

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
Advent 2C | December 8, 2024

The God who visits us

Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
Today's service is being live-streamed for the participation of those
who can't join us physically today.

A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

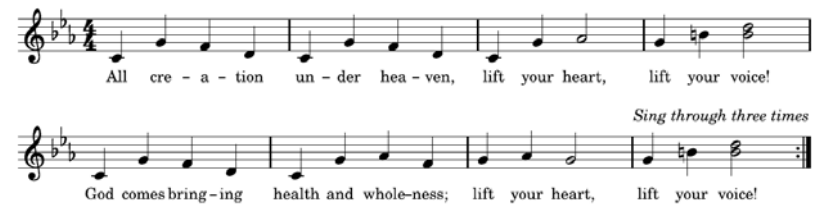
Prelude

∞ Advent ∞

Sung Processional

If you are able, please stand when the cantor sings the first line, and sing as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space:

(This song used to be a round/canon. It isn't anymore!)



***All creation under heaven,
lift your heart, lift your voice!
God comes bringing health and wholeness,
lift your heart, lift your voice! (repeat...)***

The Promises of God

Malachi 3.1-4 *I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me
(and then responsively:)*

The LORD says to his servant,
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;

***I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."***

Isaiah 49.6

Come to us, Lord, as light for our world,
Come to us, O God.

The second Advent Candle is lit

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 472 Father of mercy, God of consolation

With the Children

✻ Christmas to Epiphany ✻

The Testimony of Scripture

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

Luke 1.68-79 *The dawn from on high will break upon us...*

Luke 3.1-6 *...and all flesh shall see the salvation of God*

This is the gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Preaching of the Word

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

✻ Lent ✻

Prayer of Confession

(Each line is sung first by the minister/cantor and then repeated by the congregation)



✻ Easter ✻

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 768[(iii), through once only)

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

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The Peace

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

Affirmation of faith: God is with us

**We are not alone,
we live in God's world.**

**We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

***We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.***

***In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.***

*The United Church of Canada,
General Council 1968, alt. 1998*

Prayers of the People

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

✠ Pentecost: Community ✠

Hymn 509 Come now, everlasting Spirit

(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...)



(The prayer continues...)

The Lord's Prayer

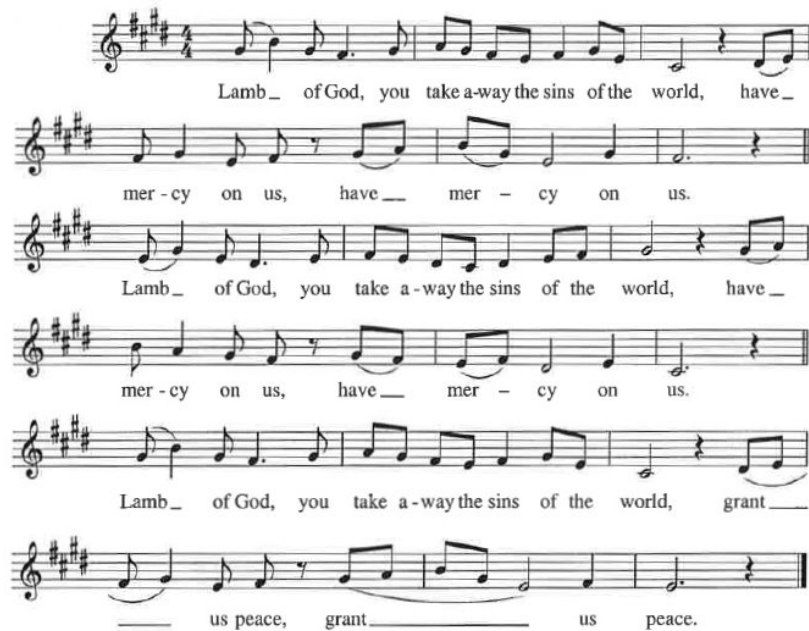
***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***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.

✠ Pentecost: Mission ✠

Offering

(We remain seated as the offering is brought forward)

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 272 Come thou long expected Jesus

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude

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

Our email address is:

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

Our website is:

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

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

Cambodia

During the sixth century, people known as the Khmers established an empire that lasted for several centuries. During the colonial period the area was ruled by the French. Cambodia obtained its independence in 1953, though was heavily affected by the war in neighbouring Vietnam and by a communist insurgency movement known as the Khmer Rouge, who captured the capital in 1975. Due to this, 75 percent of all teaching staff and 96 percent of university students were killed. It is estimated that at least 3 million people died during the four years of the regime. The Khmer Rouge attempted to eradicate all religion: some 90 percent of Buddhist monks and nuns perished and an unknown number of Christians were killed. The Khmer Rouge declined rapidly in the mid-1990s and a coalition government was formed after national elections in 1998, which brought renewed political stability. Christianity came to Cambodia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several Independent churches were established during the twentieth century, and the New Apostolic Church is currently the largest Christian denomination in Cambodia. There are no WCC member churches based in this country.

Laos

Laos is entirely landlocked on the southern Asia peninsula. Myanmar and China lie to the north, with Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south and Thailand to the west. Laos was first united under one government in the fourteenth century. In 1713 internal conflict led to the division of the country into three kingdoms, leaving the country vulnerable to aggression. After a long struggle to maintain independence, Laos became a French colony in 1893. Attempts were made to regain independence following the formation of the Communist Party of Indochina. This party led groups in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in their struggles for self-determination. Laos became a constitutional monarchy in 1947, and in 1949 it was granted limited self-government within the French Union. Lao independence was recognized by the Geneva Agreement on Indochina in 1954. Despite this agreement the Laotian government remained unstable for years. Laos is one of the least developed countries in southeast Asia. Currently, there are no railroads and just over 2'000km of paved highways. This lack of infrastructure makes disaster relief difficult, particularly as flooding is common. Christianity in Laos began with Italian Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century. All the major Catholic mission centres are located on the border with Thailand. Beginning in 1950, the Catholic mission shifted its focus to mountain peoples. The first Protestant missionaries - Swiss Brethren who translated the Bible into the vernacular - arrived in 1902. Overseas Missionary Fellowship workers strengthened their work after 1957. Of the Protestant groups, the most successful is the Gospel Church of Laos. During the 1970s the communist government took over all Catholic schools, orphanages, residences and churches, and eliminated religious education. All foreign missionaries were forced to leave. Though the current law allows freedom of religion, the government controls all public meetings and requires that they be registered.

Hotham Mission Christmas Appeal

As we are fast approaching Christmas and the end of the year, the team at Hotham Mission would like to share some of the work we have been doing during 2024.

Thanks to the hard work of staff and our many volunteers, HM's work with the local community is still running smoothly, despite an office relocation and significant staff changes. Our regular programming throughout the year includes

- supporting 30 kids from Prep - Year 6 through our Monday and Friday Homework Clubs The program is so successful and popular we had to cap attendance and have a waitlist..
- a weekly Young Women's program (15 - 25 year olds) and an additional monthly book club, supported by the City of Melbourne Library staff.
- A Food Program which supports 100 local households per week through schools and other local organisations with essential food items in times of need, and some assistance to over 100 students per week through the school breakfast programs of Mount Alexander College and University High.
- the Renshaw material aid program, which assisted around 100 local High School students to access essential study materials like books and electronic devices.
- Our partnership with the Uniting - Asylum Seeker Project to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers

As we approach Christmas and the end of the year we will be providing over 100 Christmas Boxes to local people who are in need. And celebrating the end of the school year with the kids who we regularly work with, across all our programs. And in January 2025 we will have some holiday programs, prior to the start of regular programming for the year.

If you are interested in assisting Hotham Mission with a tax-deductible donation, you can do so via Give Now

(<https://www.givenow.com.au/ucahothammission>), and if you are

interested in volunteering or would like to know more, please contact the team on Ph: (03) 9326 8245 or E: programs@hothammission.org.au

From the team at Hotham Mission, we thank you for your ongoing interest and support and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

NOTICES

SYNOD PEACE PROPOSAL

The Justice and International Mission unit of the VicTas Synod is preparing a proposal on the church's commitment to peace to go the 2025 Synod. If you would like to join a small group of MtE members to discuss this with Mark Zirnsak at the CTM on December 20, 4pm, speak to Craig for more information.

JIM SURVEY

The Justice and International Mission unit of the VicTas Synod is conducting a survey of interested UCA members, to assist it in prioritizing its work for the next year; copies of the survey will be available on the tables in the morning tea area after worship – please fill one in if it interests you, and leave it on the table for collection.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Church Council	Dec 3 (online)
Congregational meeting after worship	Dec 15
Peace conversation with the MIM unit (see above)	Dec 20, 4pm NEW
Advent Cycle of Carols and Readings	Dec 22 (morning worship) NEW
Quarterly Conversation	Feb 7 in DML
Lenten Studies (book details online soon)	Weekly from March 5 / 7

People to commemorate this week

Richard Baxter, faithful servant

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

Lectionary Readings | 15 December 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

A Parish Mission of the UCA, MtE is responsible for Hotham Mission

Contact: Rev Dr Craig Thompson, 0408 389 751

minister@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

www.hothammission.org.au

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