



## The Gospel of the Coming God

John 1.6-8,23,26b-28 *The voice of one crying out in the wilderness*

(The Lord says,) I will lead the blind  
by a road they do not know,  
***by the paths they have not known***  
***I will guide them.***

I will turn the darkness before them into light,  
***the rough places into level ground.***  
These are the things I will do  
***and I will not forsake.***

*Isaiah 42.16*

*The third Advent Candle is lit*

## Prayer of invocation

Hymn 437 Blessed Jesus, at your word

## *The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching*

## The Testimony of Scripture

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet  
***and a light to our path.***

Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11 *They shall build up the ancient ruins*

Psalms 126 *May those who sow in tears reap with joy*

*(Read responsively):*

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
***we were like those who dream.***
- 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
***and our tongue with shouts of joy;***  
then it was said among the nations,  
***'The Lord has done great things for them.'***
- 3 The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.

- 4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
***like the watercourses in the Negeb.***
- 5 May those who sow in tears  
***reap with shouts of joy.***
- 6 Those who go out weeping,  
***bearing the seed for sowing,***  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
***carrying their sheaves.***

This is the word of the Lord.  
***Thanks be to God.***

## The Preaching of the Word

*The sermon text will normally be available  
after worship and online*

*A 'sermon of stillness' – a moment for quiet reflection – usually follows the preaching*

## Prayer of Confession

The musical notation is arranged in three systems, each with a Cantor part (treble clef, key of D major, 4/4 time) and a Congregation part (treble clef, key of D major, 4/4 time). The lyrics are written below the notes.

**System 1:**  
Cantor: Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, el - ei - son.  
Congregation: Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, el - ei - son.

**System 2:**  
Cantor: Chris-te, Chris-te, Chris-te el - ei - son.  
Congregation: Chris-te, Chris-te, Chris-te el - ei - son.

**System 3:**  
Cantor: Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, el - ei - son.  
Congregation: Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, Kyr-i - e, el - ei - son.

*Cantor sings first, with congregation repeating:*

***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison;  
Christe, Christe, Christe eleison;  
Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.***

*(= "Lord/Christ have mercy")*

## Declaration of Forgiveness

*(Please stand if you are able)*

...hear, then, Christ's word of grace to us:  
Your sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Doxology – Hymn 173** My soul gives glory to the Lord

### **The Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
***And also with you.***

### **The Nicene Creed**

***We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.***

***He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father,  
who with the Father and the Son  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.***

***We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

### **Prayers of the People**

*(Names for inclusion in the prayers may be recorded in the book in the narthex)*

### ***The Visible Word: Eucharist***

**Hymn 503** Robe yourself, my soul, vv1, 2, 6

*(If you are able, please remain standing until after the Lord's Prayer)*

### **The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

***And also with you.***

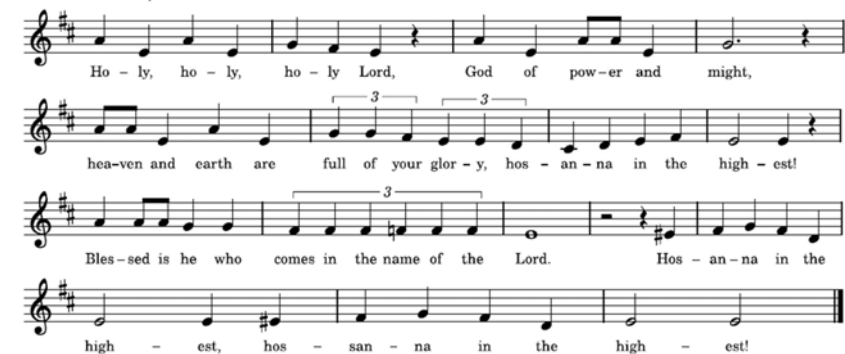
Lift up your hearts.

***We lift them to the Lord.***

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

*(The prayer continues...)*



***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!  
Hosanna in the highest!***

*(The prayer continues...)*

## 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 people sit)*

## The Breaking of the Bread

...The gifts of God for the people of God....

...Let us receive what we are,  
let us become what we receive  
***The body of Christ***

## The Communion

*The Uniting Church recognises this Table as the Lord's and, so, open to all who would normally commune in their home congregations.*

**GATHERING:** *We'll gather in a circle around the table for the distribution of the elements; please wait until all have received and the prayer is said before returning to your seats.*

*If you can't stand or walk to the front but would like to receive communion, please raise your hand if the celebrant has not already noticed you.*

## Offering

*Many members now make their offering by electronic transfer; the plate will be passed for those who prefer to make cash/envelope offerings. The prayer dedicating the offerings 'captures' the full range of gifts.*

## Notices

## *The Sending Forth of the People of God*

Hymn 268 Joy to the world

## Word of Mission and Blessing

**Postlude** GF Handel, *Messiah*, *Aria: "The people that walked in darkness"*

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We'd love to hear your feedback on the service.

Our email address is:

[enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au)

Our website is:

<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

## TODAY'S READINGS

*Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and be ready for a brief conversation about them before we hear them read!*

### **Luke 1:46-55**

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.

What do you  
think this

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;

Who are these rich,  
and hungry? Is this  
good news for  
- -

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 for ever.'

What was this  
promise?

### PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

#### **John Geddie & John Paton, Christian pioneers**

##### **John Geddie**

John and Charlotte Geddie laid the foundations of Presbyterian mission work in the New Hebrides. From 1848 to 1872 they pioneered Christian missions on the small island of Aneityum where they set the patterns for evangelism, church planting and growth, education, and health. John was born in Banff, Scotland on 9 April 1815. In 1816 the family moved to Pictou, Nova Scotia, Canada. The Presbyterian Church licensed him as a minister in May 1837 and ordained him in 1838.

He married Charlotte Leonora McDonald in September 1839. During his seven years of ministry on Prince Edward Island, Geddie promoted overseas missions and pressed the Church Assembly to establish an overseas missions committee. The Church chose the New Hebrides as its mission field, and in 1846 it appointed John Geddie as its first missionary.

After six months orientation in Samoa, the Geddies arrived at Anelgauhat, Aneityum on 29 July 1848 aboard the LMS mission ship John Williams. They joined several Samoan and Raratongan teachers who had worked there since 1841. They befriended the local people and learnt the language. The women warmly received Charlotte and her growing number of children. Two of their eight children later married New Hebrides missionaries. Women encouraged their men to attend worship, and to participate in literacy, numeracy, Bible, health, hygiene, agriculture, and other courses. Gradually attendance at worship increased. Village schools were established and staffed by Polynesian and Aneityumese teachers. Geddie and colleague John Inglis established a teacher-catechist training institution. The teachers taught literacy and numeracy and conducted daily village prayer, worship and Bible study. Charlotte used her medical knowledge to help the sick. She and John visited the schools and prepared readers and other literature printed on their Mission Press. John encouraged the processing of copra and arrowroot to enable the local Church to become self-supporting. He worked with local Christians to translate the New Testament into Aneityumese. After John's departure in 1872, Inglis completed the translation of the Old Testament.

[contd ...]



## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### John Geddie & John Paton, Christian pioneers [... contd]

For over two decades, Geddie had helped new missionaries from the Pacific Islands, Scotland, Nova Scotia and Victoria to settle in the islands and to develop their own mission programmes. After twenty-four years, on 4 June 1872, Geddie and his missionary colleagues met on Aneityum to constitute the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission Synod. The next day Geddie suffered a stroke. He returned to Geelong where he died on 14 December 1872 aged 57. He was buried in the Eastern Cemetery. Charlotte established mission support groups in churches in Geelong and Melbourne, and later was a foundation member of the Victorian Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union. She died in Malvern, Victoria, on New Year's Day 1916, aged 94.

During Geddie's pioneering ministry, many communities accepted the Christian faith. Solid foundations were laid for locally led Church planting and growth, support, and leadership. John Geddie's epitaph on the pulpit at Aneityum stated, *"When he landed in 1848 there were no Christians here and when he left in 1872 there were no heathens"*.

#### John Paton



John Gibson Paton was a passionate evangelist, Presbyterian Church leader and advocate for justice. A compelling speaker, he raised the profile of mission work in Australasia and the British Isles. Born on 24 May 1824 in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, he worked at various trades before studying theology at the Free Church Normal Seminary. For ten years he was an evangelist in the Glasgow City Mission. In spare time he studied at the University of Glasgow, the

Andersonian (Medical) College and the Reformed Presbyterian Divinity Hall. He was licensed to preach on 1 December 1857 and on 23 March 1858 ordained as a minister and missionary to the southern New Hebrides.

His stay at Port Resolution on Tanna from November 1858 was brief and tragic. In March 1859 his wife Mary Ann (Robson), their infant son and a missionary colleague died of malaria and he was very ill. Tannese opposition to Christianity increased when a measles epidemic caused the deaths of a third of the population and three devastating hurricanes left many starving. In 1861 intertribal fighting broke out and the sickly Paton and colleague Matheson hastily withdrew to Aneityum.

[contd ...]

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### John Geddie & John Paton, Christian pioneers [... contd]

These sad and painful experiences had positive results. An excellent propagandist and story-teller, Paton toured the Australian colonial Churches with graphic descriptions of his experiences in mission work. Over the next forty years he raised thousands of pounds and obtained the permanent support of Sabbath schools and congregations for the mission and its ship *Dayspring*. When he went to Scotland in 1864 to recruit more missionaries, he was inducted as moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. There he married Margaret Whitecross. In 1865 he stirred up missionary enthusiasm in the newly united Presbyterian Church of Victoria and was appointed as its first missionary to the very small island of Aniwa. Between 1865 and 1872 Aniwa became almost entirely Christian. Margaret's illness caused their withdrawal in 1872 but John continued regular visits for another thirty years and in 1899 presented them with the complete New Testament in Aniwan.

Paton rapidly became an international figure. From 1881 as Presbyterian Mission Agent, and as Moderator of the Victorian Church in 1886, he continued mission promotion and toured extensively in the Colonies and Britain. He was a political activist, making vigorous representations to Colonial premiers, British Prime Ministers and American Presidents. He opposed the "Melanesian slave trade", and its recruiting irregularities; He opposed the expansion of French colonial interests and begged Britain to annex the New Hebrides, the Solomons and New Guinea and to ban arms and liquor for "the native races". In 1891 Edinburgh University conferred on him an honorary Doctor of Divinity.

In 1891 the interdenominational 'John G. Paton Fund' was founded in Britain to support some New Hebrides missionaries including John's son Frank H L Paton at Lenakel. John's wife Margaret Whitecross Paton was also involved mission support and the PWMU. She died in May 1905. John died in Melbourne on 28 January 1907. Both rest in Boroondara cemetery after lifetimes of dedicated service.

*Contributed by Malcolm Campbell*

## **The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

[www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle)

### **China (Hong Kong SAR)**

Hong Kong was a British protectorate from 1841 when it was ceded to the United Kingdom by China. In 1997, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories on the mainland were returned to Chinese sovereignty, and became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. In this agreement, China promised that, under its "one country, two systems" formula, Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign and defence affairs for a period of 50 years. Hong Kong has a thriving economy, based on international trade. It contributes to, and benefits from China's rapidly developing economy. The churches are a minority, but very active in social work and evangelism. Many churches and Christian organizations have significant links with partner churches and agencies in mainland China. There has been renewed commitment to the issue of poverty and the area of education in Hong Kong. About half of the Protestant churches belong to the Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Holiness traditions. For several years now there has been a Metropolitanate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox) in Hong Kong, which covers South East Asia. As an international city, Hong Kong has also many foreign language congregations. The Hong Kong Christian Council is the ecumenical body.

### **China (People's Republic of)**

China traces its roots as a political and cultural entity back to around 2000 BCE. From the 14th to the 17th century, it was the most advanced civilization on earth. Colonial and civil wars weakened China during the 19th century. In 1911, nationalists instituted the republic. In 1949, communist forces defeated the nationalists and established the People's Republic of China. Today, China is rapidly developing as a regional power in Asia, and an emerging power on the world scene. The traditional religions of China are Taoism and Buddhism. Christianity has long been a foreign religion with few followers. Under communist rule China became officially an atheist country. As of 1979, churches and other religious groups were gradually given more space. Delegations of the Protestant churches travelled abroad to re-establish contact with ecumenical partners. In 1948, four Chinese churches were among the founding members of the WCC. They withdrew at the time of the Korean war. Membership was resumed in 1991, by the China Christian Council. Christianity has grown and continues to grow, as do other religions, e.g. Buddhism. Estimates vary widely, from about 22 million Christians (Protestants and Catholics) to over 100 million (i.e. from 1.5 percent to 8.5 percent). The latter would include over 40 million charismatics in house churches, 14 million in unregistered house churches, five million "New Birth" movement, etc. (World Christian Database, 2005); the WCD estimate of Three-Self Christians matches the figure of 16 million of the China Christian Council. Chinese research institutions put the total number at about 65 million. There is a small minority of about 60,000 Chinese Orthodox Christians.

Third Sunday of Advent



Ben Ullaghan/Act for Peace

### Finding Joy in resilience

Twelve long years have passed since Rima\* and her family fled their beloved home in Syria as the devastating civil war unfolded. Forced to leave everything behind, they sought refuge in Jordan, carrying with them only the essentials. With your kind gift to the Christmas Bowl, you can support Act for Peace's local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, continue to provide vital food packages, hygiene kits, and the long-term support that refugees need to rebuild their lives. **Please give today.**

\*Name changed for safety reasons



Christmas Bowl

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: [christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au](http://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au)

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### Christmas Day

#### January Services

Jan 7

Jan 14

Jan 21

### 9.30am service

Rob Gotch

P Blackwood/Robert Gribben

Peter Blackwood

## NOTICES

**Auburn Uniting Church, 81 Oxley Rd, Hawthorn**  
[auburnuc.org.au](http://auburnuc.org.au)



**SERVICE OF  
CAROLS AND READINGS**  
**With choir and organ**

**Sunday 24th December**  
**5pm – 6pm**

Followed by Mince Pies and Tea/Coffee  
 All welcome

### People to commemorate this week

John Geddie & John Paton, Christian pioneers

### Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China

### LECTIONARY READINGS 24 DECEMBER 2023

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Luke 1:46b-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne

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The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist is responsible for Hotham Mission.

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