

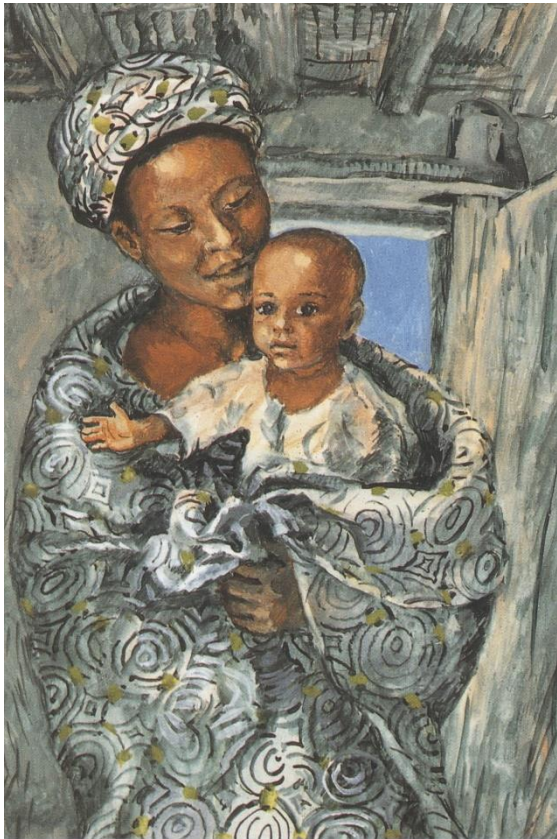
# Liturgy in a Dangerous Time



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[simonjcross.com/rumours-of-glory](http://simonjcross.com/rumours-of-glory)

## An introduction



[Vie de Jesus Mafa](#)

Earlier in 2020, during the initial UK lockdown we created a liturgy project, a free resource for folk to use on their own, with those at home, or in an online group.

At that time churches and other places of worship were closed, and it seemed good to bring together content from people with a variety of different backgrounds, who were able to remind us what it means to

be Church in a time of difficulty and testing.

Contributors came from far and wide, from conservative and liberal places, from Catholicism and Protestantism, and from a few different countries too.

Why did we call it 'Liturgy in a Dangerous Time'? Because of a song by Bruce Cockburn, 'Lovers in a Dangerous Time' which has the powerful line: "we're going to kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight." Some folk found the violent imagery a bit challenging.

Those of us who put it together though, felt it appropriate to at least try and give the darkness a sore shin.

Because things are still not a great deal better, we've put together a short Christmas version of the liturgy, because Christmas was always dangerous, even 2000 years ago. Or perhaps especially 2000 years ago.

## An opening

We still ourselves now, in the midst of  
the storm.

In the teeth of the gale.

In the tumble of the wave.

Like Jonah in the belly of the Whale.

Like Moses on the mountaintop.

Like the disciples.

We look for our place of rest and  
refuge.

And pray for the wisdom to discern  
anew 'how wide, how long, how high  
and how deep', Divine love is.

## A verse

Psalm 88 v1-2

O Lord, God of my salvation,

I cry out to you by day.

I come to you at night.

Now hear my prayer;

listen to my cry.



*Photo by Jon Tyson on unsplash*

## A poem

This Christmas I have just one prayer  
Let there be peace on earth

Sounds so simple

Sounds so easy

Let there be peace on earth

No guns

No pain

No death

No hurt

Let there be peace on earth

Children play

Adults love

Let there be peace on earth

Laughter

Forgiveness

Debate

Compromise

Let there be peace on earth

Love's accepted

Everyone valued

Let there be peace on earth

This Christmas I have just one prayer

Let there be peace on earth

[Emma Major](#)

## A carol

Take some time with this haunting winter song from Justin Grounds.

[Listen via this link.](#)

[Justin Grounds](#)

## A tune

Here are a set of Christmas tunes from guitarist extraordinaire Ian Barnett.

[Listen via this link](#)

*Ian Barnett*



[Photo by Liz Chart](#)

## A carol

Enjoy this version of the Christmas classic: O Come Emmanuel.

[Click here for the video](#)

*Sam Rankin*

## A hope

It's the waiting that kills you...  
The determined grip of doubt  
Suffocating your hope:  
Squeezing the last milligram of trust  
from your mind, heart and soul

The promises are tested, then.  
Through a lens of questions,  
A filter of false memories,  
A haze of fear..  
Did you hear it right?  
Or were you distracted by your own  
dreams,  
Cloaking the words with your own  
interpretation,  
Rejecting that which was unpalatable.  
Or, harder to discern,  
Did you interpret the information  
falsely?

Seeing patterns and flows  
unimagined.  
Drawing conclusions in an only half-  
digested fog.  
Because, surely, the time had come?  
The wait must be over,  
Recovery long over-due?  
Listening softly,  
Dampening our petulant questions,  
We can hear the whisper:  
All in good time, my child.  
All in good time.

*Andy Campbell*

## A reading

Read this slowly, repeating three  
times, pausing after each reading to  
consider the words.

**John 1:14 (NLT)**

So the Word became human and  
made his home among us.

He was full of unfailing love and  
faithfulness.

And we have seen his glory, the glory  
of the Father's one and only Son.

# A poem

## Aftermath

This is me now  
reduced to this —  
holding a photo of you  
against my chest  
as a substitute for  
all that took you away.  
I held it to my face yesterday  
hoping it would carry your scent:  
arrowroot and fennel.

Yes yes yes.  
There was conflict, yes.  
And we moved from there to  
here, yes.  
And we did not have a map.  
And we did not  
know the language  
of our own survival.  
And I didn't know where  
~~you~~-your remains were.  
And we did not know how  
to reach each other.

Because underneath us  
the ground moved.  
In fact, it blew up.  
Yes yes yes.  
This is what happens when wars happen.  
People fall apart. Yes.

Earth shifts, Places Open Up.  
The centre is now the edge.  
Yes. Y

Did I tell you  
I survived?

Well.

And

Mostly.

then there's this.

My me m o r y

'Aftermath' © Pádraig Ó Tuama. Included in *Mapping Faith: Theologies of Migration and Community*  
Lia Shimada (ed) Jessica Kingsley Publications, 2020.

© Pádraig Ó Tuama

# A song

## Christmas Time

[Click here to listen to the song](#)

Well that was a year  
And we made it through  
It was a ride and a half  
But I'm so glad that I'm here with you  
  
We're saying goodbye  
A rocky old road  
And for a moment we're laying aside  
This heavy old load  
  
I'm thankful for all of the friends  
That I've got around me  
Thankful for all of the love  
That I get to share  
  
This is Christmas Time  
Soon be Auld Lang Syne  
And we'll raise a glass

To Celebrate Life  
Celebrate Love  
  
It's Christmas Time  
Let the church bells chime  
Sing out for peace  
Sing out for hope  
Sing out for love  
  
This Christmas time  
  
We've had some surprises  
Now let's make 'em good  
There's so much light in the world  
And nothing is bigger than love  
  
So let's come together  
As best as we can  
The world is a smaller place now than  
it was  
Than when this year began

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Promotions

[Rob Halligan](#)



[Vie de Jesus Mafa](#)



## A dream

I am dreaming of a black Christmas.

Blackmail

Black-market

Black lie

My world is filled with anti-blackness,  
Lightening cream fills the Christmas  
shopping baskets in Asian and  
African markets to 'help' them look  
more desirable.

Black curse

Black Knight

Black death,

The watching and waiting for hope  
feel so far away. A hope that is lost  
when the beautiful dark coal of a  
facepiece appears on a Christmas  
advert and people are outraged.

Blacklist

Blackmark

Black sheep,

Will, I ever have a chair at the  
Christmas table or will I always be

downcast. Downcast, because to be  
me is to be black. It is to be dark. I  
am an ebony. Not a negative word to  
use for your liking.

Dark web

Pitch-black

Dark Night,

The light in the darkness is a used to  
describe this Christmas miracle. But  
maybe just maybe after months of  
being woke to the pains of the negro  
cause, we can be awakened by the  
dark-skinned refugee of a baby that  
we worship this Christmas. Maybe we  
can see the dark Jesus, as an innocent  
baby coming not to harm but to heal.  
Darkness is the absence of light, but  
darkness is the presence of the night.  
A beautiful, wonderful creation from  
which God has created. He has  
created the night and the light. We  
can re-evaluate our idioms and  
collectively broaden our vocabulary  
from Dark against Light but rather  
good against evil. I'm dreaming of a  
Black Christmas.

*Augustine Tanner-Ihm*

## A poem

### There is hope

And the wonder is  
That there is hope still  
Sparkling in the sky.  
A star of wonder  
A wonderful thing

There is hope which does not fade  
Doesn't recede into the distance  
Like a shadow  
That you can never catch.  
Hope is somehow grasp-able

And it comforts me  
To remember that  
This hope exists  
In the darkness and  
In the light  
In the day and the night  
Never fading.  
Never leaving us alone

Put your trust in me, it says  
Cling on to hope

It is the rope which will not let you  
fall

Knots secure – tied fast  
Against the tides and the rocks.  
Strong

Here is strength amid my weakness  
Here is hope amid my hopelessness  
Here is light amid my darkness  
Here is love.

[Simon Cross](#)



[Photo by Dmitry Ratushny on Unsplash](#)

## A video

Allow this to wash over you.

[Paawana Aatma Antarayami](#)

Pure, holy Spirit of God, the “One  
who knows my inner self”

[Yesu Satsang Toronto](#)

## A collection

The Treasures of Darkness project brings together a series of stories, images, poems and thoughts which bring light and hope into wintry darkness. Enjoy.

[Watch the videos.](#)

*Hull 25*

## A blessing

So may you know the peace

And love

And joy

Of the divine mystery

This Christmas

And beyond. **Amen.**

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The Liturgy in a Dangerous Time series is curated by [Andy Campbell](#) and [Simon Cross](#). This edition features contributions from:

***Ian Barnett*** (musician), ***Andy Campbell*** (poet, artist, life coach), ***Liz Chart*** (observer, sense-tester & way finder), ***Simon Cross*** (writer), ***Justin Grounds*** (producer, musician & composer), ***Rob Halligan*** (songwriter, musician), ***Augustine Tanner Ihm*** (writer & broadcaster), ***Liane Kensett*** (change maker), ***Kelly Latimore*** (artist & musician), ***Emma Major*** (lay pioneer minister & poet), ***Pádraig Ó Tuama*** (poet & peacemaker) & ***Yeshu Satsang Toronto*** (Hindi language devotional music night in Toronto).

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