



Christmas

St Aidan's Uniting Church
2023

Call to Worship

O come, you faithful ones
to glimpse the child in the feeding trough,
the tiny baby
who grew to be an adult
and whose life and ministry
has shaped who we are.

O come to encounter
God-with-us
who proclaimed the good news
that God's love is for all.

Candle

In anticipation of the coming of Christ,
we have lit four candles:
of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Now we light the Christ candle;
for Christ is the light of the world
and no matter what darkness is encountered,
no matter how much the other candles might flicker and fail
the light of Christ will always shine.

Prayer

As we gather in this community,
we bring our thanks, loving God,
for this time to celebrate together.

Amidst our hopes and joys,
we also see our failings
and so while we celebrate with thanksgiving,
we also confess.

We experience God-with-us,
the child in the manger
and all the hope the Messiah engenders:

**We sing to you, O God
with praise and thanksgiving.**

And yet, when we try
to keep the Messiah as a baby
and not hear the challenge of his adult words:
Loving God, forgive us.

We see the inclusion of the shepherds,
the ordinary people of society:

**We sing to you, O God
with praise and thanksgiving.**

Yet we fail to understand
the shepherds as outcasts
or apply that lesson into our lives:

Loving God, forgive us.

We find comfort in this old familiar story
of how God came
to be especially present
in human life:

**We sing to you, O God
with praise and thanksgiving.**

But when we simply celebrate tradition
and not hear the story anew for our time:

Loving God, forgive us.

Help us, God-with-us,
to know we are made in your image
and to walk on the path
that shows all your inclusive love. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God, who came in a new way
in the birth of the child, Jesus,
loves you dearly and helps you start again:
Know then, you are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Loving God,
we pray for all those
for whom the message of Christmas
needs something more to bring it to reality.

The angels sang "peace on earth"
and we pray for
those whose lives are
turned upside down by war,
people for whom "home"
is a place of domestic and family violence,
and those who live in communities
where peace is in short supply.

The shepherds, society's outcasts,
were welcomed to see the Christ-child
and so we pray for today's shepherds:
the homeless,
those who don't have enough to eat,
and people who experience discrimination
because of their race, their ability, their sexuality

or for countless other reasons to which we are often blind.

There must be many others involved
who do not appear in the Christmas story –
the midwives,
fellow travellers on the road,
a random person who gave a kind word or a drink of water.
We also pray for the countless others
who, whether they know it or not,
bring a moment of support or comfort
for those who need to know your love today.
Amen.

Benediction & Blessing

Christmas is not just a story for long ago;
it is a story for today
and for every day.

So, go now knowing God's love goes with you;
go, living your life as a companion of Christ;
go and let the Holy Spirit blow where it will in your live:
on this day and on all days,
know you are loved and blessed
by the one whom we call God.

*Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a
new year filled with God's hope and love.*