Turning 556

Verses



1. My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3. From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
 4. Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, And my spir - it sings of the
 work great things in me, And your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant from his throne. The
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp. This



fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
 sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, So from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, You will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; There are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, 'Til the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.