



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Rev. Gregory Daly: Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Carmen Llanos: Minister of Community Development

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Norma Grech

Advent Two – December 6, 2020

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Call to Worship

Do you Remember Me?

Yes, we remember You.

How do you Remember Me?

We remember You with Joy.

How do you Remember Me with Joy?

We remember the Joy that comes with a newborn baby.

*We sing with joy, we light candles to bring joy,
we share your joyous news with all the world.*

We share what we have so that more people can feel Your joy.

Remember me with Joy, as I remember you.

Let us worship together

Response

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

VU 2

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free!
from our fears and sins release us, Christ in whom our rest shall be.

Israel's strength and consolation, born salvation to impart;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now your gracious kingdom bring:

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

Life & Work of the Church

Welcome to online worship



Land Acknowledgement

As we prepare for worship, we take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which Birchcliff Bluffs United Church stands. It has been a site of human activity for many thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississauga's of the Credit and Scugog, part of the Williams Treaty. Today, the meeting place around Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory. We seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Advent Two Candle Lighting

Candle Lighting Hymn

Hope is a Star v. 2

Words: Brain Wren
Music: Joan Collier Fogg
© 1989 Hope Publishing Co.

VU 7

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

Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness

Words: © 1968 Moir A. J. Waters
Music: Adapted from Joachim Neander

VU 28

Herald! Sound the note of gladness!
Tell the news that Christ is here;
make a pathway through the desert
for the one who brings God near.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

Herald! Sound the note of judgement,
warning us of right and wrong,
turning us from sin and sadness,
till once more we sing the song.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

Herald! Sound the note of pardon!
Those repenting are forgiven;
God receives these wayward children,
and to all new life is given.

*Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!*

Herald! Sound the note of triumph!
Christ has come to share our life,
bringing God's own love and power,
granting victory in our strife.

*Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!*

Prayer for Grace

*Holy and loving God, we have dwelt in darkness and preferred it to the light;
we have been proud of our accomplishments and despaired over our shortcomings.
Smooth down the mountains of our pride, and lift up the valleys of our doubts.
Open a path in the wilderness of our lives that we might find a way to you again.
Refine us and prepare us once again for life in your kingdom. Amen*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

In past years the intergenerational drama group at BBUC called Shower Curtain Productions has performed a Christmas Pageant on White Gift Sunday, the second Sunday in Advent. Since we were unable to meet to create a new presentation for 2020, we decided to revisit the poem written for 2019 by Beth Moore: *The Road to Bethlehem*. Please enjoy the following video presentation of the poem, and thanks to the readers who recorded audio files and to the photographers, especially Barbara Merritt, who contributed photos of last year's play to be used for this video.

Jessie Gordon

The Road to Bethlehem



Hymn

O Come, Divine Messiah

Words: Simon-Joseph Pellegrin
Music: 16th century French carol

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.
*Dear Savior, haste! Come, come to earth.
Dispel the night and show your face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.
O come, Divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.*

O come, Desired of nations,
Whom priest and prophet long foretold.
Come break the captive's fetters,
Redeem the long-lost fold.
*Dear Savior, haste! Come, come to earth.
Dispel the night and show your face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.
O come, Divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.*

O come in peace and meekness,
For lowly will your cradle be:
Though clothed in human weakness
We shall your Godhead see.
*Dear Savior, haste! Come, come to earth.
Dispel the night and show your face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.
O come, Divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.*

Isaiah 40:1-11

New Revised Standard Version

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,

that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from God's hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of God shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of God has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of God blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get 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!”

¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹He 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

New Revised Standard Version

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

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

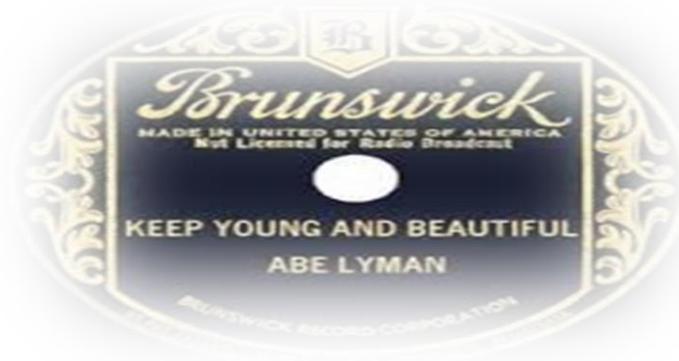
‘John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ‘And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ‘Now John was clothed 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.”

The word of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

Sermon

Comfort Ye (Keep Young and Beautiful says the World)



Hymn

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

VU 18

Words: James Lewis Milligan
Music: © 1938 Henry Hugh Bancroft

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!

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering



Prayers of the People



*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever.
Amen.*

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Hark the Glad Sound

Words: Philip Doddridge
Music: Thomas Haweis

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

He comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

Benediction & Commissioning

Postlude



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Other Resources for Today

Advent Calendar

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2020-10/au_advent-calendar-2020.pdf

Advent Body Prayers

<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/body-prayers.pdf>

Hidden in Plain Sight: White Gift Sunday (From United Church of Canada Advent Unwrapped)

The story of White Gift Sunday began in 1903, in Painesville, Ohio, where a woman was troubled by her children arguing over the value of different gifts. She suggested that they, together with other children of the Sunday school who were bringing gifts to church for those in need, should wrap the gifts in white paper. The uniformity of decoration would obscure the gifts' value. The idea allowed everyone to participate in the joy of giving without regard to economic status.

The ideas behind the origin of the White Gifts tradition resonate for us today. Poverty may be obvious to the attentive observer, but there are many communities in which poverty goes unseen. Churches continue to play a vital role not only in making someone's Christmas with simple gifts, but also in declaring that unseen needs are not forgotten. This is the joy that Mary expresses in the Magnificat—that God sees the needs of the people and desires us to rectify injustice, reconcile relationships, and mend the broken.

The liturgical significance of the White Gifts is the visibility of the offering and the ability of people of all ages to contribute.

Other Lectionary Readings

Psalm 85

NRSV

GOD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
² You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin. *Selah*
³ You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.
⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.
⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
⁶ Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O God,
and grant us your salvation.
⁸ Let me hear what God will speak,
for God will speak peace to the people,
to the faithful, to those who turn to God in their hearts.
⁹ Surely salvation is at hand for those who fear God,
that God's glory may dwell in our land.
¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
¹² God will give what is good,

and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before God,
and will make a path for God's steps.

2 Peter 3:8-15

New Revised Standard Version

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with God one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 God is not slow about God's promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with God's promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by God at peace, without spot or blemish; 15 and regard the patience of God as salvation. So also our beloved sibling Paul wrote to you according to wisdom given.