

Together We Pray

CHRISTMAS DAY 25 December 2023 The Birth of Jesus Christ

Readings: Isa 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20) *To be used at midnight or on Christmas day*

Prayers may be read by one speaker or second sentence may be bolded (as here) and said by the congregation: *"God of darkness and silence, you have pierced the quiet of this moment by a great light, and the utterance of your Word in our flesh. **May your word of compassion and reconciliation resound in us and through us.**"*

God of darkness and silence, you have pierced the quiet of this holy moment with the coming of your Son. **May your word of compassion and reconciliation resound in us and through us.**

In that holy night angels proclaimed the peace of your unconquered Sun of righteousness. **Strengthen all who work for peace and justice.**

On that day you came to us, a child cradled in a borrowed bed of straw as there was no room in the inn. **Open our hearts to the needs of the homeless and the hungry.**

By night, shepherds and outcasts heard your good news. **Give us grace to spread your gospel of joy and liberation to others, and receive good news too.**

We rejoice at the coming of this time of re-creation, and give thanks for summer. **Be with those who travel, enrich our rejoicing, and strengthen the bonds between us.**

On this day as Christians throughout the world are celebrating Christ's birth. **Unite us in one family that we may shine with the one light that scatters all our darkness.**

Your living Word leaped down, shedding light on all who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. **Give strength and peace to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit and all who are alone.**

In this holiest of days heaven and earth embrace and in your true child you give us power to be your children. **Fulfil in your love all who have gone before us in the faith. May we, like them, remain faithful to the mystery of the Word made flesh and live in your eternal light.**

Hear these prayers we bring to you and fulfil your purposes in us in the name of Jesus, your incarnate Word. **Amen.**

Sources: NRSV Bible; Christmas prayers from liturgy.co.nz by Bosco Peters (formerly acting dean, Christchurch cathedral), NZ Prayer Book, NEB Starr.