

Online Joint Worship for the Mid Fraser Cluster of the  
United Church of Canada  
First Sunday of Advent – Hope  
Nov 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Thank you for Connecting for Worship**  
**Today's Leadership includes**  
Preacher: The Rev. Tim Bowman  
Presiding: The Rev. Tracy Fairfield  
and The Rev. Bill Booth  
Musician – Jacob Greenan  
Song Leader & Soloist: Deborah Handley  
Technical Support: Jeremy Wright

*People are invited to share their prayers in the chat during the worship service.*

**WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

**Words of Welcome, Announcements from Each Congregation**  
**Land Acknowledgments All**

**Lighting the Rainbow Candles Bill/Tim**

**Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope Ethan/ Matthew/ Wendy**

Our Advent journey has begun. We prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth.

**We come to embrace the good news of the Light of the World.**

It is within the hidden mysteries of life we discover vulnerability. Within the dancing shadows cast by a flickering candle flame we discover the promise of hope and new possibilities.

**We come to be transformed despite and because of our weaknesses.**

We light a candle for hope, a candle that shines for all our essential workers in this time of pandemic.

**In every place, God calls us,  
to share and reflect the Lights of Lights  
that is and is to come;  
our hope in a despairing world.**

Written by Gord Dunbar. Gathering, A/C/E 2020-21, pg. 70. Used with permission.

*We light the first candle.*

**Sung Response: "Hope is a Star" verse 1 (VU 7)**

Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
leading us on till the morning is bright.

**R) When God is a child there's joy in our song.  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.**

**Opening Prayer: Tracy**

Ever-faithful God, once again we begin our hopeful journey to Bethlehem. We reflect back over many years, our own as well as those of our ancestors. We seek peace, we seek joy, we seek love; but we are not always able to find them. Today, as we begin the waiting time of Advent, we pray that your Spirit will fill us with the confident expectation that your promises will be fulfilled. Help us, as Advent people, to do our part in bringing hope, peace, joy, and love to your unhappy world. Amen.

**Hymn: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”**

VU 2

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free:  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel’s strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.*

*Born they people to deliver;  
born a child and yet a king;  
born to reign in us for ever;  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne*

**Time with our Children: Tracy**

**Hymn: “We are Waiting Lord”** (for Advent 1) Tune of Kumba yah

We are waiting Lord, come by here (3x)  
Oh, Lord, Come by here.

*We invite the children and their leaders into breakout rooms.*

**Prayer of Confession Tim**

Renewing God, this Advent season,  
we long for the gift you bring.

**We watch.**

**We wait.**

**We worry.**

We obsess about not knowing  
why things have happened as they have, not knowing what is to come.

**Help us keep watch.**

**Help us be patient.**

**Help us be calm.**

Help us stay awake in the present moment so we may resist the seductive pull to numb  
out and sleep through our lives.

**This Advent season, may we accept your gift  
that will keep us awake, your gift of not knowing.**

**Amen.**

Written by Norah Laverty. *Gathering*, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2020. Adapted, and used with permission.

**Assurance: Tim**

The Good news is this, that we are loved and forgiven because of the Incarnation,  
because God took human form. We are a forgiven people. Thanks be to God!

## WE LISTEN FOR THE WORD

### Scripture Reading:

#### **Isaiah 64:1 – 12**

*Please introduce yourself: your name, your congregation and the passages you will read.*

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
2 as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
4 From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
5 You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
7 There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.  
10 Your holy cities have become a wilderness,  
Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.  
11 Our holy and beautiful house, where our ancestors praised you,  
has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins.  
12 After all this, will you restrain yourself, O LORD?  
Will you keep silent, and punish us so severely?

#### **Mark 13:24 – 37**

“But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.  
Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will  
send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to  
the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its  
leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you  
know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until  
all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not  
pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only  
the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man  
going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work,  
and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not  
know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow,  
or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I  
say to all: Keep awake.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon: Tim**

**Hymn: “All My Hope on God is Founded” VU 655**

All my hope on God is founded; Who doth still my trust renew:  
I through change and chance am guided, Only good and only true.  
God unknown; God alone Calls my heart eternally home.

Human pride and earthly glory, Sword and crown, betray our trust;  
What with care and toil is built up,  
Tower and temple fall to dust.  
But God’s power, hour by hour Is my temple and my tower.

Daily doth the almighty giver bounteous gifts on us bestow.  
God’s desire our soul delighteth,  
Pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand hand in hand; Joy doth wait on God’s command.

God’s great goodness ay endureth, deepest wisdom, passing thought:  
Splendour, light, and life attending,  
Beauty springeth out of naught.  
Evermore from God’s store new-born worlds rise and adore.

### **WE COME TO THE TABLE**

**Hymn: “Bread for the Journey” (X 3) MV 202**

Bread for the Journey, Food for the way  
Cup of God’s blessing, Tomorrow, today.

**Communion: Tracy**

As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ,  
a banquet prepared for everyone. It is not my table or your table or the Church’s table.  
All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith,  
all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice,  
are welcome here.

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift our hearts in prayer.**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is good to give God thanks and praise.**

*Let us pray:* **Bill**

Blessed are you, Breath of peace,  
Giver of all life,

Source of love that knows no boundaries.

Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began;

throughout the ages, your song of liberation has impregnated us with your hope for a world where:

those considered last and least are first and most;

violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and,

all siblings work together for peace.

**Tim** You bring our longings to birth, and send prophets to awaken us to your approaching Advent among us.

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world;  
for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem;  
for those who, like the wise ones, actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us  
in womb and tomb,  
in cradle and cross,  
in tenderness and compassion.

We join in the Advent prayer of all your people,  
**“O come, Emmanuel.”**

And, as we wait and watch for your coming among us,  
we proclaim your goodness.

**Sanctus: Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, O God of glory power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full, are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in God’s name.**

**Tracy** At this time, we also remember  
all with whom you would have us share your feast.  
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...  
all who are ill or alone...  
all who are close to our hearts...  
all our siblings who live with fear, oppression, or hunger...  
all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty...  
for all whom the world counts as last and least.

We pray for the church and its many ministries,  
for nations as they strive for peace and justice,  
for an end to violence against women and men.

God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding,  
this wine the medium of our transformation,  
this table the foundation of our renewal,  
and this community the place of our rebirth. Amen.

**Bill** At this time, we remember Jesus,  
Who on the night before he died,  
took a loaf of bread,  
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,  
**“Take and eat;  
whenever you do this, remember me.”**  
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,  
**“This is the new covenant; remember me.”**

**Tim** Gracious God, Breath of peace,  
Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.  
**Make us, while many, one.  
Make us, though broken, whole.  
Make us, despite death, alive.**

And so we pray:  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

As we pray, as we partake of the bread and the cup,  
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

The body of Christ,  
**the Bread of life.**  
The lifeblood of Christ,  
**the cup of blessing.**  
Let us eat and drink together  
for our strengthening in the faith,  
and for the sake of the world.

*We partake in our elements*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

**Tracy** We thank you, God,  
for breaking into our world  
and pouring into our lives and our experiences.

**We thank you, God,  
for this meal of thanksgiving  
and the stories  
of love, grace, and hope that it tells.**

Let us go and tell our story to the world.

**Amen!**

*Written by Alydia Smith. Adventunwrapped.ca. Adapted, and used with permission.*

**WE RESPOND IN LOVE AND ACTION**

**Prayers of the People and all the World **Bill****

**Prayers shared from the chat: **Tracy****

Holy God, you hear our words; you hear our hearts. We are known and heard deeply, graciously, constantly. Confident in this grace, we sing together the words that Jesus taught us...

**The Lord's Prayer [Sung]: (to tune of Away in a Manger)**

Our Father in heaven all praise to your name!  
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same  
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone:  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;  
From evil deliver your children most dear.  
For yours is the kingdom; o'er all thing you reign.  
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.  
To you be the glory, resounding again,  
From all of creation, forever! Amen!

## **Acknowledging Our Gifts for the Work of God Bill**

“In the Bleak Midwinter” (verse 4) VU 55

**What can I give him; poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet, what I can I give him – give my heart.**

## **Prayer of Dedication: Bill**

God of love and power,  
your Word stirs within us  
the expectation of the coming of your Son.  
Accept all we offer you this day,  
and sustain us with your promise of eternal life.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Hymn: “May the God of Hope Go with Us” VU 424**

*May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.*

***Chorus) Praying, let us work for peace,  
singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that’s new,  
faithful when we hear Christ’s call.***

*May the God of healing free the earth from fear,  
freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued.  
May the God of love keep our commitment clear  
to a world restored, to human life renewed. **Chorus)***

## **Blessing and Sending Forth: Tim**

Let us go out into the world in hope. We are not alone. God is with us. Hope is promised in these Advent days. Hope is known deeply in these Advent days. God bless you as you wait. God bless you as you work for hope. God bless you as you live the life that is yours. Your hope is blessed. Go in hope.

## **Sung Response: Hope Shines as the Solitary Star (sing twice) MV 220**

Hope shines as the solitary star. Faith is the inner light.  
You and I together mirror the Light of lights and illumine the pathway home.

## **Postlude**

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