



The Anglican Parish  
of Greater Hastings



*A “Blue” Christmas Service*

*Thursday 4th December 2025  
6.00pm*

## Welcome

***A very warm welcome to all as we gather this evening.***

The Christmas season can be a painful time for many people.

It's hard to be "merry" when we're feeling "blue".

It may be our first Christmas without loved family members  
or friends who have recently died;

or it may be yet another Christmas without a loved one.

The strong focus on family and togetherness promoted  
in the secular world can emphasise the loneliness of those  
who are separated from loved ones.

The anguish of broken relationships, the loss of employment and  
status, the insecurity of regular income, the weariness of ill health,  
the pain of isolation - all these can make us feel very alone  
in the midst of the celebrating and spending.

We need the space and the time  
to acknowledge our sadness and concern.

We need to know that we are not alone.

Our hope is that this Blue Christmas Service will provide  
an opportunity for everyone to do just that.

You are invited to join in and participate as much as you feel able,

*(the people's responses are in **bold**)*

or you may prefer to simply listen and reflect - that's fine too.

At the conclusion of the service, all are welcome to share  
a time of fellowship and light refreshments,  
served in the "Hospitality" corner  
on the southern side of the church.

You are welcome to take this service booklet with you  
when you leave.

## **The Gathering**

Presider: I runga i te Ingoa o te Atua,  
te Matua, te Tama me te Wairua Tapu.  
**Āmine.**

*(In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen)*

Grace to you and peace from God our Creator,  
the love at our beginning and without end,  
in our midst and with us.

**God is with us,  
here we find new life.**

*The Presider may greet the people informally before continuing*

## **Call to Worship**

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

**The Word became flesh and lived among us,  
full of grace and truth.**

In him was life, and that life was the light of all.  
**The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has never been able to put it out.**

God of love and understanding,  
we gather here this evening to confront our pain  
in the midst of the world's celebrations.

**Help us to know that you are present with us  
in all of our moods and feelings and seasons.  
Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love  
that you promise to all of your people  
through the gift of your Son,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.**

## **Hymn:**

### ***What a friend we have in Jesus***

SG646(ii) - Words: John Scriven - Tune: **CONVERSE**

- 1   What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer!**
- 2   Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
take it to the Lord in prayer!**
- 3   Are we weak and heavy laden,  
burdened with a load of care?  
Jesus is our mighty Saviour:  
he will listen to our prayer.  
Do your friends despise, forsake you?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he will enfold you;  
and his love will shield you there.**

## **Candle lighting:**

Tonight we have four candles in honour of our loved ones -  
we'll light one for our grief, one for our courage,  
one for our memories, and one for our love.

This first candle represents our grief.  
We own the pain of losing loved ones, of dreams that  
go unfulfilled, of hopes that evaporate in despair.

*The first candle is lit and brief silence is kept*

This second candle represents our courage.  
It symbolises the courage to confront our sorrow,  
to comfort each other,  
to share our feelings honestly and openly with each other,  
and to dare to hope in the midst of pain.

*The second candle is lit and brief silence is kept*

This third candle represents our memories.  
For the times we laughed together, cried together,  
were angry or overjoyed with each other;  
for the memories of caring, and the shared happiness.

*The third candle is lit and brief silence is kept*

This candle represents our love.  
The love we have given, and the love we have received.  
The love that has gone unacknowledged and unfelt,  
and the love that has been shared  
in times of joy and sorrow.

*The fourth candle is lit and brief silence is kept*

And in the centre, is the Christ candle;  
as we light this one, we remember that Jesus Christ  
is always in the centre of our lives.  
Christ hears our cries, knows our hearts, and,  
in the midst of all our thoughts and emotions,  
Christ offers us hope and healing.

*The Christ candle is lit and brief silence is kept*

Let us pray ...

Comforting God, wrap us in your presence  
in this time of remembrance.

**With these candles, help us find your light,  
a light that will guide us day by day, step by step,  
as we try to live life fully and wholly.**

**We cherish the special ways  
in which we have been touched by our loved ones.  
We thank you for the gift their lives have been to us.  
Now comfort us; encourage us; empower us.  
Hear this prayer for your love's sake.  
Amen.**

### **Readings:**

#### **Isaiah 40: 1-2a, 25-31 (NLT) -**

*Comfort for God's People - this was written in a time when many of the people of Judah had been taken as captives into exile in Babylon, and were feeling crushed and without hope.*

- 40:1 “Comfort, comfort my people,”  
says your God.
- 2a “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.  
Tell her that her sad days are gone  
and her sins are pardoned.”
- 25 “To whom will you compare me?  
Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One.
- 26 Look up into the heavens.  
Who created all the stars?  
He brings them out like an army, one after another,  
calling each by its name.  
Because of his great power and incomparable strength,  
not a single one is missing.
- 27 O Jacob, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles?  
O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights?
- 28 Have you never heard?  
Have you never understood?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of all the earth.  
He never grows weak or weary.  
No one can measure the depths of his understanding.
- 29 He gives power to the weak  
and strength to the powerless.
- 30 Even youths will become weak and tired,  
and young men will fall in exhaustion.
- 31 But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.  
They will soar high on wings like eagles.  
They will run and not grow weary.  
They will walk and not faint.”

#### **Revelation 7: 15-17**

*Our present world is not how God wants things to be.  
Those who weep now will not weep later. In this new heaven and new earth,  
there will be no more need for tears.*

7:15 “That is why they stand in front of God’s throne  
and serve him day and night in his Temple.  
And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter.  
16 They will never again be hungry or thirsty;  
they will never be scorched by the heat of the sun.  
17 For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd.  
He will lead them to springs of life-giving water.  
And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

### **Matthew 11: 28-29**

*When burdens get piled on top of other burdens, the load can crush us. In his promise, Jesus offers us help to carry our burdens and responsibilities.*

28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary  
and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you,  
because I am humble and gentle at heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **The Address**

### **Musical Reflection**

*This is an opportunity for everyone who wishes to come forward and light a votive candle of remembrance, and to take away a Christmas decoration to place in your home at Christmas-time as a reminder of God’s love and presence with you.*

### **Hymn:**

#### **Come and find the quiet centre**

FFS10(i) - Words: Shirley Erena Murray

Tune: Lewis [Gaelic] Folk Melody, Arr. © John Bell

**1 Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter,  
find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace, and simply be.**



- 2 Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.
- 3 In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain;  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare!

### *Prayers of the People*

In the spirit of this season, let us now confidently  
ask God for all the things we need for ourselves,  
as we participate in whatever way we can  
this Christmas season.

God of love, hear our prayer:  
**And let our cry come to you.**

We pray for our families, friends, neighbours,  
and all who encourage and support us;  
may we all know love, peace,  
and happiness in you.

God of love, hear our prayer:  
**And let our cry come to you.**

We pray that the peace and goodwill  
proclaimed by the Christmas angels,  
may come throughout the whole world.

God of love, hear our prayer:  
**And let our cry come to you.**



God of great compassion and love,  
we pray to you for those we love but see no longer.  
We thank you for the peace and light  
you bestow upon them;  
in your loving wisdom and almighty power  
continue to work in them  
the good purpose of your perfect will,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who taught us to pray,  
saying ...

**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.**

**Song of Praise:** *The desert shall blossom* Isaiah 35:1, 2, 5, 6, 10

- <sup>1</sup> The desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
it shall rejoice with gladness and singing.
- <sup>2</sup> **The glory of the Lord shall be revealed:  
and the majesty of our God.**
- <sup>3</sup> Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened:  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
- <sup>4</sup> **then shall the lame leap like the hart:  
and the tongue of the dumb shall sing for joy.**

- 5 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness:  
and streams in the desert.
- 6 **The ransomed of the Lord shall return:  
and come with singing,  
with everlasting joy upon their heads.**
- 7 They shall obtain joy and gladness:  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Hymn:**

***Nothing is lost on the breath of God***

*FFS #50 - Words & Music: Colin Gibson - Tune: GREENLANE*

- 1 **Nothing is lost on the breath of God,  
nothing is lost forever;  
God's breath is love, and that love will remain,  
holding the world forever.  
No feather too light, no hair too fine,  
no flower too brief in its glory;  
no drop in the ocean, no dust in the air,  
but is counted and told in God's story.**
- 2 **Nothing is lost to the eyes of God,  
nothing is lost forever.  
God sees with love, and that love will remain,  
holding the world forever.  
No journey too far, no distance too great,  
no valley of darkness too blinding;  
no creature too humble, no child too small  
for God to be seeking and finding.**
- 3 **Nothing is lost to the heart of God,  
nothing is lost forever;  
God's heart is love, and that love will remain,  
holding the world forever.  
No impulse of love, no office of care,  
no moment of life in its fullness;  
no beginning too late, no ending too soon,  
but is gathered and known in its goodness.**

***Blessing:***

May the LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace;  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
Creator, Redeemer, Life-giver,  
be with you, now and forever. **Amen.**

***Dismissal:***

Go now to love and serve the Lord.  
Go in peace.  
**Amen. We go in the name of Christ.**



*Acknowledgement:*

*This “Blue” Christmas Order of Service for the Anglican Parish of Greater Hastings  
has been compiled and adapted from copyright resources offered on-line by  
the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia,  
A New Zealand Prayer Book / He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa  
and is used in accordance with regulations;  
and resources from the “Whole People of God”.*

*Artwork © John Stuart - [www.stushieart.com](http://www.stushieart.com) - used with permission*

*Hymns reproduced with permission under Licence #CCLI 565525*

**The Anglican Parish of Greater Hastings**

**Parish Support Hub:** phone: 878-9476 ~ P O Box 824, Hastings 4156

email: [hastingsparish@waiapu.com](mailto:hastingsparish@waiapu.com)

website: [www.greaterhastingsanglicanchurch.co.nz](http://www.greaterhastingsanglicanchurch.co.nz)

Facebook: Parish of Greater Hastings, NZ

Bank account: ANZ 01-0646-0246683-01 Greater Hastings Parish

**Parish Vicar:** The Reverend David van Oeveren

ph 06 211 3457 / 021 470 337 - email: [david.vanoeveren@waiapu.com](mailto:david.vanoeveren@waiapu.com)