



**Order of Service**  
**4<sup>th</sup> December 2022- Advent 2**

**INTROIT Hymn: TiS 158 God has spoken by his prophets**

God has spoken by his prophets,  
spoken his unchanging Word,  
each from age to age proclaiming  
God the one, the righteous Lord.  
In the world's despair and turmoil  
one firm anchor holds us fast:  
God is king, his throne eternal,  
God the first and God the last.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We give thanks for the Yorta Yorta peoples  
who have held protecting the Land  
and living in harmony with it  
as their sacred duty.

May God bless them – now and to eternity.

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**Safe Church**

Shepparton Uniting Church is a safe place for all to worship.

**Advent Candles:**

***Light the first candle***

**Prayer:** Now is the time for us to wake from sleep. Light of the World, we wait for You. Voice in the Darkness, we wait for You. Prepare us to receive You in our world and in our lives in a new way. Amen.

**Second Sunday**

You know what time it is. A voice has cried out from the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord."

It is time to make things ready, in our lives and in our world, for the Word to be flesh again.

It is time to prepare to live as God showed the ancestors of our faith, through the teaching of the prophets and the stories we have passed down until now. Prepare to make all things ready, for Christ to be born in our hearts again, that we might remember who we are, who God intends us to be.

Prepare the way of the Lord.

***Light the second candle***

**Prayer:** God of our ancestors, we repent of where we have gone astray. Help us to listen to the voice that cries out from the wildernesses, the margins of our world. Help us to listen to your voice call us to prepare for justice, your voice that calls us into the hard work of reparation, your voice that calls us to pursue the path of peace. Amen.

Rev Mindi Rev-o -lution



## Call To Worship

This season reshapes itself  
around the long and deep promise  
that is God.

From ancient times  
the echo of the story  
has travelled our world,  
reinventing itself,  
finding a way  
to bring hope  
into every age.

We hear it still,  
whispered through the air,  
in the hope and expectation:  
incarnation,  
**incarnation.**

*Spill the Beans Issue 45 (slightly adapted)*

## Reflective introductory prayer

Advent is a time of waiting,  
a time when life is real  
but not fully made known,  
a time to reflect on the past,  
to learn from the great story,  
to listen and wrestle with the harsh reality  
of life then and now.

Today we remember Rahab,  
a strong, courageous woman,  
who recognises what she needs to do  
to save her family,  
she takes risks and is bold in her words and actions.

Her reward is to be named in the family line of Jesus.  
Jesus, who is our deliverer,  
our shepherd, our guide,  
our peacemaker.

And so, God,  
We give thanks for the story of Rahab,  
for the wonder of humanity  
and the amazing reality  
that you love us so much  
you sent Jesus into the world  
so that we might know you  
and come to follow in the way of Jesus.

Help us to be bold and courageous  
as we share the good news of Jesus,  
shining your light for all to see.



**So be it.**

**Amen.**

Spill the Beans Issue 45 (slightly adapted)

### **Prayer Of Adoration and Confession**

God,  
what an amazing universe you have created,  
a multitude of mysterious galaxies,  
stars and black holes,  
a world of diversity, danger and wonder,  
humans made in your image with free will  
to do whatever they choose.

What a crazy mess it feels like sometimes,  
yet into the craziness you sent Jesus,  
you took a risk and entered into creation  
to show us your great love for us  
and to help us to choose wisely and carefully.

Around the world,  
our brothers and sisters  
are preparing for Christmas,  
remembering the story of Jesus  
coming into the world as a tiny, vulnerable baby.

So many people,  
down through so many centuries,  
involved in his birth story.

Normal men and women,  
some choosing well and others not so well.

Women, like Rahab,  
Elizabeth and Mary,  
each one different and with different choices to make,  
each one open to the you,  
their living God,  
and each one given a different life to live.

God,  
These women played their part in your greater story  
and today we are invited to remember  
and give thanks for them  
and to ask  
what is it that you want us to do  
with the lives we have been given.

So, Lord,  
we seek your forgiveness,  
for the times we have judged others for their choices,  
and for the times we have failed to choose your way.



We seek your forgiveness  
for the times we have judged others  
by their looks, their jobs,  
the company they keep.

We seek your forgiveness  
for the times we have imagined ourselves  
to be better than others.

We seek your forgiveness  
for the times we misinterpret  
the actions or words of others.

We seek your forgiveness  
for the times we fail to act  
or speak or show grace  
or live our part of your story.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Lord, you promise to forgive us  
and accept us back  
into a loving relationship with you,  
help us to receive your forgiveness  
and commit ourselves  
to making better choices in the future.

**Lord, your story is still unfolding today  
in our crazy world  
and we still have a part to play,  
help us to be bold and accept your call  
to take risks and build your kingdom,  
here and now.**

**Amen.**

Spill the Beans Issue 45 (adapted)

### **Hymn: TiS 768 Praise God from whom all blessings flow (to tune known by congregation)**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, you heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

### **Reading: Joshua 2: 1-21**

Rahab and the Spies

2 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

2 The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." 3 So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."



4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. 5 At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” 6 (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) 7 So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, “I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 10 We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

12 “Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”

14 “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.”

15 So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. 16 She said to them, “Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way.”

17 Now the men had said to her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us 18 unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. 19 If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. 20 But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear.”

21 “Agreed,” she replied. “Let it be as you say.” So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

### **Reading: Luke 1: 39-45 NIV**

#### **Mary Visits Elizabeth**

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

#### **Reflection:**

It is clear that Rahab’s image of God is influenced by the stories she has heard of how the Hebrew tribe of people were taking over the land after their escape from Egypt.

But the retelling of Rahab’s story also influences how we approach her actions.

- If you have heard the story of Rahab before, what do you remember from those retellings?

- How does the job that Rahab held make a difference to how you understand the story?
- What can we learn today from people who are in vulnerable situations?

Rahab has prophetic qualities; she saw what was going to come to pass.

Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, also had prophetic qualities. She, like Rahab, could read the signs. When she met Mary, she felt John leap with joy within her and she understood that Mary too had a great hope within her.

- What are the signs of hope that you see around us at the moment?
- What gives you a sense of joy and excitement in your life?
- How can you be a sign of hope in your community in this time and place?

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### **Hymn: TIS 650 Brother Sister let me Serve you**

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the nighttime of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;



let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

## **Announcements**

### **Offering**

#### **Prayer Of Dedication (pray together:)**

**Generous God,  
you created life  
in all its wonderful diversity,  
in your image you created humanity,  
Jesus came into the world  
to reveal the extent of your love for us  
and to offer us a full relationship with you.**

**Today, we come before you  
in humble adoration  
and offer our gifts to you.  
Use the money we bring  
to continue to build your kingdom,  
here and now.**

**Receive our service,  
take and use our talents and time,  
as you guide us to continue  
building your kingdom,  
here and now.  
Amen.**

#### **Prayers For Others and Ourselves**

Loving God,  
we thank you that we can gather here today  
to worship you in a safe, secure place.

We pray for our brothers and sisters  
who are not able to gather together,  
who have no building to meet in  
or who are not safe to gather,  
may their faith grow stronger  
as they meet where and when they can.

God,  
we thank you for our family and friends,  
for people who love and care for us.

We pray for our brothers and sisters  
who have had to leave family and friends behind,  
for all who feel lonely,  
may they know your loving arms around them.



God of wonder,  
we thank you for the beautiful  
and diverse universe you have created  
for us to enjoy and look after.

We pray that humanity would  
respect and honour all creation,  
that we would do all we can  
to protect and bring healing  
to our fractured world.

God,  
we thank you for the people  
who work for peace and justice in our world.

We pray for all who are affected by war and injustice,  
may they know that you walk  
with them and care for them.

God,  
we thank you for Jesus, your son,  
sent into the world to reveal your love for us all.

We pray for all who are  
seeking you today around the world,  
for all who are reaching out to you,  
may they find what they seek  
and a community to help them grow in faith.

God,  
we thank you that you know  
our deepest desires before we do.

We pray, in a time of silence  
for the people and places close to our hearts.

*Pause*

Thank you, Loving God,  
for your deep love for all creation,  
for your desire to know us and reach out to us.

May we come to know you more deeply day by day.  
May we serve you in word and action  
wherever and whenever we can.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

**Amen.**

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**Communion**



The Uniting Church in Australia  
**SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH**



The communion liturgy will be a little different today: your responses will be in your heart. We will finish our service with a sending prayer and then a hymn.

### **Sending**

We have remembered God.  
We have shared the story of God.  
We have sung praises to God.  
We have enjoyed the feast from the table of God  
Go, and share God's love,  
and feed others.  
Go, and quench the thirst of others,  
offering the living waters of God's love  
and practice God's forgiveness.

May the peace of God be with you all.  
Amen.

### **Hymn: TIS 531 Sent forth by God's Blessing**

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from his table take leave.  
The service is ended, may now be extended  
the fruits of his service in all who believe.  
The seed of the teaching, our hungry souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for all humankind.  
God's grace shall incite us, and love shall unite us  
to work for God's kingdom and answer the call.

2 With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,  
the tasks of our everyday life we will face,  
our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
embracing God's as neighbours all those of each race.  
Our feast that has fed us, one light that has led us,  
unite us as one in this life that we share.  
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
give honour to Christ and his name that we bear.

At end of service sheet this info about Spill the Beans:



The Uniting Church in Australia  
**SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH**

We invite you to buy only one issue per congregation and then copy the material as much as you wish for as many are involved in your worship and learning

