



Sunday December 17, 2023
Second Sunday of Advent - Joy

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Uxbridge



THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Prelude

Noel: The Happy Shepherds

Daquin

Welcome & Opening Greeting

Advent Candle Lighting

One: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed.

All: The spirit of God is upon me, because God has anointed me and has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Isaiah 61:1-3a).

One: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

All: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.

One: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven.

All: Amen.

(<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2023>)

Lighting of three candles of the Advent Wreath

A Candle Is Burning

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,

a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

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.

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.

Tune: Cradle Song (Common Praise 1998 #126)
Text by Sandra Dean

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Processional Hymn

The Kingdom of God Is Justice and Joy

CP 631

Land Acknowledgement

Together we say

The Township of Uxbridge is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Mississauga, and Chippewa (Anishinaabe) people. We acknowledge that these lands are covered under the Williams Treaties and are home to many Indigenous communities. We honour, recognize, and respect this nation and Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we now live, work, and play. (Township of Uxbridge)

Litany for Advent 3

One: The prophets call and an apostle writes to announce that joy comes from God.

All: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice." (Philippians 4)

One: Grief, pain and loss are inevitable. But woven into life is the joy of living in a universe that reflects God's beauty.

All: Advent provides me time to nurture joy in my life and in the world God loves. Advent calls us to share with others the good news that comes into the world with the birth of Christ.

One: Holy are you, Source of all new life among us.

All: Jesus Christ comes as joy to the world. We join with all creation and lift our hearts in joyful praise. (Presbyterian.ca)

Collect of the Day

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son. Give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** (Churchofengland.org)

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. (NRSVA)

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

Psalm 126 Refrain



Gradual Alleluia

CP 712

*“Speak O Lord, your servant is listening,
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”*

Holy Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

Reader: The Lord be with you

People: And also with you

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light. When Jews from Jerusalem sent a group of priests and officials to ask John who he was, he was completely honest. He didn't evade the question. He told the plain truth: "I am not the Messiah." They pressed him, "Who, then? Elijah?" "I am not." "The Prophet?" "No." Exasperated, they said, "Who, then? We need an answer for those who sent us. Tell us something—anything!—about yourself." "I'm thunder in the desert: 'Make the road straight for God!' I'm doing what the prophet Isaiah preached." Those sent to question him were from the Pharisee party. Now they had a question of their own: "If you're neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?" John answered, "I only baptize using water. A person you don't recognize has taken his stand in your midst. He comes after me, but he is not in second place to me. I'm not even worthy to hold his coat for him." These conversations took place in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing at the time. *(The Message)*

Reader: The Gospel of Christ

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Gradual Alleluia

CP 712

*"Speak O Lord, your servant is listening,
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!"*

Reflection

Contemplative Pause

People: God we hear and receive your words of hope and encouragement and with thoughtful gladness we sing.

Lord, We Hear Your Word with Gladness (vs 1)

CP 447

*"Lord we hear your word with gladness: you have spoken – we rejoice:
Words of love and life and freedom – help us make their truth our choice!
Now in holy celebration for your Word we worship you;
Spoken, written, known in Jesus, ours today to prove anew."*

Affirmation of Faith for Advent

We believe in God,
creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—
God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn—
who emerges as the herald of hope,
God's laughter in the face of despair.
Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way
to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ,
and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God.
Announced by the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus,
and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven,
when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow
will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness,
and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.

For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray:
Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

(By Nathan Nettleton, re-worship.blogspot.com)

Choir Anthem

Come Sing a Joyful Song

Purcell

Prayers of the People

Confession and Absolution

Friends in Christ, let us confess to God the faults and shortcomings of our world; its pride
its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is
wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for all humanity.
**Merciful God, we confess that we have not given you the things that are yours. We
quibble over technicalities and argue over questions that do not lead us to love you,
ourselves, or our neighbors well. We ignore your goodness that is all around us, and
we do not allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit who empowers us to live as
people who glorify you. We do not recognize your holy touch in the world around
us, and we neglect our responsibility to treat all things and all people as sacred.
Forgive us, we pray, and free us to live in love and peace with you, with ourselves,
with our neighbors, and with all creation. Amen.**

(Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2023)

Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm
and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

May the peace of the risen Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Hymn

Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes

CP 98

Prayer over the Gifts

God of hope, renew in us the joy of your salvation and make us a living sacrifice to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

One: Our God is here.

All: God's Spirit is with us.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to our God.

One: Let us give thanks to our God.

All: it is right to give thanks and praise.

Living God, Parent of light, hope of nations, friend of sinners, builder of the city that is to come. Your love is made visible in Jesus Christ. You restore the lost and give dignity [to the marginalised] and despised. In the face of Jesus Christ your light shines out, flooding lives with goodness and truth, gathering into one a divided and broken humanity. With people from every race and nation, with the Church of all the ages, with the apostles, evangelists, and martyrs, we join the angels of heaven in their unending song:

Sanctus

CP 722

Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness. Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

On the night he gave himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you

and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb. We rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption God, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kin-dom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Parent, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us join in prayer with confidence.

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting [Parent], Prince of Peace—
hallowed be your name.**

Immanuel, God with us—hallowed be your name.

**In us, through us, and around us, your kin-dom come,
where the wolf will live with the lamb and the lion will feed with the calf.**

Bread of life, feed us with your truth.

For our indifference to the wonder of your coming, forgive us.

Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day.

**Word who became flesh and lived among us,
we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth.**

**As You come to us now, and You will come to us again in glory,
when we will join all heaven and earth in giving you blessing
and honor and glory and might forever! Amen.**

(www.minnesotaumc.org)

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ

All: We being many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Agnus Dei

CP 685

Communion

Prayer after Communion

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 **Amen.** (AdventUnwrapped.ca)

The Doxology

Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Sending forth & Blessing**A Joyful Blessing**

One: Be people of joy.

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

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

All: In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

As we go out into the wonder of God's creations, we will share joy, peace, and hope with those we meet. Amen. (liturgylink.net)

Announcements**Recessional Hymn***Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

CP 101

The Dismissal

Go in joy to love and serve Christ who is our eternal joy.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude*Noel: When God is Born Among Us*

Daquin