

**Pilgrim Uniting Church
12 Flinders Street, Adelaide
8.00am MORNING WORSHIP**

COCU3A Advent 3A December 15th, 2019

WELCOME, GREETING and COMMUNITY NEWS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF LAND

Opening Sentences

The season of Advent challenges us

to see God's vision of what is yet to be,

to hear God's voice calling anew,

to smell the scent of God in our world.

On this third Sunday of Advent, let us enter into the hope-full joy of God.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,

the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,

and rejoice with joy and singing.

The joy of the Lord be with you all. **And also with you.**

Psalm of the day: Psalm 146:5-10

HYMN TiS 106 Now thank we all our God

The prayers of who we are

We confess that we feel overwhelmed when we see systems, structures and practices that leave people powerless. We affirm again that to follow your way is to seek the way of shalom, that your reign, O God, is found whenever domination is overcome, whenever justice is experienced, and whenever people are released from prejudice and exploitation.

Song: The Kingdom of God (sung twice)

Reading: Isaiah 35: 1-10 (*a vision for the future: the desert blooms, the weak are strong, the blind shall see.....*)

Song: The Kingdom of God (sung twice)

The kingdom of God

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'The Kingdom of God'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system includes the lyrics: 'The kingdom of God is justice and peace and love in the Holy Spirit'. The second system includes the lyrics: 'Come, Lord, and visit us, we grieve at your delay. The'. Below the second system, there is a line of text in a non-Latin script, likely a translation of the lyrics into another language. At the bottom, there is a small block of text: 'Mus. v. Tabak, 92 Ave. No. 4, Pinar del Rio, P.O. Box 200, Tabak, Dominican Republic'.

Reading: Luke 1: 46b-55

Song: The kingdom of God (sung twice)

In this season of waiting and hoping,
let us look for small signs of joy which have been given to us:
**to be aware of how we can always be open to the grace
that can shape us in new ways.**

We open ourselves to be a part of what God is doing in the world
building communities of shalom where all may know love and peace
May your kingdom come, and your will be done, in Christ's name, Amen.

BIBLE READINGS: Matthew 11:2-11

REFLECTION

HYMN When out of poverty is born
(*the offering is collected*)

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!'
(words: Kathy Galloway; tune: Kingsfold)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

The riches of God's gracious love have been entrusted to us. May we share the beauty of God with all who walk with us, in caring service
(FMacnab).

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Prayer is an act of hope: hope for inspiration, hope for communion with one another, hope for consolation and renewal. We enter a time of prayer to collect our hopes for ourselves, for others, for our world.

We pray for those who came to the Land of the Long White Cloud, to listen to tangata whenua, to honour haka, to hike, to scan sky and land for birds, and to walk the amazing volcanos - and who died in this eruption. Tenderly hold those who grieve, those who worry about loved ones who are still missing, and rescue workers, still waiting for an opportunity to return. God of the mountains and of the depths, rest your cloak on your children.

Other prayers are offered (this is my prayer/this is our prayer)

We add our hopes to yours, O God. Wait with us as we seek to understand our part in the well-being of those who wait for love. We pray these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

THE NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May the Creator of the Holy Way be with you.

And also with you.

Do not be afraid, people of God, but lift your hearts to the holy One.

Our hearts will be filled with God's hope and grace.

Children of God, offer songs of goodness to the One who keeps faith forever.

We offer glad praises to the One who comes with justice.

You carved a holy way through chaos, Unveiling God, rejoicing with Word and Spirit as creation trickled down mountains to form rivers, birds built nests in shrubs and trees, bees and butterflies pollinated meadows. These great, and good, things were for those formed in your image so we might be with you in wonder, but we were blinded by sin's sparkling seductions and could not envision the life you offered to us. Patiently, you sent prophets to us, who urged us over and again to return, but we continued to look favourably upon the gifts offered by sin and death. So you emptied your strong heart, becoming weak in the baby born in Bethlehem for us.

With those you have put back on their feet,
with those you knock off our presumptions,
we sing our carols to you:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God who does great things.

All creation shall rejoice, offering you praise.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who keeps your promises.

Hosanna in the highest!

Holiness is the path you walk, Gracious God, and your Child, Jesus, is the One who comes with justice for all your people. When we are worry, world, and work weary, he comes to strengthen our hearts, to stand us back on our feet. When disappointment silences us, he comes to teach us how to

proclaim the good news. When we cannot see our way out of our foolishness, he comes to point us toward salvation's dawn. When we were held captive by sin, he came, giving himself in love, so joy might dance in our hearts, and we could gather bouquets of resurrection gladness as death ran away.

As we draw closer to the joy of his birth,
as we remember his death and resurrection at this feast,
we bear witness to the holy way of faith which is a mystery:

Christ died, trusting that your weakness destroys death;

Christ was raised, telling us of the resurrection he had seen and heard;

Christ will come again, to lead us home by the holy way of God.

Gather your people in these moments, and lead us along the holy way to the Table where the Spirit anoints the bread and the cup and blesses all who have come for this feast. As we are strengthened by the bread, may we show the way toward healing to the imprisoned, the sightless, the sufferers of chronic pain, those who struggle to hear.

As we drink from grace's cup, may we notice what you are doing in our midst so grief and loneliness will disappear, never to be seen again.

And when all time has drawn to a close, when we are gathered with our sisters and brothers at Advent's Table in eternity with you, we will rejoice in your forever, God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF THE BREAD AND WINE *Communion is shared*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this meal we have shared renew us and inspire us to join more hopefully in seeking peace, justice and reconciliation in the world. Amen.

WORDS OF MISSION AND BLESSING *Candles are extinguished*

We have gathered, and we are sent. It is time to take our leave. Time to re-engage with the world beyond this place of gathering. Time to put faith into deeds. May the way of Jesus be our path, and hope be our guide as we walk together in the love of God. **Amen.**

May there be peace within and between us. God's peace be with you.

And also with you! *The sign of the peace is exchanged*

Acknowledgement: Communion liturgy by Thom Shuman