

# Peace



St Aidan's Uniting Church  
Second Sunday in Advent  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## Call to Worship\*

Here we meet.

**Here we encounter.**

**Here we worship God.**

Here we will encounter Christ,  
Peacemaker for all of creation.

Here we will celebrate what it means,  
to be the people of God in this place.

**Here we will give thanks for the Word made Flesh.**

**Here we will experience  
the Deep Peace of the Spirit.**

**Here we will worship God.**

## Acknowledgement of country

We are not the first people to walk this land. We acknowledge the Wadjuk people of the Nyungar Nation who have cared for this place since time immemorial.

**We give thanks for and pray for their Elders past and present.**

## Prayers

As we recognise God's call  
for us to be peacemakers,  
let us confess those times  
we have failed to work for peace.

God of all people,  
we know that peace  
is your gift and hope for the world,  
yet we fail to wage peace  
with the same intensity  
that others would wage war.

When we see opportunities  
to change a situation  
and bring the offer of peace  
yet we turn a blind eye  
and walk away:

**Loving God, forgive us.**

When we try to impose a quick solution  
instead of listening to both sides  
and building a lasting answer:

**Loving God, forgive us.**

When we seek a false peace at any cost  
and so leave people vulnerable  
to the abuse of others:

**Loving God, forgive us.**

Help us, O God,  
to be real peacemakers in your world  
so that all your world may experience your love  
and know your hope.

**Amen.**

### Words of Assurance

God, who loved this world into being,  
loves you and created you in God's own image.  
Know that you are loved and forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Christmas Bowl Story\*

Sara\* fled to Ethiopia from Yemen eight years ago with her four children. She left when she became scared that her young boys would be forced to join the war.

They found their way to the capital Addis Ababa, home to some of the most marginalised refugees, many of whom are women and girls who have survived extreme gender-based violence. With limited ways to earn an income, they are at risk of severe exploitation, with little access to education, medical care or basics like food.

Adding to Sara's burden, one of her sons suffers from scoliosis, and she struggled to find the medical care he needed.

*"I want my children to be happy and have good health, a good education and a better life. I'm tired because I'm trying to face all these problems alone."*

Act for Peace's local partner, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC\_DICAC), supports refugees like Sara. They helped provide her with livelihoods training and medical treatment for her son.

Sara explained, *“I learnt a lot from that training. I learnt the traditional foods of Ethiopia, as well as how to make cookies. I improved my skills, and I made friends with other refugees. I learnt a lot and I feel good about that... If I have a problem, I go to DICAC, they help me, they give me information if I have any problem and they support me a lot.”*

Through the Christmas Bowl, you are helping EOC-DICAC to continue providing medical and psychosocial care and helping to protect girls and women from gender-based violence. Together we are giving people like Sara the chance to make a living and create safer, stronger futures for their families.

### Prayer of Intercession\*

Loving God,

We pray for Sara\* and those in Ethiopia. We pray for strength as they navigate life with very few safety nets. We pray for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's work and are thankful for the training they offer. We are thankful for their support systems, educational opportunities, and continued presence in the lives of Sara and her son. We are thankful for the skills Sara learned, and we pray for opportunities to exercise them.

We pray for the country of Ethiopia. May it know the Peace that comes from you as they host over 800,000 refugees. We pray for the countries of Congo, Somalia, Eritrea and South Sudan. We are thankful for the peace-building work being undertaken by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

May our communities be places of welcome and inclusion, especially for those living below the poverty line. May we be communities that love generously.

Amen.

### Benediction & Blessing\*

Go from this place filled with God's infinite Peace.  
Go now, as people of God.

**We go assured that God is love,  
and God brings Peace into our world.  
We go to love our neighbour  
as ourselves.**

Go now, held in the loving hands  
of God Most High.

Go now, and follow Christ in all things. Go now, in the love and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

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\* From the Christmas Bowl Resources 2023: [Second Sunday in Advent](#)