

# Together We Pray

SUNDAY 17 December 2023, The Third Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; [Luke 1:47-55]; 1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

*Let us pray for people everywhere, that this season wraps the world in peace.*

We pray for the life of the church throughout the world, for those who believe, and those who seek to know you; those whose lives appear graced by love, and those who need encouragement or someone to listen. Let us make time for small moments of comfort and joy: a smile, a nod to a passerby. Guide us in the way of peace, and our hearts in understanding. We pray for the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa and here in Wellington; for our Bishop, +Justin and clergy, musicians, parishioners -- and any struggling with a grief that keeps them away. We give thanks for the work of the Mission and social agencies, caring for the least and the lost among us whom Jesus loved.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the needs of the world; for all who have no peace, but live in fear: Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, the Congo and everywhere there is violence and suffering; for refugees, those bound in slavery and prisoners. We pray for people experiencing flood or drought, heat or cold, needing agencies' help. Bring our consciences to bear on the plight of the earth and its animals; enlighten scientists, politicians, and all who live close to and care for the land, we pray, and help us acknowledge the earth as a blessing to be protected and restored, while walking a city street, or wilderness trail, or beach this summer.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the well-being of our community, especially local schools at year's end; for women giving birth in varied circumstances, alone or with a partner or friend. We pray for children who reflect the light and heart and very being of God, a precious gift. May the hope that has brought them into the world be greater than any uncertainties they may face. We pray for parents and grandparents, friends, and larger whanau, who need support and love. Comfort and heal all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give rest to the weary, and shield those immersed in newfound joy. May we be as little lights lighting up everyday life with a smile, a hug, an open door. And when our own candle is depleted, we pray 'someone relight it from their lamp of kindness'\* and send us out like sparks of love.

*Sources: NRSV Bible; NZ Prayer Book; Episcopal BCP; \*Joy Cowley, Psalms for the Road; John Pritchard, Intercessions Handbook; NEB Starr, prayers.*