



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Order of Service 25 December 2024



God with us

a simple celebration for Christmas Day

WELCOME TO KNOX

Knox Church is a congregation within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. We aim to create Christian community in which people of all ages, sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic situations are included as equally valued participants in our congregational life. We cherish our diversity, offering a safe place of belonging to any who wish to explore their beliefs in an atmosphere promoting discussion, the development of healthy relationships and spiritual growth. We strive to be open to dialogue and shared experiences with people of other faiths. We enjoy worshipping the God made known in Jesus, endeavouring to do so in ways that are relevant to our daily lives, respect the integrity of creation, and make a positive difference to our wider world.

A loop system for hearing aids operates at Knox.

Toilets are available through the door on the South side of the sanctuary.

Please don't leave any items unattended around the church;
they may cause alarm.

We take care to use inclusive language in our services. References to God in traditional prayers and hymns may sometimes be gender-specific. As we pray and sing together, you're invited to adapt the words we've chosen. When we pray the "Lord's prayer", feel free to pray in your first language.

This morning the Bible already has been placed on the lectern, so will not be processed in. At 10 o'clock, with the congregation remaining seated, the minister and reader approach the Advent Wreath. Once the Nativity Passage from Luke's Gospel has been read, the Christ Candle is lit. The service proceeds from there.

The Nativity: Luke 2: 1-14

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

The Christmas Proclamation:

"Behold, the home of God is among mortals.
God will dwell with them;
they will be God's peoples,
and God will be with them
and be their God.

Revelation 21:3

**PRAISE TO THE GOD WHO IS WITH US.
THANKS BE TO GOD!**

Without announcement, we stand to sing

Hymn:

Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)



1. Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
joyful all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies,
with th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born king.*

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the God-head see;
hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased on earth with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born king.*

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings;
mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us all from earth,
Born to give us second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born king.*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

The congregation sits for

The Prayers of Approach:

What greater gift, O God,
than for One to say to the Other,
"I am with you"!

What greater love, O God,
than for life to be shared.

**WE EMBRACE EMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US.**

What deeper mystery, O God,
than for heaven to touch the earth!
What profounder wonder (a great and mighty wonder)
than for light to shine in darkness,
and for angel song to ring through the sky!
**WE EMBRACE EMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US.**

And what more arresting thought, O God,
that these things should be made real for us
as a child is born.

Flesh.

Blood.

Infant crying.

A mother keeping things in her heart.

Marveling in the humanity of it all,

**WE EMBRACE EMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US.**

Hear our Christmas praise,
as we keep a worshipful silence.

Silence

Gathered to celebrate his birth in a stable in Bethlehem,
and to explore an artist's rendition
of the Holy Family in a bus stop,
we will seek an understanding
of the depth and complexity,
but also the plain simplicity
of Emmanuel,

**GOD WITH US,
IN CHRIST THE LORD.
AMEN.**

*If there are younger ones present who are feeling chatty,
A Conversation with the Younger Ones*

The Bible Lesson: Matthew 1: 18-23

In this is the Word of God.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

Hymn:

Forest Green

English traditional melody



1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.
2. O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King
and peace to all on earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
3. How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessed grace of heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) alt.

A Reflection: Maria at the bus stop

Hymn:

Incarnation

Richard Madden (b. 1953)



1. Child of Christmas story,
stable, straw and star,
small and sweet and gentle:
tell us who you are.
2. Child whose baby finger
round our own is curled,
come to melt our hearts, and
come to change the world.
3. Child of Jew and Gentile,
child of white and black,
teach us how to love you,
teach us what we lack.
4. Child of Mary's courage,
birthed in human pain,
tell us what your name is -
be our hope again.

Shirley Murray (1931-2020)

Another Reflection: Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive

Generally, sermons are posted on our website shortly after the service at:

<http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/sermons.html> Hard copies of the sermons are

available before and after the service – ask the person at the door. A video of these reflections being practised is available from 10:00am today:

<https://youtu.be/Xw3Xr-JbpDs>

Hymn:

Star Child

Carlton Young (1926-2023)



1. Star Child, earth Child, go between of God,
love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lighting rod,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!
2. Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
hurt child, used child, no one wants to know,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!
3. Grown child, old child, memory full of years,
sad child, lost child, story told in tears,

This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!

4. Spared child, spoiled child, memory full of years,
wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!

5. Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!

Shirley Erena Murray (1931-2020)

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

*To the minister's words "Emmanuel means 'God with us'",
you are invited to respond "GOD WITH EVERYONE ALIVE".*

... **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.**

Hymn:

Adeste Fideles

John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786)



1. O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him
born the king of angels;
*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*
2. God of God,
Light of light,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him . . .
3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above.
'Glory to God,
glory in the highest':
O come, let us adore him . . .
4. Yea, Lord we greet thee,
born on Christmas morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
O come let us adore Him . . .

John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786)

Benediction and Sung Amen

Postlude: Carol of the Bells
Tom Rainey (b. 1962)

A retiring offering will be received for the Christmas appeal
of the Christian World Service

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