



*The Footscray Baptist Church celebrates the God-given diversity of cultures. We welcome you to join us in the journey of faith, whatever your race, religion, capability, gender or sexuality.*

## *Order of Service - December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

### *Advent 4 - Love*

#### *Acknowledgement of Country (Cheryl)*

For thousands of years Indigenous people have walked  
in this land, on their own country.

Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives.

We acknowledge the Wurrundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and their stewardship  
of this land throughout the ages.

We honour their history, their elders, past, present and emerging and commit to work  
for reconciliation between all people, God and the land.

Welcome everybody to worship!

#### *Welcome & Covid Rules (Cheryl)*

- Today we continue our journey through Advent. The season leading up to Christmas where we wait in hope, peace, joy and love to celebrate again the birth of Christ - God with Us.*

#### *Lighting the Candle - Jesus said 'I Am the Light of the World' (Sunny)*

#### *Call to Worship*

This is the fourth Sunday of Advent, a time to rejoice in the wondrous things that God is doing.

**Our hearts are filled with the hope that is coming into the world.**

The time is fast approaching, not for parties or presents, but for the awareness of God's loving gift to us--the gift of the Christ child.

**Help slow us down, Lord, that we may realize that your gift of love is at the centre of our lives and our celebrations.**

Thanks be to God who again reminds us of God's eternal love.

**Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive your blessed gift. AMEN**

#### *Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem*

#### *Lighting the Advent Wreath*

Today is the third Sunday of Advent – the time when we prepare again for the coming of Jesus. Last week we lit candles symbolising Hope, Peace and Joy. Today we light those candles and another one symbolising Love.

As we come to the end of our Advent pilgrimage  
Grant us the courage to share your love  
Love for the unexpected challenge  
Love for the vulnerable one,  
Love for the presence of God with us. Amen.

*(Based on prayer by Katherine Hawker [www.liturgyoutside.net](http://www.liturgyoutside.net))*

So, we light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love. In so doing we proclaim God's light is coming into the world. **(Sunny to light 4 candles)**

### Opening Prayer

Creator God, you have molded us into your people. As we gather for worship, let us settle into your bosom of love. We wish to be made into your image. We worship to experience your brightness. We gather to become your Body of Believers. Restore us, O God of the heavens; let your face shine upon us, so that we may worship and know you. Amen.

(Prayer from 'Ministry Matters' by Nancy C. Townley)

### Bible Reading: Micah 5:2-5a (NRSV)

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

### Passing the Peace

Shalom my friends  
God's peace my friends  
Go with you now  
And stay with you  
In all you do  
Shalom, shalom.

### Bible Readings: Luke 1:39-56 (NRSV)

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be<sup>[a]</sup> a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever. <sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

### Song: Tell Out My Soul

## *Children's Talk: Wombat Divine*

### *Reflection: Love Come in the Midst of Chaos*

#### *Prayer of Affirmation*

Our souls magnify the Lord,  
and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,  
for he looks with favour upon us  
and sees our unrealized potential.

In the tradition of Mary,  
and all who have said "yes" to God,  
we stand here today,  
to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed;  
we wonder if we are worthy,  
or capable, of following the calling.  
Like Mary, we have our questions  
and we will not be afraid to ask them.  
Like Mary, we will hear and ponder  
the assurance that God will empower us.  
Like Mary we will strive to say -  
"Let it be with us according to your will."

To whatever God is inviting of us  
at this time in our lives,  
and relying on God's grace,  
we say "yes."

(Prayer by Ann Siddall, and posted on the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community website. <http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/>)

### *Song: Christ Be Our Light*

#### *Prayers for the Church & World*

Remembering:

- Those known to us who struggle with their health
- For those who wait to hear about their visas
- Places and people affected by the **Omicron** strain of Covid
- Families, children and community in **Devonport** affected by the tragedy at the school function
- Families of those killed, lost or displaced by the typhoon in the **Philippines**
- The people of **Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Somalia & Sudan** and other places of conflict
- For our neighbours at **Westhaven**
- Doctors, nurses, ambulance officers and welfare workers, all working to provide assistance in this pandemic
- Global Interaction – candidates preparing to work for Global interaction
- Baptist World Aid – Pray for safety and peace during Christmas celebrations around the globe
- Our friends at Sanctuary and the Houses of Hope in Footscray

Silence – in the silence and through our minds and imaginations we bring prayers which words cannot contain:

*(p. 56-7 A Wee Worship Book)*

We continue to pray for the church and the world which needs your love.

Loving God,  
Christmas is nearly here. We eagerly anticipate the time we will spend with loved ones. But for some this is the hardest time of the year.

We pray for those who are sad, bring the joy of Christmas into their lives.

We pray for the sick, give them strength and freshness.

We pray for those without hope and those who are alone, shine the light of your love into their lives.

We pray for refugees and others with no place to call home, may we help them find a quiet, empty room.

We pray for peace throughout the world, show us all how to accept each other so that one day soon we might live in harmony.

Help us all to bring the light of the Christ-child into the lives of others this Christmas and beyond. Amen.

*(Based on a prayer in 'Worship is for Everyone', p.6)*

### *The Lord's Prayer*

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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

### *Offering*

Generous God,

At the time of the year that we ponder your greatest gift to us -the Christ Child.

Take the gifts we offer now and along with them, our compassion, our hearts and our love so all around may know they are loved by you. Amen.

Gifts for Houses of Hope can be placed under the Christmas Tree at this time.

Offerings can be made by using our direct debit facility or placed in plates at entrances and exits of the church

**Footscray Baptist Church**

**BSB: 083 437**

**Account No: 515383063**

### *News & Notices*

- **Today's** service will not be on zoom or live streamed, copies of the service and sermon can be found on our website.
- **Baptist World Aid** – leading up to Christmas you are invited to place donations in marked envelopes in the offering bowl. Marked envelopes are available at the entrance to the church

- **Christmas Arrangements**
  - a) **Services on Christmas Day (Sat 25<sup>th</sup>)** – 9.30am for face-to-face worship
  - b) **Services on Boxing Day (Sun 26<sup>th</sup>)** – 10.30am, Ini will lead service and Grace bring a reflection as I will be on leave
- **Reflective Prayer** –continues this week (Thursday Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm) on zoom for an Advent Series. Please contact Ros or Chery for an invite.
- **Food Donations for Sanctuary** – Christmas Treats, canned chickpeas, red lentils, tuna in oil, oil, kidney beans. Please no cereal as they do not eat cereals.

*Song: O Come All Ye Faithful*

### Blessing

Go in peace, and may God who spoke to an ordinary woman speak in your life,  
 May God who came as a vulnerable child touch you in your vulnerability  
 And may the Spirit join you in songs of joy. Amen.

*(From Prayers for Life's Particular Moments, p. 56)*