

Readings:
Isaiah 9:2-7

Titus 2:11-14
Luke: 1-14

In the dead of the night, three secret service agents were on assignment in the Mr Kipling Christmas Pudding and fruit mince factory — their task was to investigate the quality of the product and to report to HQ. They are the mince pies!! [spies?]

Welcome to our worship tonight as we celebrate Christmas.

Christmas:
The Celebration of Christ,
The Celebration of the one who comes — anointed to lead — the Messiah...

Many will celebrate Christmas...
But how many will celebrate God with us.

But we come to think on, to hear, the stories of the babe of Bethlehem who became Christ — the one in whom unfolds the Word of God.

We can see in Jesus the one who is the fulfilment of all that the prophet Isaiah had hoped for.

The one who brings light to the darkness of our world.

The one who is Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, and whose authority is confirmed, not simply in the mystery surrounding his birth, but in the manner of his life and teaching, his dying and rising.

Paul writes to Titus, after Jesus has lived and points to the calling of Christ to live lives that are self-controlled, godly, and upright.

And he urges Titus to look forward with hope and expectation to the eventual completion of all that was begun in Christ.

And Yet! There are many who will celebrate and **not** think on these things on Christmas Day. Clive Robertson the ABC radio announcer, evidently said he would spend Christmas Day with God and avoid much of the trappings of modern Christmas.

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As we become a more multicultural society, inclusive of many faiths, it is important to reflect on what it means to be "Christian". To develop a clearer idea about what we are and what we believe in...

NOT so we can be argumentative and divisive, **BUT** so that we can be ready to enter into discussions in a meaningful way. If we were to live and breath the gospel of Jesus, we would be far more able to build a community of tolerance, compassion and justice.

If Jesus calls us to anything, it is **NOT** the condemnation of others, but the conviction that we are called to love and serve without limit, and if we ponder Jesus' way — without concern for the

consequences!

The themes of Christmas are:

God coming to us

God sharing humanity and dwelling among us. (This is the mystery we proclaim tonight.)

God initiating healing and reconciliation.

God sharing the difficulty and pain of humanity.

If we ponder these themes, we must be prompted to also be initiators of healing and reconciliation and entering into the difficulty of life to restore and renew. — Political? [you bet!]

There is much talk at Christmas is about it being "for children"

I think that is an attempt to say that now we have grown up we have no time for the wonder and mystery of God — Very Sad!

If Christmas is for and about children, then we must ponder the identification of Jesus with the oppressed and suffering children of the world. If it is about children, it **cannot** be about presents, parties, tinsel and glitter — it must make us think about the children of Gaza and Bethlehem.

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in southern Sudan,

in Iraq

and the situation of many in our society

[note from web ed: [story of the Bakhtiari kidnapping in Adelaide](#)]

Christmas Bowl Story of a boy too weak to go to school. Suffering malnutrition.

Diagnosed by a Christmas Bowl partner organisation, treated, and on the way back to health.

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Jesus' birth identifies the ultimate truth — that God is also present in each and every child, and in each and every life.

In Jesus, God affirms humanity as a worthwhile cause — and calls on us to do likewise.

He calls us to deal effectively, compassionately and honestly — NOT to spoil and damage...

(and how many will be spoilt and indulged and learn no values this Christmas except to gain...)

As we deal with the children of today, with compassion, and care, with firmness and honesty, they will be the adults of the future and maybe they will make things just a little better and we will have helped place steps in the building of the sort of humanity God wants.

Celebrate Christmas

Celebrate Christ

Celebrate God present

Celebrate the Holiness of all life

Celebrate and value God's gift in humanity.