



## Christmas Wreath – Christmas Candle (white)

*The priest prays:*

God our Father, today the Saviour is born  
and those who live in darkness see a great light.  
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,  
to live in the light of your Son  
and to share the good news of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the light who has come into the world. **Amen.**

*The Christmas candle is lit.*

*We pray together:*

**Lord Jesus, Light of light,  
you have come among us.  
Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest. Amen.**

## Psalm 96

- 1 O sing to the Lord a new song:  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Sing to the Lord and bless his holy name:  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations:  
and his wonders among all peoples.
- 4 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised:  
he is more to be feared than all gods.
- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are mere idols:  
it is the Lord who made the heavens.
- 6 Majesty and glory are before him:  
beauty and power are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Render to the Lord, you families of the nations:  
render to the Lord glory and might.
- 8 Render to the Lord the honour due to his name:  
bring offerings and come into his courts.
- 9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness:  
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
- 10 Say among the nations that the Lord is king:  
he has made the world so firm that it can never be moved; and he shall judge the peoples with equity.
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad:  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it.
- 12 Let the fields rejoice, and everything in them:  
then shall all the trees of the wood shout with joy before the Lord.
- 13 For he comes, he comes to judge the earth:

he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

## From the *Locum Tenens Rector*

**O sing to the Lord a new song** (Psalm 96)

What a day for praise: Christmas day. Joy is a great theme for the day.

Christians have traditionally sung this psalm, written many centuries before the birth of Jesus, on Christmas day. And the reasons are clear: God shows his glory and salvation to the whole world in the humble birth of Messiah Jesus.

This poem begins with a three-fold command to sing a new song. At Christmas we sing that old/new song in a new key. The old song is that God, who made the heavens and the earth, reigns. His strength and his beauty are on display. Anything the humans seek to put in his place (idols) is a mere created thing with all the strength, beauty and darkness of such substitutes.

The song is universal in its character. It calls not only on the people of God but all the families of the earth, heaven and earth and the whole inanimate created order to celebrate the God's salvation. This is no tribal celebration (my god is better than your god) but praise for the one God who alone can and does save. His only response is to tell the great news report that the battle has been won: all has changed (2).

And that brings us to Christmas, to the new key. The great news report is that God's beautiful victory for the sake of the whole world is coming in this obscure humble birth. God reigns in the birth and life of Jesus and the purpose of that reign is the salvation of the world, the universe, the whole created order. What joy! What a word of hope and empowerment. In the face of all the old injustice, violence and brokenness we can defy such alarming and dark realities in trust because He is trustworthy. Everything has changed. We can live in that trust:

"The kingdom of the world has become,  
the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ,  
and he will reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11.15)

Colin



## St Philip's 12 Days of Christmas Calendar

Enjoy the calendar on our  
website [stphilipsoconnor.org.au](http://stphilipsoconnor.org.au)  
Each day includes: readings,  
prayers, art, music – check it out!