



Order of Service
2nd January 2022

Introit:

Call to Worship:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Let us worship God.

Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves to being people of the covenant walking together as first and second peoples seeking justice for all.

Hymn: 156 (TiS) 'Morning has broken.'

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

The angel's songs still singing in our hearts of the coming of the Christ, O God. Joy brought down through the years and into our time and space.

Thanks be to God.

The light of Christ's life shines into the shadows of our loneliness, opening warm touches of love around us, and making clear the way for new possibilities.

Thanks be to you, O God. In the name of Christ, the Word.

O God, even as our longing hearts reach out towards you, we know that we fall far short of our own hope and your holy hope for us.

You have trusted us with the wonder of your life among us and we betray that trust in ways which are too many to name.

Be gracious to us, O God.

Remind us of our calling, Jesus Christ, and forgive us in our human frailty, we pray.

We grieve the time when we have not been as gracious to others, we regret the times when we have chosen lesser paths while we have seen the vision of your way before us.

Be gracious to us, O God.

Remind us of our calling, Jesus Christ, and forgive us in our human frailty, we pray.

We are sorry when we, as your church, failed to witness to your love for us and for all people to a world which waits and struggles and loses hope.

Be gracious to us, O God.

Remind us of our calling, Jesus Christ, and forgive us in our human frailty, we pray.

Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness:

The word to us in Jesus Christ is never less than grace upon grace.



This is the miracle of the hope which Christ brings.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Doxology: 768 (TiS) 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'

Readings: Jeremiah 31: 7-14, John 1: 10-18

Message: 'The future begins today.'

- The theme may sound like a contradiction because we normally think of the future as that time which is yet to be. We have divided time into three main categories: the past, which is what has happened already, the present is that what is happening now and the future which is yet to be.
- There are those who tried to define the three categories of time like Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the 32nd president of America who said this: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery, and today is a gift – that is why we called it the present." Travis Dultz, a thinker said this: "Yesterday is relative, tomorrow is speculative, and today is electric – that's why we called it current."
- Some may think that I don't have any concept of time at all but what I am referring to, of course is the Incarnation. The Word made flesh and dwelt among us. The intersection between human and the divine, between the temporal and the eternal.
- The birth of the Christ child is the birth of tomorrow today. Whatever it is that we have been hoping for, our fears and anxieties about this life and the life hereafter are met in the birth of Jesus. The history of salvation is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- The Eternal God who created the whole universe at the beginning of time is now living with human beings in the temporal world, transforming and recreating the whole of creation into God's kingdom.
- One of our Christmas carols puts it this way: Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings: mild he lay his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to give us second birth...' (TiS. v.3)
- The birth of the Messiah has broken down the barriers between life and death, between light and darkness, and offered a bridge between heaven and earth.
- The gospel of John opens with the prologue, or the beginning, so rather than start at verse 10, which began our reading for today, let us go back to the beginning.
- The first thirteen verses summarise the relationship between the Word and the world as its rejected Creator, Visitor, Light, and Saviour. John is directing us very quickly from the celebration of the birth of Jesus to its theological meaning.
- This is a challenging theological reflection on how the Word was at the beginning, how the Word was with God, and how the Word is God. John introduces us to the incarnation, how God breaks into human history as a human being, a child who will become the Light for all people. Light that darkness cannot overcome.
- God coming near to us as Word incarnate in a child, he is good news in a person and yet, many still fail to hear, to believe.
- We can easily get ourselves lost in the Christmas story and the excitement of the baby while forgetting the majesty and the power of an almighty God who was there at the beginning creating and now recreating. It is the same God that will be there at the end of time.
- The incarnation then is that, the God of our future is here with us today bringing with him the future to today. The characteristics of that future is with us today. Peace, joy, full of grace and hope.
- In that future which is today because of the birth of Jesus gives light to our darkened world, it is possible to love unconditionally, to forgive without looking for reward, to open our prison doors and set the captives free.



- Our Creator, the Word, is coming among us and is with us in compassion, showing us how to love, how to reconcile to God and others, and ultimately showing us how to be fully human.
- It is good news indeed: The Word became flesh and lived among us and from his fullness, we have received grace upon grace (v14-16), and those who believe becomes children of God.

Hymn: 477 (TiS) 'Jesus calls us here to meet him.'

Holy Communion:

Narrative of the Institution

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

And also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks through your beloved child Jesus, whom you revealed to the whole world as Saviour and Redeemer, the light of all the nations.

And so, we praise you with the faithful of every time and place, joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Make us one with him, one with each other, and one in ministry in the world, until at last we feast with him in your heavenly kingdom.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in your holy church, all honour and glory are yours, Father almighty, now and for ever.
Amen.

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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

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

The breaking of the bread:

Lamb of God:

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.



Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us your peace.

Communion:

Prayer after Communion:

We thank, God our Father, through word and sacrament you have given us your Son who is the true bread of heaven and food of eternal life.

So, strengthen us in your service that our daily living may show our thanks, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: 687 (TiS) 'God gives us a future.'

Notices:

Joys and Concerns:

Offering:

We bring our gifts with glad hearts, O God, inviting you to receive all that we have given in faith. Increase all that we have offered with the wonder of your love, we pray.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession:

Be made flesh within our lives, O Christ. In a world that seem to deny hope, be real within us, that others may see and take heart.

We pray especially for those who are finding it difficult to believe in the birth of God in human flesh.

Come, gentle Jesus, come.

Cry out into the silences of pain, loving God. Call to us when we walk past without seeing what you see.

Speak into the wilderness of hopelessness with your voice of encouragement and truth.

Come, gentle Jesus, come.

Then stand in the midst of our own lives, O God with us. Show us who we are and who we could be. Raise among us your passion for loving and hold before us the dream which you have for all of creation.

We pray this in humble faith, O God.

Amen.

Hymn: 530 (TiS) 'Now let us from this table rise.'

Blessing:

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Recessional: 666 (TiS) 'We are marching in the light of God.'

