

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

6:00pm 19 December 2021

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome to St Peter's Cathedral as we gather on this final Sunday night before Christmas, the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We know that the telling of the story of the Birth of the Christ Child is coming. Our task is a gentle oneto embrace the waiting.

For many, we approach Christmas hoping to know it a season of joy and hope. For many, perhaps all of us, the joy is woven with the sadnesses of our own lives, the griefs in our families' lives, the struggles of the world in which we live. For some of us, the grief is all we can know at Christmas. And so, at this service of Blue Christmas, we spend time with that grief. We will light candles, we will listen to the music of the cello and the organ, we will ponder words of scripture and we will sing hymns.

As we gather this night, may we know that the God of love who was born as a baby in Bethlehem is with us, may we know that the light of God's love shines in the darkness.

Jenny Wilson, Canon Precentor

Officiant

The Rt Rev'd Chris McLeod, Dean

Reflection

The Rev'd Canon Jenny Wilson

Director of Music

Anthony Hunt

Cellist

Rachel Bruerville

Organist

Anthony Hunt

Hymns: 45, 79

St Peter's Cathedral strives to be a Christ-centred, sacramental, inclusive, thinking, mission-oriented, faith community.

The Cathedral resides on the lands of the Kaurna people whom we acknowledge as the original custodians of the Adelaide Region

St Peter's
nurturing spirit and mind
CATHEDRAL

A note on the wearing of face masks: Under current COVID restrictions, masks are mandatory in all indoor public places, including all places of worship. If you can wear a mask, you must wear a mask.

SA Health advises that there are circumstances where it might not be possible to wear a face mask, including where a person may have obstructed breathing, a serious skin condition of the face, an intellectual disability, or a mental health condition. Masks are also not required where “the nature of the work or education means that clear enunciation (ie speech) or visibility of their mouth is essential. This includes teachers, lecturers, broadcasters or call centre staff.”

When a person is consuming food, drink or medicine, their mask may be removed.

Please stand as the procession enters

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus, you came to call sinners to repentance,

have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, sent to heal those who are burdened in soul,

have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, now seated at the Father’s right hand to intercede for us.

have mercy on us.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

who made heaven and earth.

Glory to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

as in the beginning, so now, and for ever.

Praise the Lord!

Please join in singing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” - a song of people in darkness longing for God’s light. It is not calling us to rejoice in the worldly form of the word, but calling our spirits and souls to reflect the true hope and joy that only God can give.

(masks must be worn while singing)

Hymn: #45 [Veni Emmanuel]

O come, O come, Emmanuel

- 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear:**

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:
3. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:
4. O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:
5. O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

WORDS: John Mason Neale (1818-1866) translated from Latin Advent Antiphons

MUSIC: Melody adapted from a French Missal by Thomas Helmore (1811-1890)

harmonised by Noël Tredinnick (b. 1949), descant by David Iliff (b. 1939)

Reproduced from *Ancient & Modern* Electronic Words Edition, number 45

The Christ Candle (Paschal Candle) is lit

We light this candle, the candle of Christ's light and life, and symbol of God's presence with us even in the darkness. We remember all who gaze into the night sky with longing and with hope, all who listen for the song of the angels. We pray that this light will also kindle a flame of hope in our heavy hearts.

Other candles are lit from the Christ Candle

We light this *candle of memory and loss*, inviting Christ's light into our darkness. We remember those we have loved and lost. We acknowledge our sorrow and we look to the light in hope.

We light this *candle of compassion and community* in honour of the hope and support we have received from family and friends who have walked with us. We thank you, Holy God, for your expression of love through them.

We light this *candle of wisdom* as a prayer for the grace to accept what cannot be changed and to move forward even when our hearts are raging against the pain. May we be at peace in Christ's light.

We light this *candle of faith*, believing that even when we feel most alone, you, O Lord, are with us; even when we deny you and run from you, your love never changes. May our faith be strengthened day by day.

Reflective music by Rachel Bruerville

All are invited to light a candle at any of the stations around the Cathedral. There is no hurry. Let your candle burn as a symbol of light and hope.

The Collects

Father of all, we pray to you for those whom we love but see no longer. Grant them your peace, let light perpetual shine upon them, and in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please sit for the first reading: Isaiah 11:1-9 (Read by The Rev'd Peter Jin)

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Please stand for The Song of Mary: Luke 1:46-55 (said)

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.**

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

Glory to God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

Please sit for the second reading: John 1:1-5, 9-14 (Read by Henry Vaughan)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Reflection the Rev'd Canon Jenny Wilson

Reflective music by Rachel Bruerville.

Please kneel/sit: The Rev'd Peter Jin leads the following prayers sourced from a Blue Christmas liturgy "When Christmas Hurts"

In the spirit of this season
let us now confidently ask our God
for all the good things we need:
For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas
coping with our many different losses.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For our families and friends,
that they may continue to help and support us.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For any person we have loved who has died,
for all the losses we know in our lives,
that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that
faraway hillside.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

For greater understanding of the lessons of love and acceptance
as taught by Jesus your Christ.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

God of great compassion and love,
listen to the prayers of these your people.
Grant to all,
especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas,
the blessing we ask in the name of Jesus.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Support us, Lord, all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes, the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our
work is done. Then, Lord, in your mercy, give us safe lodging, a holy rest, and
peace at the last, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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 for ever. Amen.

Please stand to sing the Hymn (masks must be worn while singing)

Hymn: #79 [*Forest Green*]

O little town of Bethlehem

1. **O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**
2. **O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**
3. **How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**
4. **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
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.**

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

You are invited to listen reflectively to the organ postlude:

Naji Hakim (b. 1955) – *Viens, mon Bien-Aimé*

*Please refrain from conversation until the music is completed;
applause is not normally appropriate during an act of worship*

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