



St Aidan's Uniting Church
14th December 2025
Advent 3

Call to Worship

From Christmas Bowl resources

The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus,
streams will flow in dry land,
and the people will sing for joy.

**We gather to worship the God who turns
mourning into dancing,
who gives strength to the weary and
hope to the poor.**

In Christ, joy rises even in the midst of hardship,
and the Spirit renews the face of the earth.

Come with songs, come with prayers,
come with joy.

**For God is here,
and we will rejoice together.**

Candle

This is the hope candle.

It is a candle that shines brightly in darkness,
and shares its light generously.

This is the peace candle.

When the angels sang "peace on earth,"
they sang of how far its light will shine.

This is the joy candle.

Joy is different to happiness;
it is not about self-satisfaction
or experiencing pleasure;
joy can be experienced even in the darkest times.
Joy comes with knowing that what is
does not need to know what will be;
God gives us a different future.

We light the candle of joy.

Prayers

God our Parent,
as we come to a week of joy,
we pause and think about what joy means
and know that we have fallen short
of living with your joy.

When we confuse joy with happiness
looking for cheap fulfilment
or stuffing our lives full of stuff,

**God our Parent,
forgive us and help us start again.**

When we judge others
who experience pain
or depression
because we think they are not
expressing joy:

**God our Parent,
forgive us and help us start again.**

When our ideas of joy
allow us to leave what is wrong
as it is
rather than challenging us
to find new ways
to live out God's reign:

**God our Parent,
forgive us and help us start again.**

When we condemn ourselves
or push away feelings
that we have been taught to view as "negative"
because we see those feelings
as not part of your joy:

**God our Parent,
forgive us and help us start again.**

Embrace us in your arms,
loving God,
Parent God;
help us to start afresh
knowing the joy of your forgiveness.

Amen.

Words of Assurance

God's love is shared for all;
God's joy is knowing this is not all there is;
we can experience grace,
we can be forgiven,
we can be helped to start again.

Know that you are forgiven:
thanks be to God.

Prayer of Intercession

From Christmas Bowl resources

God of life and renewal,
we lift before You the people of Indonesia,
who live with the constant threat of floods,
storms, and rising seas.

We give thanks for their resilience, their courage,
and their determination to adapt.
Bless those who farm the land, who build homes,
who teach their children to hope.

We pray for communities working together
through climate adaptation programs.
Strengthen their hands as they plant, rebuild, and
prepare for tomorrow.
Let their joy be rooted not in fleeting ease, but in
the enduring promise of Your care.

We pray for those already displaced by disaster.
Give them safety, dignity, and support to
rebuild their lives.

We pray for governments and leaders:
stir them to act with urgency and justice in
responding to the climate crisis.

We pray for the church across the world:
may we embody the joy of Advent,
not shallow or sentimental,
but the deep joy that flows when we
act in love and solidarity.

God of the blossoming desert,
make us partners in Your renewing work,
that the wilderness may rejoice and all creation sing.
Through Christ, our joy and salvation.

Amen.

Benediction & Blessing

We are the people of hope,
and God sends us
to gather the scattered
and help heal the broken.

We are the people of peace,
bringing peace and justice
when the world needs reminding
of a different way.

We are the people of joy,
singing 'Joy to the world'
is not just a nice sentiment,
but a call to live with the joy
of knowing that what is, is not the end.

And take that joy,
live that joy,
so the people around you, may too,
experience joy in their lives.

Go knowing that God is with you,
beside you, before you –
God the Parent, Christ, and Spirit.

Amen.