

Online Joint Worship for the Mid Fraser Cluster of the
United Church of Canada
Second Sunday of Advent – Peace
December 6th, 2020

Thank you for Connecting for Worship
Today's Leadership includes
Preacher: The Rev. Bill Booth
Presiding: The Rev. Tracy Fairfield
and The Rev. Tim Bowman
Musician – Donna Poncelet
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 Peace: The Assels Family

Our Advent journey continues our time of waiting.

As we wait, we prepare ourselves and our world for the Prince of Peace.

**We come to embrace the contrasts of light and of dark, creating the
balance of life lived in diversity.**

In the lively dance of perspective and practice, communion and connection are forged.
In the building of relationship and in the sharing of story, we come to know one another
as we listen for bonds of peace.

We come to strengthen all our relations.

We light the first candle reminding us of the way of hope.

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.***

We light our second candle to signify Christ's path of peace in a broken world.

We light the second candle.

Sung Response: "Hope is a Star" verse 2 (VU 7)

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth..

***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

Let us join as a community of faith in prayer:

We come to worship as those created in your image of self-giving love, O God. Teach us your steps of harmony and of wholeness - the rhythms of connection and of interdependence sustained through beauty. As you bless us with peace rooted in our shared vulnerability, may we invite others to trust us as companions along the way of transformation. Amen.

Written by Gord Dunbar. *Gathering*, Advent/Christmas/Easter 2020-21, pg. 70. Adapted, and used with permission.

Hymn: "O Ancient Love" VU 17

*O ancient love, processing through the ages;
O hidden love, revealed in human form;
O promised love, the dream of seers and sages:*

**R) O living Love, within our hearts be born,
O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**

O homeless love, that dwells among the stranger;
O lowly love, that knows the mighty's scorn;
O hungry love, that lay within a manger: **R)**

*O gentle love, caressing those in sorrow;
O tender love, that comforts those forlorn;
O hopeful love, that promises tomorrow: **R)***

O suffering love, that bears our human weakness;
O boundless love, that rises with the morn;
O mighty love, concealed in infant meekness: **R)**

Time with our Children:

Hymn: "We are Waiting Lord" (Advent 2) Tune of Kumba yah

We're preparing Lord, come by here (3x)
Oh, Lord, Come by here.

We invite the children and their leaders into breakout rooms.

Prayer of Confession: Tracy

"Christmas is coming!" the preacher proclaims.

"Christmas is coming!" the ads shout.

"Christmas is coming!" the children whisper.

But sometimes we have trouble getting too excited,
for like the prophet we have known the inconstancy of the human heart.

Our leaders have failed us;

Our friends have let us down;

we have disappointed ourselves and others.

Will anything be different?

Will we have peace after Christmas?

Silent Prayer

Assurance: Tracy

The Advent of Christ is not good news because of our own strength or the work of our hands.

The Word made flesh among us dares to be weak enough to dwell in our weakness and brave enough to live with our despair.

**The Advent of Christ is the faithfulness of God:
the Alpha and Omega, our end and our beginning.**

Sung Response: MV 16 - "Confitemini Domino"

*Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace, alleluia.*

*Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace, alleluia.*

WE LISTEN FOR THE WORD

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: "Comfort" Bill

Hymn: MV 12 "Come Touch our Hearts"

*Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
from failing embers build a blazing fire;
love strong enough to overturn injustice,
to seek a world more gracious,
come touch and bless our hearts.*

*Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;
create a space for spirit to grow in us,
let life and beauty fill us,
come touch and bless our souls.*

*Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;
help us to open doors of understanding,
to welcome truth and wisdom,
come touch and bless our minds.*

*Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;
that we may rise to follow and to serve,
steady now our nerve,
come touch and bless our wills.*

*Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,
to break the bread and share the cup of peace;
that we may love you with our heart,
our soul, our mind, our strength, our all,
come touch us with your grace.*

WE RESPOND IN LOVE AND ACTION

Prayers of the People and all the World: Tracy

Prayers shared from the chat: Tim

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: Tim

Here is our cash; here are our cheques; here is our Pre-Authorized Remittance;
here are our online donations.

They are a prayer for peace.

Here are our hearts; here is our time; here are our passions; here are our lives.

They are a prayer for peace.

Prayer of Dedication: Tim

“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.

Hear our prayer, God.

Amen.

Hymn: VU 18 “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”

*There’s a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!*

*The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where God, our God, may go!*

*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their King.*

*Like the flowers of the field they perish, like grass our works decay;
the power and pomp of nations shall pass, like a dream, away.*

*But the word of our God endureth, whose arm is ever strong;
God stands in the midst of nations, and soon will right the wrong.
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd, the lambs so gently hold;
to pastures of peace will lead them, and bring them safe to fold.*

*There’s a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!*

*The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where God, our God, may go!*

Blessing and Sending Forth: Bill

Sung Response: Peace Shines as the Solitary Star (sing twice) MV 220

Peace 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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