

Trinity-Grace United Church
December 10th, 2023
Second Sunday in Advent

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

THE JESSE TREE

The symbols for the second week of Advent are:

Multi-Coloured Coat (Joseph): Genesis 37

Stone Tablets (Moses): Exodus 19 & 20

Tambourine (Miriam): Exodus 14 & 15

Ram's Horn Trumpet (Joshua): Joshua 6: 1-20

Red Cloth Rope (Rahab): Joshua 2

Scales of Justice (Deborah): Judges 4 & 5

INTROIT: "Peace for the Children"

Words & Music: Doreen Lankshear-Smith

Peace for the children: peace, peace

Peace for the children, we pray.

Following the path of One of peace,

we work for healing, we work for peace;

peace for the children today.

Peace for the nations...

Peace in the soul...

OPENING RESPONSES:

(One/**All**)

One: Wake up, my friends, and hear the words of the messenger:

All: “Do not be afraid. A baby will be born, and you will call him Jesus.”

One: Come and hear the words spoken long ago:

All: “The newborn king will be called the Son of the Most High.”

One: Will there be an end to his kingdom, his mission of love on earth?

All: “Of his kingdom there will be no end.”

One: Then have no fear, for the kingdom of heaven is eternal.

All: The kingdom of heaven is near. Come, let us worship!

CANDLE LIGHTING

Sing: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come to us, our Everlasting Home,
Your people lost and broken, roam,
And seek a place of welcome and peace,
From war and violence, may they know release.**

**Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.**

Words by Juanita L. Austin – Nov. 29 2017 (used with permission) | Tune: Veni Emmanuel

Lighting the Candles of Hope & Peace

One/All:

In our most desperate times, by day or by night, the hope of Christ may be found.
We watch and we wait to witness the hope of heaven making a place here on earth.

We light the candle of hope, because hope has come to us.

The candle of Hope is lit

When we are overwhelmed with conflict without or within,
the peace of Christ may be found.

We welcome the peace of Christ, present among us and available to all.

Today we light the candle of peace, because peace has come to us.

The candle of Peace is lit

All:

Welcome, peace of Christ.

We breathe in your presence, which sustains us and makes us whole.

Where will we find you today?

Prayer

Leader:

God of peace,

You sent your messages in the dark of night
to prepare us for the coming Son of God.

The night is no stranger to you.

You meet us in our dreams, in our thoughts,
in the dark, and in the morning sunrise.

As we join together today in worship,
we direct our attention toward your message and your messengers,
speaking to us in word, song, prayer, and presence.

You call us on a journey of faithfulness through light and darkness.

And no matter where we find ourselves,
may we discover the peace of Christ among us today.

Amen.

Response: (MV 220)

Peace shines in the solitary star,

Faith is the inner light;

You and I together mirror the Light of lights,

And illumine the pathway home.

HYMN: "There's A Voice in the Wilderness" (VU 18)

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 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,
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.

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 God, our God, may go!

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

(One/All)

God of surprises, you call us from the narrowness of our traditions to new ways of being church, from the captivities of our culture to creative witness for justice, from the smallness of our horizons to the bigness of your vision.

Clear the way in us, your people, that we might call others to freedom and renewed faith.

Jesus, wounded healer, you call us from preoccupation with our own histories and hurts to daily tasks of peacemaking, from privilege to pilgrimage, from insularity to inclusive community.

Clear the way in us, your people, that we might call others to wholeness and integrity.

Holy, transforming Spirit, you call us from fear to faithfulness, from clutter to clarity, from a desire to control to deeper trust, from the refusal to love to a readiness to risk.

Clear the way in us, your people, that we might all know the beauty and power and danger of the gospel.

(Silence is held)

A WORD OF GRACE

SHARING PEACE

Today we celebrate the incarnation of the Prince of Peace, and the peace that finds us both in dark and light places. We find peace among us and between us as we gather to worship. Greet one another with the peace of Christ.

One: May the peace of Christ,
God's promise of peace for a weary world,
be with you all!

All: And also with you!

We take a moment to greet each other and share a sign of peace

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

(One)

God of grace,
you speak words of peace in the midst of : turbulent times.
Send your Holy Spirit to open our ears to that hope.
Give us wisdom to read our own times
through the lens of your grace,
and find comfort and courage through Christ,
your Living Word.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 85: 8-13

(One/All)

Let me hear what you will say, O God,
For you will speak peace to your people,
To the faithful who turn their hearts to you.
**Surely salvation is near those who heed you,
and your glory will dwell in our land.**

Mercy and faithfulness will meet,
Justice and peace will embrace.
**Faithfulness will spring up from the earth,
and righteousness look down from heaven.**

You, O God, will give what is good,
**Righteousness will go before you,
and the paths of your feet will be peace.**

Luke 1: 36-59

Mary and Elizabeth

36 And now, Mary, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God.'

38 Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, **40** where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit **42** and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. **43** And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? **44** For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. **45** And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

Mary's Song of Praise

46 And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

47

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

48

for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

49

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

50

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

51

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

52

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

53

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

54

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

55

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

56 And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. **58** Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father.

One: For the living word of God in scripture,
and among us, and within us:

All: Thanks be to God!

EXPLORING THE WORD: "Do Not Fear"

- Shadia Qubti, TGUC Community Engagement Animator

LYRIC VIDEO: "Song for the World"

Ramallah Friends School (2023)

During the hymn, the offering box is brought forward

RESPONDING

HYMN: "O Day of Peace" (VU 682)

1 O day of peace that dimly shines
through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,

guide us to justice, truth, and love,
delivered from our selfish schemes.

May swords of hate fall from our hands,
our hearts from envy find release,
till by God's grace our warring world
shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.

2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
nor shall the fierce devour the small;
as beasts and cattle calmly graze,
a little child shall lead them all.

Then enemies shall learn to love,
all creatures find their true accord;
the hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
for all the earth shall know the Lord.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Trinity-Grace is grateful for the many ways we are gifted and called to contribute to God's mission through this faith community.

Prayer of Dedication

(Leader)

God of Peace,
Light of the World and Nurturing Womb of Safety,
to you belong the lights sustaining us
and the vastness of the universe surrounding us.
Bless our offerings of time and skills and treasure.
Guide us to steward these gifts with wisdom and compassion,
In Christ's name. Amen.

CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

We share announcements, insights, joys & concerns.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Periods of silence will be left for you to offer your own prayers

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES (The Lord's Prayer)

You can use the words printed in the order of service, or pray in whatever words or language you would prefer...

(All)

**Our loving Source of life,
may your name be held sacred by all creation.
May your reign come, and your holy will be done,
here among us,
as in the great communion of saints.**

**Provide what we need to sustain us this day.
Forgive our sins,
as we forgive the hurts others cause us.
Keep us from trials too great to bear,
and strengthen us to resist evil.**

**For yours is the realm of love,
yours the energy of life,
and yours the true essence of all that is,
now and always.
Amen.**

HYMN: "Tomorrow Christ Is Coming" (VU 27)

Tune: Lancashire (VU 421)

- 1 Tomorrow Christ is coming,
as yesterday he came;
a child is born this moment,
we do not know its name.
The world is full of darkness,
again there is no room;
the symbols of existence
are stable, cross and tomb.
- 2 Tomorrow will be Christmas,
the feast of love divine,
but for the nameless millions
the star will never shine.

Still is the census taken
with people on the move;
new infants born in stables
are crying out for love.

- 3 Our God becomes incarnate
in every human birth.
Created in God's image,
we must make peace on earth.
God will fulfil Love's purpose
and this shall be the sign:
we shall find Christ among us
for this is God's design.

AFFIRMATION OF PEACE

(One/All)

God of Peace,
we find peace in you because you made yourself low,
living among us and experiencing our human struggles.
We call upon your promise of peace today.

Where there is war,
let there be an end to the violence.

Where there is anxiety,
let there be serenity.

Where there is fear,
let there be an assurance of safety.

Where there is darkness with no light, or light with no rest,
may your peace abound in our hearts and minds.

May we find peace in your promise proclaimed so long ago:
of your kingdom there will be no end.

SENDING & BLESSING

As our worship concludes, our prayers rise as we sing:

SUNG RESPONSE

**In this season filled with expectation
We await the holy child;
God who comes to dwell among us
Bringing hope to earth beguiled.
As God's people, may we go
To the world, our hope to show.**

(Tune: VU 62)

POSTLUDE