

Dorchester United Church Worship Service

Advent Hope

Welcome into the Peace of Advent

December 6, 2020

Prelude:

Call to Worship

In this season of expectation
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into the bustle of our lives
and the hard to find moments of solitude
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into our homes and situations
along with friends and families
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into our hearts, and those often hidden parts of our lives
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
For beneath the surface of your story
is an inescapable fact
You entered this world
as vulnerable as any one of us
in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.
Our fears, our insecurities and our sins
all that can separate us from God
exchanged by your Grace for Love.
We cannot comprehend the reasoning
only marvel that Salvation comes to us
through a baby born in a stable,
and reaches out to a world in need.
In this season of anticipation
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah

Advent Candle lighting Liturgies: Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

Readers and Candle Lighters: Al Busche & Sam Gartner

Jesus, Our Caregiver,

V1. Who do you say Jesus is?

V2: To me, a tree, Jesus is like a strong root, giving me strength and support.

V1: To me, a seed, Jesus is like a loving gardener, nurturing and caring for me. (Invite people to add their own sentences.)

All: We wait for Jesus, the firm foundation and careful gardener, who nurtures peace.

V2: (Lights second Advent candle)

V1: We wait for Jesus.

Please Join us in Singing: A Candle is Burning

A candle is burning, a candle of PEACE,
A candle to signal that conflict must cease
For Jesus is coming to show us the way
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay

Children's Time with Ashley: Advent; Peace

Prayer of Approach:

To you O Lord we bring our lives
Troubled, broken or at ease
A sacrificial offering
For you to use
Take away our selfishness
And teach us to love as you loved
Take away our sense of pride
And show us the meaning of humility
Take away our blindness
And show us the world through your eyes
Take away our greed
And teach us how to give as you gave
Show us your ways
Teach us your paths
That we might walk with you more closely
Our hand in your hand
Our feet in your footsteps
From the baby in a stable
To eternity, Amen
Time of Meditation for Offering: These Gifts We Bring
Prayer of Confession
Forgive us, Lord
We are a wandering people
Who kneel before you now
A people who bring prayers
And requests to your feet
When we have need of you
And nowhere else to turn
Then go our own way
When times are good
And life is easy
Forgive us and draw us close
Teach us your way
That we might follow
Help us to walk in your company
And know your presence

Assurance of Pardon

You are the Father who welcomes home
The prodigal who has wandered far
You are the Father who prepares a meal
When others would simply ignore
You are the Father whose love extends
Beyond our thoughts or minds
You are the Father who knows our hearts
And yet loves us as we are
You are the Father whose word we trust

In whose presence we have no fear
You are the Father whose tender touch
Makes a wounded spirit whole
You are the Father whose only Son
Was born that he might die
You are the Father whose gracious love
We celebrate this day. Amen

Hymn: VU 18 There is a Voice in the Wilderness

1 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 the God, our God, may go!

2 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.

3 But the word of our God endureth,
the arm of the Lord is 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.

4 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 the God, our, God may go!

Responsive Prayer

For your word which endures
We give you thanks
For your promises to which we hold
We give you thanks
For such intimacy with you
We give you thanks
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
We give you thanks
For those gathered here today
We give you thanks
For family, friend and stranger
We give you thanks
For those who minister your grace
We give you thanks
For the hope that lives each Advent
of a love that has no end
We give you thanks, Amen

Hymn: VU 688 O Day of God Draw Nigh

1. O day of God, draw nigh
in beauty and in power;
come with thy timeless judgment now
to match our present hour.

2. Bring to our troubled minds,
uncertain and afraid,
the quiet of a steadfast faith,
calm of a call obeyed.

5. O day of God, draw nigh
as at creation's birth;
let there be light again,
and set thy judgments on the earth.

3. Bring justice to our land,
that all may dwell secure,
and finely build for days to come
foundations that endure.

4. Bring to our world of strife
thy sovereign word of peace,
that war may haunt the earth no more,
and desolation cease.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Reflective Time

The Man Attracting a Crowd

Imagine you are walking along a tree-lined path in your favorite park. It's a beautiful day with the sun shining in a clear blue sky. You are smiling as you feel the sun on your face and listen to the birds singing. But your heart is heavy. You need to make a decision, and you are unsure what to do. You begin praying. *Dear God, please be with me this day. I'm not sure what I need to do. It feels so difficult. Help me see your will in my life.* As you walk, you notice a large crowd of people. They are standing, sitting, and some have even climbed up the trees and are hanging from the limbs. As you approach, you strain to see what they are looking at. You try to see over the shoulders of those standing, but it's hard. Finally, you notice a clear spot to see what's happening. You have to stand on your toes, but you see an unusual man standing at the center of the scene. He is surrounded by the crowd, who are all facing him, listening to what he is saying. Something is drawing you to him. You gently move through the crowd who lets you pass. You find yourself standing at the edge of the circle in front of the man. He has a strange look about him. His clothes are torn and dirty. *Why are so many people listening to him?* You wonder.

As you stand there, you hear his voice, but the words are unclear to you. You try to listen harder, but you still cannot make out what he says. Then, as if he knew you were straining to hear him, his eyes look directly into yours. His eyes are dark and mysterious. There is something in his eyes that speaks to you more than the words he's saying. You feel so safe in his gaze. A deep feeling of peace comes over you. He continues to look at you as you hear him say, "You are looking for the path to follow. Jesus has shown you the way. Follow him. Listen to his voice deep inside you. He walks the path with you." His eyes continue to look at you. You feel the tears running down your cheeks. *Thank you. Thank you,* you say in a soft whisper. You move through the crowd, your heart lighter. Now you see the path before you.

Concluding Prayer

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.

Amen.

Hymn: Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness ever joy

Oh, master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
It isn't pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men let we receive
And in dying that we're born to turn around

Oh, master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness ever joy

A New Creed

We are called to be the Church...to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope...

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

Scriptures: Reader: Al Busche

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people.

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.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (VU p. 802)

Will you be angry with us forever?

Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. Selah You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

2 Peter 3:8-15a

The Day will come like a thief in the night. But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. In accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Mark 1:1-8

The preaching of John the baptizer. 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."

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; My Peace I give to you; Not as the world gives do I give to you; Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace [eirene] among all people.—

Message: I will give you a “Peace” of my mind

Prayer:

Father God, your servant John the Baptist came with a challenging message;
calling for repentance and lives to be transformed.
Those who heard were filled with expectation,
waiting for Messiah,
and yet ultimately failing to notice his arrival in that humble stable.

This Advent season,
may we be filled with expectation,
as we celebrate the greatest gift of all;
your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Hymn: Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be
Send forth your
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there
Send forth your word
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

A Peaceful Benediction

Be people of peace.

Let peace live in your heart and share the peace of Christ with all you meet.

Share peace by acting out of compassion and not fear.

Share peace by listening to all sides of the story.

Share peace by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share peace.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share peace and hope with those you meet. Amen

Postlude: