



25 December 2011

Christmas Day

Our Vision: all welcomed and respected

“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”

Minister: Rev Dr Robyn McPhail
Organists: Kato Akau'ola (Kerikeri) Clyde Foster (Kaeo)
Readers: Kay Blunkell (Kerikeri) tba (Kaeo)

One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly.

Andy Rooney

Gather in Jesus' Name



Call to Worship

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,
 which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David,
 a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM,
 AND SEE THIS THING WHICH IS COME TO PASS.

Carol *Angels a'singing*

Candle Lighting

God breaks into human history not in the guise of a celebrity but in the shabby clothing of the poor. With costs rising and the dominance of large scale production, poor Ugandan small farmers are being squeezed, pushing more people into poverty. In Uganda there have been food riots as people expressed their anger at hunger and the lack of sound policies that will make a difference. CWS Supports the Church of Uganda which runs agricultural

training programmes for rural people to improve production but more are needed to feed the whole country. At Christmas we remember that God promises there is enough for everyone.

God of light and darkness, we give you thanks that you came to us as a child born in poverty.

WE LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE TO REMIND OURSELVES
THAT YOU PROVIDE ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE.

Carol WOV228 *O come, all ye faithful* vv.1,3,6-7

[KAE0] Video

Our Story and the Christmas Story

Prayer – Children's Christmas Thanksgiving

Let us thank God
for giving us Jesus.

Let us thank God
for the gifts we discovered this morning –
in our stockings, beside our bed,
or beneath the Christmas tree,
and for the possibility of some yet to be opened!

Let us thank God
for our family – mum, dad, those who care for us,
sisters and brothers, and grandparents,
and our cousins.

God, we pray for those who have no family,
those who live homeless on city streets,
those left lost and alone by war, famine or disease,
those who are refugees, stateless and unwanted.

Let us thank God
that Christmas is about giving, not grabbing,
about sharing, not selfishness.

May this day be for us as warm and happy
as the birth day of Jesus was
for Mary and Joseph,
and for all who gathered
in that stable at Bethlehem.

Bill Bennett, *Listen to the Shepherd Whakarongo ki te Kupu*



Engage

The question of the Jewish Passover, asked by the young if
the family is: “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

“Why is this child different from all other children?” could be the question of Christmas.

If we can't answer this question, writes Prior, we are at the mercy of the department stores and the marketing managers. The nativity scene will inevitably descend into trite excess, and finally, be forgotten.

Reading John 1:1-10,12,14 from *The Message* by Eugene Peterson



The Word was first,
the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.
The Word was God,
in readiness for God from day one.

Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—
came into being without him.
What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

The Life-Light was the real thing:
Every person entering Life
he brings into Light.
He was in the world,
the world was there through him,
and yet the world didn't even notice.
But whoever did notice,
who believed he was who he claimed
and would do what he said,
He made to be their true selves,
their child-of-God selves.

The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes,
the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
true from start to finish.

Something gained and something lost when we use variations on scriptural translation.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

I chose Eugene Peterson's paraphrase today to put alongside that core phrase of Christian faith tradition so that together they could help answer today's question:

“Why is this child different from other children?”

There's a wonderful word hidden in the Greek original that means a lot to me. In the midst of words that are potentially just read as philosophising, there's a word that means “pitch a tent”. What we'll be doing in a couple of days. What goes for many with holidays, rest, recreation, re-creation.

What goes with *not* taking along everything including the kitchen sink.

What enables going to all sorts of different places.

And tents also mean shelter for refugees and in disasters – temporary homes until home can be re-established.

Dwelt among us = pitched a tent among us.

That's incarnation. God setting up camp right here with us.

God has moved into the neighbourhood: that's the difference with this baby.

And being God, being the source of life and all that is, it's not a one-off. God in flesh and blood – aka Jesus, Saviour, Christ, the Lord – keeps being born potentially in every person. God moves into the neighbourhood again and again – every time people make Jesus the shape and substance of their lives.

Our eye might be on a baby, but unlike the majority culture's picture of Christmas, we don't just see the baby. We see the person he becomes, the life he lived and the life he keeps living through us.

Respond

Prayers

Lord's Prayer

The annual Christian World Service Christmas Appeal has the theme of “share the care” this year. We seek to highlight the value of health and healing in the developing world. In a time when many in our land spend so much on themselves and their families, we are challenged to make a generous contribution to those who are disadvantaged. Your gift will connect you with those in need and help provide safe drinking water, food and health care.

Carol [KK] *Super-duper Christmas*

[KAE0] *W0V227 Hark the herald angels/Whakarongo ki te r*

Serve God



Prayer

O God, I reach out to you
as a child reaches for its mother,
and like a child I offer you a special gift.
It's something unique.
In all the history of the universe
there has never been another like it.
It's something of great beauty,
small and fragile, yet amazingly strong.
It has all the colours of the rainbow,
a gift of shimmering contrast,
and I offer it exactly as it is,
without any wrapping,
because you already know it
better than I do.

So here it is, my God,
with all my love and gratitude,
the gift you made,
the gift you cherish,
the gift of me.

Joy Cowley

Blessing

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa, te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki a Ihu Karaiti, me te aroha o te Atua, me te whiwhingatahitanga o te Wairua Tapu, ake tonu atu

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever.

Amen.

NOTICES FOR TODAY – 25 December 2011

Minister: Robyn McPhail 401 7554, Mobile 021 0247 6280

Fax 401 7555, email:robyn@chirmac.co.nz

Church Office: 407 8250 (Message machine)

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Notices: Jenny Phillips 407 8883 email jenny.jane@xtra.co.nz

Prayer Book available to write in before the service if you prefer.

Sermon Notes available as usual today – to have at hand during the service and/or to take home and share

Screen Sheets available in Kerikeri for those who have trouble seeing the screen

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR SUNDAY 1 JANUARY 2012

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

Psalms 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

ROSTERS FOR SUNDAY 1 JANUARY 2012

Leader: Jan Gough

Organists: Diane Paterson (Kerikeri) Clyde Foster (Kaeo)

Readers: Jenny Phillips (Kerikeri) tba (Kaeo)

Door & Tea: Arlene and Lloyd Purdie (Kerikeri)

Marsden Cross Service Tuesday 27 December at 12noon.

If you wish to carpool please meet at St James Church, Kerikeri at 10.00am. Take lunch and swimming gear etc.

HOSPICE STAFF request volunteers to sit with patients during the holidays. Please call Carol 4077799 to arrange suitable times and places.

ALSO looking for a handyman to prepare larger household items for the Hospice Shop. Call above number or call in and see Colleen Gleeson, Shop Manager. Hospice Shop: 4073993.

TAKING THINGS FURTHER: thoughts on Luke 2:1-20 available at <http://onemansweb.org/theology/a-difficult-day-of-the-lord---mark-13-24-37/red-pills-for-christmas---luke-2-1-20.html>