**Lighting a candle for peace**

**Guidance for participants**

Welcome this Christmas Eve to Woden Valley United Church for a time of peace and reflection.

One of the central messages of Christmas is peace. Yet this year, for many people, peace seems out of reach. There is so much strife and violence in the world. In our own country many families are having trouble making ends meet or they have other problems. And then there is the busyness of the lead up to Christmas which we all experience.

This year the people of this church congregation are offering to anyone who wishes to come a quiet space and an opportunity to find a time of peace.

When you enter the room you will hear quiet music playing. There will be an area for seating and you will see three small tables or “chapels” which represent Peace, Hope and Love. On each table there is written material to read and reflect on as well as candles to light.

We invite you to spend some time reflecting on the theme of each chapel. Try to use the stillness and music in the room to step aside for a moment from the busyness and concerns of your daily life. We invite you to focus on one of the themes, following an idea you have gleaned from some of the written material or perhaps from your own contemplation.

In the greater detachment that stillness brings you may wish to light a candle. You may think of this action as a prayer; or as a respectful tribute to your thoughts, wishes or actions for yourself, for others or for the world this Christmas and the coming year.

Stay in the room for a few minutes or stay longer.

Once you are ready to leave make your way into the courtyard where you will find a cool drink and some Christmas cake. If you have time, stay around for a conversation. Christmas is also time for socialising.

**The people of Woden Valley Uniting Church wish you, your family and friends a very happy Christmas.**