



Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

President's Christmas Message 2021

As we move towards Christmas, many of us find ourselves wearied by the last couple of years. Life under lockdown has affected most of us one way or another. We have missed seeing family and friends.

Many of us had have had commemorations and celebrations cancelled or curtailed. Many businesses have suffered and people are worried about their financial future and the security of their job.

We are concerned about the well-being of our young people. We are worried about our older friends and family.

Many of the routines that helped us navigate our daily lives have been disrupted or lost alongside COVID.

Many of us are anxious about the world, about the lack of vaccine justice, about growing tension in our region, and about climate change and the very real threat the Earth can no longer sustain life in a meaningful way.

As I reflected on what troubles us, a line from a Christmas Carol came to me singing of Jesus.

It says "the hopes and fears of all the years I met in thee tonight".

Christmas is the celebration of God entering into human life in flesh and bone and coming among us as a baby. God enters into the riskiness of human life, the risk of disease and death of illness and injury. The risk of loneliness, alienation and rejection of living as a member of a colonized people in a world of injustice.

Jesus meets our fears showing God is not distant from the world, but fully in the world.

In meeting our fears, Jesus brings hope. Jesus brings hope that God not only witnesses the suffering of the world, but enters into it in solidarity.

Hope that Jesus crosses boundaries, eats and drinks with sinners and the outcast, loves abundantly. Hope that God is with us, among us, alongside us in Jesus, who is the face of God's love, the voice of God's justice and the embodiment of God's mercy.

And so our fears are met and held in God's hope and love.

This Christmas, may you know this hope and love.

Rev Sharon Hollis