

December 12, 2021
Third Sunday of Advent

We Gather In God's Presence

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Joy can be elusive.

In shadowed times, it is difficult for us to find joy.

The night may feel like it is closing in on us on
these shortest days of the year.

Yet we believe that joy is possible.

We believe that the light will return.

Embracing joy in times of trouble is a choice.

May we find the strength to choose joy.

May we let God lead us through the tears
to the places and people of joy.

May joy be found in a manger and throughout the world.

(The third Advent candle is lit.)

*Written by Eric Hebert-Daly.
Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-22,
page 69. Used with permission.*

Response VU 6 "A Candle Is Burning" vs. 6

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...

Call to Worship

Your promise dawns upon us, Living God –
we wait expectantly.

Your hope arises among us, Living God –
we wait confidently.

Your Cherished One appears for us, Living God –
we wait in joy.

Hymn VU 29 "Hark the Glad Sound"

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.

Opening Prayer (*unison*)

For the mothers who are ready to tear tyrants from their thrones, so that their children may live and love;
for the fathers that stand beside them, to offer strength and support – alleluia, God!

May the joy that we feel in your Presence, fill us with life abundant, so that, when the time is right, joy
can be birthed anew into your Creation.

Alleluia. Alleluia! ALLELUIA! Amen!

Anthem: “Mary, Did You Know” Carrie Underwood

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=tEEv3mS52lw&feature=share>

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Hymn VU 68 “All Poor Ones and Humble”

All poor ones and humble and all those who stumble,
come hastening, and feel not afraid;
for Jesus, our treasure, with love past all measure,
in lowly poor manger was laid.

Though wise men who found him
laid rich gifts around him,
yet oxen they gave him their hay,
and Jesus in beauty accepted their duty;
contented in manger he lay.

Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
our service he ne'er can despise;
whose love still is able to show us that stable,
where softly in manger he lies.

The Christ Child will lead us, the Good Shepherd feed us
and with us abide till his day.

Then hatred he'll banish; then sorrow will vanish,
and death and despair flee away.

And he shall reign ever, and nothing shall sever
from us the great love of our King;
his peace and his pity shall bless his fair city;
his praises we ever shall sing.

Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
our service he ne'er can despise;
whose love still is able to show us that stable,
where softly in manger he lies.

We Respond to God's Blessing

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer (VU 959)

God of Love, "A voice cries in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord!" Yet we need you, by your Holy Spirit, to prepare a way in our hearts and minds and lives.

Prepare among us the path of joy.

We pray for those whose spirits need to be buoyed up and who have forgotten childhood's gift of taking delight in the simple pleasures of life, which come from you, Extravagant God. We pray for Your church that it may be a joy-giving light in the darkness. Especially we pray for Kilworth United Church, and their minister, the Rev. Catherine Tovell.

Prepare among us the path of love.

We pray for all who need to be embraced by love:

all who are cramped and narrowed in spirit;

all who have lost the ability to trust;

all who ache for a signal they are cherished, or even noticed by someone;

all who struggle with a lifetime burden of being told they are not good enough.

Prepare among us, O God, the path of hope.

We pray for those in need of hope today:

all who mourn the death of a loved one; the friends and families of Jim Parish and Alexandra Stemp.

all who grieve the end of a relationship;

all who are worried for a friend;

all who are anxious for a family member's health;

all who are overwhelmed by illness or disability, especially we pray for:

Cecil Jenkins, Marleen Parish, Marlene Smith, Mac Toner, and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts ;

all who live in the midst of social collapse;

all who live in the midst of warfare and terrorism;

all who live in grinding poverty.

Prepare among us the path of peace. Grant the peace that comes in following your ways, in practicing justice and righteousness, in sharing our gifts for your sake. We pray for the peoples of this world, that they may be reconciled one to another and learn to live in peace. Especially we pray this week for the people of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

O God of hope, peace, joy and love, we honour you now and always, through Jesus, your Anointed One, who taught us to pray, singing,

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come,

your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

Amen.

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Sometimes we wonder how generous we should be. John the Baptizer was very clear: share what you have so everyone has enough. Do not give in to greed. Be content. I wonder what that could look like here? What joy would that kind of generosity bring us? Friends, let us trust God to be sufficient in all things as we share our gifts for our community of faith and for God's work in the world through Mission & Service.

Offertory Hymn "Bless Our Hands" *to tune Good King Wencaslas*

Bless our hands to do your work, bless the gifts we're bearing.

May your love and grace be known in the way we're sharing.

Peace and hope and joy and love – these are gifts worth giving.

These be ours to pass along when in Christ we're living.

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Prayer of Dedication

God of joy, may giving these gifts be our deepest joy. You are the God of abundance, and on this day, we give thanks knowing you are our salvation; we will trust and will not be afraid, for you are our hope and our strength. Amen.

We Listen for God's Word

Responsive Reading: Isaiah 12:2-6

I will praise you, O God,

for though you were angry with me,

your anger turned away, and you comforted me.

Surely God is my salvation.

I will trust and not be afraid,

for you, God, are my strength and might;

you show yourself my saviour.

With joy we draw water from the wells of salvation.

Give thanks and call on God's name.

Make known God's deeds among the nations;

proclaim that God's name is exalted.

Sing praises to God, whose work is glorious;

let it be known in all the earth.

Shout for joy, you who dwell in Zion,

for the Holy One of Israel is majestic among you.

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹ In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

*The other readings for this week are: **Zephaniah 3:14-20; and Philippians 4:4-7.** You can look them up on www.biblegateway.com and search for the passage.....in any translation you prefer (ie. King James - KJV, NKJV, NRSV, etc.)*

Hymn VU 9 "People Look East"

People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the rose is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled;
even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the bird is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the star is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

Meditation: "What are you expecting?"

We Go Forth in Hope

Hymn VU 59 "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Commissioning and Benediction

God who leads by a star, **show us the direction to Bethlehem.**

Lead us to the place where love and joy are to be born into our lives.

**Give us signs along the road as we make our journey,
that we may follow in your way.**

Amen.

Sung Response: VU 35 "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" vs. 2

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!

Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy!

Jesus Christ was born for this!

He hath opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Announcements.....

Union:

Tax Receipts for 2021: Please ensure all offerings are received by December 28 in order to be included on your 2021 tax receipt.

M&S: Please ensure all donations to the Mission and Service fund are received by December 14 so they can be forwarded to Toronto prior to Christmas.

Dorchester:

Tax Receipts for 2021: Please ensure all offerings are received by December 26 (December 28 for e-transfers) in order to be included on your 2021 tax receipt.

2022 Offering Envelopes: Offering envelopes for 2022 are now available. To get your set, please contact Dianne at the church office at 519-268-3154 or dorchesteruc@gmail.com

ALL:

A Living Nativity will be staged at 276 Scotland Drive (just west of Westchester Bourne/Belmont Road) nightly from Sunday, December 12 until Saturday, January 1, 2022 from 5-7:30 p.m. Donations for the food bank and/or feminine hygiene products are gratefully accepted.

Scripture Readings for next week: (Dec. 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)