



## Second Sunday in Advent, December 8th, 2024

### The Fig Tree Worship Resource



#### **Call to worship & Lighting the Candle**

*Luke 1:68-79 (alt).*

Blessed be God who cares for us and redeems us  
They sent us Jesus, present still amongst us  
They have shown us mercy, and remembered us  
They teach us salvation by forgiving our sin  
They send the light to those who sit in darkness  
and guide us into peace.

*(Light the Hope & Peace candles)*

**Singing: Come, let's walk.** *based on Isaiah 2:5*  
*words: Jennie Gordon © 2019*  
*tune: Twinkle, twinkle, little star*

Come, let's walk the path of light  
through the darkness of the night.  
Now the lost don't walk alone,  
hungry ones are welcomed home.  
Peace in what we do and say,  
peace between us on the way.

#### **Acknowledging**



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional  
Custodians of these unceded land and waters. We  
pay respect to Elders past and present. As First  
and Second Peoples walking together, we commit  
ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening,  
truth telling and seeking justice for all.

#### **Singing - On Jordan's bank TiS 270**

OR: The King of glory comes TiS 279

#### **Prayer**

##### **Prayer of confession**

*(different readers could callout a line each)*

You send the light to us when we are in darkness.  
Shine your light into our lives,  
show us the dusty corners  
and the unjust, and selfish parts of us  
that we hide, even from ourselves.

For the times we forget to be gracious  
For the times we forget to be merciful  
For the times we forget  
to be messengers of peace  
For the times we live on false hope,  
faded dreams and misguided intention.  
For the times we forget  
the joy of your abundant love,  
and live without generosity

Refiner and Redeemer,  
forgive us and grant us peace.  
Let the dawn from on high break upon us  
and bring us to completion,

##### **Prayer of thanksgiving**

We thank God for all those we remember,  
those who have gone before us  
and those who are around us.

*(Pause to name some of these)*

For those who live out the gospel's message  
For those who are committed and dedicated  
to sharing love

For those who are generous in their loving  
For those who share God's grace  
and show your compassion  
May we follow their example,  
may we live from a generous place  
of love and compassion.  
Thanks be to God

#### **Passing the peace**

May the Peace of God dwell with you:  
**and also with you.**



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#### **Listening**

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Read: Malachi 3: 1 – 4,  
Luke 1: 76 - 79 (psalm reading)

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Reflecting - Rev'd Ian Brown**

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“Preparing the way of peace”

I read all sorts of books. Contemporary Australian and International authors. Classics of fiction; Covid lockdown saw me get through *The Count of Monte Christo* and *War and Peace*. But Malachi is not on my list of favourite reads. We really don't know much about the writer. The book's title comes from the Hebrew, *mal'ak*, which means ambassador, angel or messenger. It begins,

“The word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.” –  
then footnote: *by my messenger*.

Malachi slots in as last of the minor prophets in the ordering of most bibles, so just before Matthew. He opens a host of issues and leaves blank the small matters of who and how and when, but it's colourful and sharply targeted imagery;

‘See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, ... indeed, he is coming, says the Lord. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi.’

At 961 Celsius, molten silver is a beautiful and dangerous thing! I used to do a little casting with molten silver. We used an oxy-acetylene torch for the heat and a centrifugal casting machine to force the molten metal into the mould. Letting the melted metal fly always made me hold my breath! Glowing bright red, fluid silver takes a

huge amount of energy. And it's purified by melting. That's hot, dangerous work. Malachi seems to be familiar with the technique. Refining metal is used as a metaphor, a striking image for warning.

The refiner's task was hands on and dangerous. Breaking up ore to be melted in a crucible, the heat has to be raised until the ore melted and began to separate from the dross. It's about cleaning up in preparation for God's long awaited intervention. Like all metaphors, you can't take them too far. The tone of Malachi's images is hot and fiery. Perhaps that fits with John the Baptist's preaching. But Jesus' way has a much stronger emphasis on making a difference; the 'dawn from on high that will give light to those in darkness', through peace.

So, we might not think in terms of preparing by burning away the dross, but serious preparation is the mood of Advent, isn't it? Watching for the signs, cleaning up, preparing. Looking at the times and preparation are still relevant. So is looking at the signs in nature. And when we too easily start to think of who or what we might want to apply this imagery to, take a breath and turn the page to Jesus' words, and be guided by his 'judge not'.

This gospel calls us to live by a different form of justice and for a different set of values. To 'guide our feet in the way of peace'. To practice peace in the way we live our everyday lives. In the turmoil of a warmongering world, competitive to the core, we might do well to take some space, .... to listen better, .... to go in a different direction. What if we could embrace Zechariah's words of promise? The Lord guiding our feet in the way of peace! How can we join the voices that cry out for peaceful means of resolving conflicts? How can we nurture peace in our families and churches and neighbourhoods and between nations? How can we help turn leaders' feet in the ways of peace for spending on aid and building up community rather than piling up weapons.



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On this second Sunday of Advent, hear the good news. Zechariah speaks of John and Jesus and says,

“And you, child,  
will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord  
to prepare his ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in  
the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

He reminds us that there is a task for us here. We also have a role to prepare the way, to open our ears and our lives. To be open now to God's coming in Christ, so we can all walk in the way of peace! Prepare the way!

### ***Singing - O bless the God of Israel***

***TiS 284***

OR: Breathe on me, breath of God TiS 407

### ***Offering***

*(Hold your hands in a bowl shape)*

This day we long to put peace in each other's hands. We bring our offerings of time, skill, money. Take the offerings we make this day, and make them a blessing for others, make them an instrument of peace, of generosity and the sharing of Gospel love. Let our love overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight. Let the bowls of our hearts overflow and may our ways of being, reflect your peace.

### ***Notices***

December 9th is Anti-Corruption Day

December 10th is International Human Rights Day

### ***Prayers for World & Community***

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This day there are many we remember with joy, we appreciate them and pray constantly for them.

We think of those with no-one who attends to them, those who feel alone, unseen or unheard.

Grant us mercy, **grant us peace.**

This day we think of peace. We pray for all the places where this is no peace, sites where warfare is being waged, places of pain, hunger and suffering. We think of other places of conflict, relationships, families, hearts and minds. We think of divisions and disagreements at political and governmental levels across the world. And we think of those who wear the consequences of this, the little people, the vulnerable ones. We pray that all leaders will work for the common good rather than that which is politically expedient.

Grant us mercy, **grant us peace.**

Let us lead the way, show in our own lives the way of peace. Remind us of the places we need to attend to in order to make peace.

Grant us mercy, **grant us peace.**

When we are faced with the busyness of the season, when we are overwhelmed, spend too much, don't have time to notice the little things, help us find the abundance of grace to which we have access. When our patience is low and the needs are high. When we forget to pray for those in pain, or forget to pray for those experiencing absence and lack, when we eat without thinking of the hungry, Remind us.

Grant us mercy, **grant us peace.**

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:



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#### ***The Lord's Prayer***

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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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

#### ***Singing - Make me a channel of your peace*** ***TiS 607***

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OR: Comfort, comfort all my people TiS 647

OR: [carolynshymns.com](http://carolynshymns.com) : [Down By the Jordan](#) (new words to an old tune)

#### ***Blessing***

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A Franciscan Christmas Blessing  
for Justice and Peace.

(This blessing is in the Social Justice Advent Resource 2024)  
<https://victas.uca.org.au/.../10/JIM-Advent-Resource.pdf>  
(Source: "Troubadour: A missionary Magazine," published by  
the Franciscan Missionary Society,  
Liverpool UK: Spring 2005)

May God bless you with discomfort...  
at easy answers, hard hearts,  
half-truths, and superficial relationships.

May God bless you  
so that you may live from deep within your heart  
where God's Spirit dwells.

May God bless you with anger...  
at injustice, oppression,  
and exploitation of people.

May God bless you so that you may  
work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears...  
to shed for those who suffer from pain,  
rejection, starvation and war.

May God bless you so that you  
may reach out your hand  
to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with  
enough foolishness  
to believe that you can make a difference  
in this world, in your neighborhood,  
so that you will courageously try  
what you don't think you can do, but,  
in Jesus Christ  
you'll have all the strength necessary.

May God bless you to fearlessly  
speak out about injustice,  
unjust laws, corrupt politicians,  
unjust and cruel treatment of prisoners,  
and senseless wars, genocides, starvations,  
and poverty that is so pervasive.

May God bless you that you remember  
we are all called  
to continue God's redemptive work  
of love and healing  
in God's place, in and through God's name,  
in God's Spirit, continually creating  
and breathing new life and grace  
into everything and everyone we touch.

Go in Peace.  
Rejoice and be glad.  
THIS, is the day the Lord has made.

***Reflection:*** Rev. Ian Brown  
Wattlebird Ministry Team - Warragul

***Liturgy:*** Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

***Editor:*** Rev. Jennie Gordon  
[revjenniegordon@gmail.com](mailto:revjenniegordon@gmail.com)

