



## Advent One: The Cry for Climate Justice

**Much has changed since last Advent, so we come to the season afresh, seeking sustenance after a difficult year and strength to face what is yet to come. We begin the season of Advent by taking a deep breath.**

**In this new church year, it is time to get in touch with God, to think of our neighbour, to feel the breadth of creation. Climate change is the biggest challenge we now face. Let us look for the hope we find in God and each other, drawing strength from the familiar stories.**

### CALL TO WORSHIP

E te whanau a te Karaiti,  
God brings new life and hope in  
desolate places.

In God, justice is restored and our  
souls are refreshed.  
Come, let us worship God.

### LIGHTING OUR ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

On this first Sunday of Advent we remember God's gift of hope and that we are called to be people of God's hope.

#### Read the Partner Story:

The Pacific Ocean links us with many people and lands who are facing the immediate effects of rising global temperatures. Already people have had to move from their traditional whenua or land. Others are trying to cope with salty water and the lack of drinking water.

The Pacific Conference of Churches has been relentless in voicing the cry of their people for climate justice. Like a canary in a mine, they have warned all people of the dangerous level of global warming in an effort to protect our common home for the unborn and future generations.

**We seek climate justice.**

**Light the candle**

**Together:**

God of hope and possibility

May we be people who shine the light of hope in your world through our words and by our actions.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

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**LECTIONARY THOUGHTS**

The theme for this Sunday is hope. The coming of God's reign is a central focus of this week's readings. They call us to be open to God's coming at all times – including in our lives. They also invite us to recognise God's presence – God's coming – in the midst of the world's suffering and struggle. The Christian World Service Christmas Appeal with today's focus on the Cry for Climate Justice is one way to focus on how we might respond.

**Jeremiah 33:14-16**

The people are in despair, with their country and main city ravaged, and on top of that have been taken into exile without hope of a return. This short passage gives a promise that God will provide a safe, just and peaceful future with a ruler who is righteous. They are called to hope-filled waiting and to trust in God's promise.

*“We are not drowning, we are fighting.”*

*Pacific Climate warriors*

**Psalm 25: 1–10**

This psalm is a psalm of lament, where the writer expresses their grief to God honestly, to God who listens and is trustworthy. There is an openness to what is about to unfold and finishes with praise. It lets the reader see that hope exists even for those in the midst of struggle and who are in need of guidance and forgiveness.

**1 Thessalonians 3: 8-13**

Paul is waiting and concerned; waiting for the time they can get back together and worried about this infant church. He prays that they may grow in love, and to have strong and holy hearts when Jesus comes. That invites us to keep encouraging and strengthening one another, as does the apostle.

**Luke 21: 25-36**

Jesus calls for his disciples to be watchful and aware of what is happening around them, and open to the signs of the coming of God's reign in the midst of great turmoil. Jesus says that as these signs indicate that the end is “near,” not necessarily “arrived,” his disciples must remain

alert, ready to stay faithful despite upheaval or persecution. The point of the whole passage is: be alert, trusting in God and awaiting salvation from the world's systems that only God can, and will, bring.



## REFLECTION

### Hope is Found in Action

In this first week of Advent, our readings remind us to be watchful, alert to the signs of the times. No matter what dangers lie ahead, God's promise is for justice and peace. This is the vision we must hold on to for ourselves and our world.

The Pacific Conference of Churches is one of our [partners](#) in this task. Climate change has been on their agenda for many years. General Secretary James Bhagwan and Iemaima Vaai took the voices of the people, the land and the sea to the

COP26 (Conference of Parties). The urgency of the climate emergency is something they know well. They campaigned tirelessly to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5° Celsius. Villages like Vunidogoloa were forced to move inland because of constant flooding. Fiji plans to move more than forty more coastal villages soon.

Who wants to see their homes washed into the sea or gardens drowned in salt water? Who wants to tell their mother or grandmother that they have no choice but to leave the land and sea that has been home for generations? Who wants to always buy food and water because traditional gardens are saturated?

In Glasgow, James [gave](#) a two minute intervention at the High Level Plenary at COP26: "... Our interconnectedness to this common home forces us to a radical solidarity, across gender and generation, for climate justice for all.

... Love calls us to transformation of systems and lifestyles. This transition away from fossil fuel-based economies must be just, securing livelihoods and wellbeing for all and not just some."

We find hope through action, by sharing God's love for the world.

### [Lomana Na Vulagi](#)

Last year the Pacific Conference of Churches started a Food Bank garden. Staff and volunteers grew food to give away and for lunches to school

children living in the informal settlements. This year it has bought 50 acres of land at Lawaki – two hours from Suva to expand the Food Bank concept.

Launched on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the farm will be completely off the grid, using solar energy and water from a nearby creek.

The initiative is called Lomana Na Vulagi (Love the Stranger), and will provide food for those in need, revenue for the PCC and an on-site eco-school for young Pacific people.

Central to the farm's ethos is the involvement of women, young people and people with disabilities along with using time-tested traditional agriculture and land management methods. They will plant a tree to offset the carbon for those who travelled to Glasgow.

Your gifts to the Christmas Appeal and prayers and action for people living on the frontline of climate change can bring joy and justice this Christmas.

**Read the [partner story](#).**

*“Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:17*

## INTERCESSION

- For people of Pacific Island nations
- For the Pacific Conference of Churches, especially in their work against climate change
- For Aotearoa New Zealand - our government, health workers and front line workers
- For all who work for the good of our environment in this country
- For hope and action in the face of climate change and global warming
- For the well-being of generations to come
- For the church throughout the world to be a beacon of hope

## BLESSING

May the peace of God surround you like the trees of the forest.

May the peace of God warm you like the sun in the sky.

May the peace of God swell and roll over you

like a wave in the sea.

May the peace of God fill you like the cool wind.

May the peace of God be with you.

(Jim Burklo, USA, with permission)

## MUSIC

**Hey Mary.** Malcolm Gordon. (music to listen to)

<https://youtu.be/PVoGcumJwnq>

**O God of boundless hope.** Brian Davis

Link for lyrics and video:

<https://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/o-god-of-boundless-hope>

**Song of Faith that sings forever.**

Shirley Murray. *Faith Forever Singing*  
57 (NZ Hymnbook Trust)

**Pioneers of Hope.** Malcolm Gordon.

[Lyrics and music](#)

YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/hPBdHqoPTIs>

## ACTIVITY

- Find ways to share hope with people who are anxious in our community eg give flowers, plants or food; establish a community pantry, a Lilliput

library or a special recycling collection; make boomerang bags; run classes on gardening, food preservation, sewing or upcycling.

- Plant a tree on your church property.
- Brainstorm ideas for a climate justice banner to put outside the church – then paint it.

## FOR DISCUSSION

- Share ideas making your Christmas more sustainable.
- Look for the signs of the times: what is our responsibility to creation at this time and in our community?
- What can our church do to express our concern for climate justice in an on-going way?
- What practical steps can we take together in the year ahead?

