

## WORSHIP AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

November 28, 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

Email [sketchingalong4@gmail.com](mailto:sketchingalong4@gmail.com) to get the Zoom link.

### Prelude

#### Hymn: VU 1 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vv. 1, 4, & 5*

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lowly exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

4. O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,  
from every foe deliver them  
that trust your mighty power to save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

5. O come, O Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

### Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's United Church, creating sacred space to connect with the holy. And what a special day, this first Sunday of Advent!

Again, we are blessed to have Tracey Le Grand leading music for us. Thank you for sharing your talent with us. Thanks also to our reader today, Freda Wilson.

If you are new here, please note the credits at the end of this worship on screen with contact information – Facebook, our website, email and just a traditional phone call to us to say hello and allow us to get to know you. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7 with hosts Bev and Diane.

As we prepare to worship, let us take a quiet moment ... [silence]

### Inviting Holy Light

Hope admits that we're not quite there yet. Hope means that something good is within reach. God is our hope. Let us taste, see, hear, feel, smell, anticipate this hope as we light the Christ candle.  
[light Christ Candle]

### Nurturing Safe Space

We seek Holy Spirit and Love to help us nurture safe space in this place where all can participate in worship and life regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

### Acknowledging Traditional Territory

For millennia, this land we live on has been cared for by First Peoples. When Europeans came to this land, and church communities formed, we did not appreciate the wisdom and spirituality that

had been here; we imposed our civilization as a condition of accepting the gospel. We are grateful to be allowed to use these lands for growing spiritually and worshipping. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Indigenous, the Métis, ancestors of this particular land, particularly those of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek. Let us work earnestly for Reconciliation.

### **Advent Candle Lighting**

Speaker 1: For the signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, we light this candle.

Speaker 2: For the unknown and the not yet,

**ALL: we light this candle.**

Speaker 1: For seeds planted in hope and prayers prayed in earnest, we light this candle.

Speaker 2: For doubt and confusion,

**ALL: we, too, light this candle.**

Speaker 1: For these days of wandering and wondering, we light this candle.

Speaker 2: For all that we didn't know we were waiting for,

**ALL: we light this candle of Hope. Let us worship.**

*[The candle is lit.]*

### **Praying for Grace**

Let us pray: Creator, we are so grateful for all that you have entrusted to us. But we know that on our watch, the cries of joy of your creatures are muted. We yearn for justice, but it seems that we as a human race fall short. We seek Grace, Holy One.

**We will hear today, Jeremiah speaking about waiting in hope. Are there areas in my life where I feel hopeless? Can I open my heart in those moments to allow myself to believe in new beginnings?**

*[Silence... play singing bowl]*

**During this pandemic, where have we experienced hopelessness? This Advent season, how might I bring God's promise of hope to my family, church and community?**

*[Silence... play singing bowl]*

### **Words of Assurance**

Despite all we do, or do not do, God loves us. As surely as the bud unfolds and calls forth the spring and the harvest, so God transforms our lives anew. Rejoice, friends, for God is near!

### **The Prayer Jesus Taught**

This we pray along with the prayer taught to us by beloved who loved, and called us to love too,

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Time Up Front**

Ok, here is a pop quiz to see if you know your leaves and trees.

What kind of a tree does this leaf come from? *(Maple leaves graphic)*

Maple? Right. *(Maple tree graphic)*

That was an easy one. What tree does this leaf grow on? *(Oak leaves graphic)*

Oak? Correct. What tree does these leaves belong to? *(Oak tree graphic)*

Oak is correct. You are pretty good, but can you guess what kind of a tree this sprig comes from?

*(Olive leaves graphic)*

Olive. Correct. *(Olive tree graphic)*

I saw a lot of olive trees in Palestine and Israel when I was there, it is a powerful symbol for the people of that land of peace and justice. A deep seeded hope for God's salaam/shalom to come there. Goodness that comes from trees, including the fruit, nuts, olive oil, and maple syrup.

*Rev. Dave shares the story of Jeremiah telling a disheartened people that God will give them a leader someday who will come from their family tree. He will be a righteous branch: that means he will produce good things (love, caring, respect, hope). We see those qualities in the person of Jesus. We can share those qualities of Jesus with others since we are part of Jesus' family tree.*

This is a repeat after me prayer:

God of all, ... as we await your dream for our world to come true, ... teach us to be brave, ... to be creative, ... to never lose hope, ... and to trust you. Amen.

### **Hymn: VU 7 Hope is a Star, vs. 1**

1. Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
leading us on till the morning is bright.

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.

### **Scripture Reading (Freda Wilson)**

#### **Gardens You May Never Get to See – A retelling of Jeremiah 33:14-16**

*Today we hear the words of the prophet Jeremiah, shared in a time of great crisis. This version, though, is a paraphrase. May God's Word speak to our hearts today.*

Jeremiah listened to God. But sometimes he wished he couldn't hear what God had to say. Jeremiah's people were being attacked. A cruel king was about to take over the land. But in the middle of the bad news, Jeremiah could also hear God's good news repeating over and over again, like a bell that wouldn't stop ringing:

"A different day is surely coming. You will still be my people, and I will still be your God. You will know me because my words will be written on the inside of your hearts."

God told Jeremiah to buy a field before the cruel king took over the land. "You will get it back," God said. "Nothing is too hard for me. And because I love doing good for my people, I will plant them in this land and love them with all my heart and all my soul."

Jeremiah was bewildered. It was hard to love a God that made no sense. But then God said one more thing:

"A different day is coming. In this land where you are planted, another Branch will grow. This Branch will be a different kind of ruler who will seek justice, who will live in right ways, a ruler who loves the people and longs to keep them safe."

Jeremiah had not seen this kind of ruler. The rulers he knew were violent and mean and would fight for a long, long time. But maybe, just maybe, if he held on to that little piece of land, this new Branch might grow up in spite of the mean rulers, there in a garden that he might never get to see.

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Let us pray: *(note the suggested gestures)*

*(hands by ears)* May we hear your voice speaking to us today, God.

*(touch heart)* May we feel your presence and encouragement.

*(Hands out in front of you)* May we live courageously and be filled with hope. Amen.

**Message: “Hope, now?”**

*Message will be posted on the website when it is available.*

**Hymn: VU 12 *She Walked in the Summer*, vv. 1, 2, & 4**

1. She walked in the summer through the heat on the hill.  
She hurried as one who went with a will.  
She danced in the sunlight when the day was done.  
Her heart knew no evening who carried the sun.

2. Fresh as a flower at the first ray of dawn,  
she came to her cousin whose morning was gone.  
There leaped a little child in the ancient womb,  
and there leaped a little hope in every ancient tomb.

4. When you walk in the summer through the heat on the hill,  
when you're wound with the wind and one with Her will,  
be brave with the burden you are blessed to bear,  
for it's Christ that you carry everywhere,  
everywhere, everywhere.

**Reaching Out Moment (*Sylvia Carscadden*)**

**“What We Do in Advent”** (presentation by the Reaching Out Team)

**Offering Our Gifts to God**

Challenged by the fact that there is poverty, children go to school hungry, people find themselves living in a tent in the middle of a city – challenged by all of that, we hang on hope. Not empty hope, but hope as a promise from our Creator, from our Scripture tradition, that if we persevere with compassion and pray and work for justice, God's vision will grow.

Thank you for your gifts, towards all that work that the Reaching Out team have told you about, about how your donations to St. Andrew's United Church get directed in these challenging times. Thank you for your gifts to Mission and Service, justice and care offered around Canada and the world. Thank you!

**Offering Prayer**

Let us pray: God of mercy, of hope, of promise: accept these gifts we offer to you, in thanksgiving for all that you have done for us. You journey with us wherever we go, and you promise to bring us into new days and new ways. We dedicate our gifts and our lives to service in Christ's name. Amen.

**Prayers of the Community (Call and Response)**

God, hear our prayers,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Compassionate One, we see our world and we worry about it. We know that you worry too. Political unrest, a reflection of people in power not attentive to the needs of those they are responsible to, but also cries for peace and justice. God, we offer to you our concerns for these your vulnerable children near and far.

God, hear our prayers,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Earth-keeper, we see the effects of our lack of human stewardship of the earth, climate change that has had devastating effects from India to British Columbia, and disproportionately impacting the 2/3 of our world with floods, draughts, and harsher storms. We look to the sky and earth and ask you, Creator, to help us to pay attention to the ways we can mend and tend your creation. Hold Mother Earth in your care.

God, hear our prayers,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Gentle Healer, we look to the twilight of suffering and illness. Our loved ones, friends and strangers alike, who live with uncertainty and feel alone and tired. Help us, God, to pay attention to the ways we can ease the pain of those who suffer. Help us when we suffer in mind and body. In this silent moment we offer our personal prayers of concern as we hold up this prayer list... *(silence)*

God, hear our prayers,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Guiding Light, we look to the dawning sky of a new day and a new way – help us to live your way of abundant promise and blessing. Amen.

### **Closing Hymn: VU 9 People, Look East, vv. 1, 4, & 5**

1. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

### **Blessing**

We give thanks to God, who blesses us with the joy we find in each other.  
**May God be present to us in the faces of those we meet today.**

Let us be filled with love for one another. And may God strengthen our hearts in holiness.  
**Amen.**

### **Benediction Hymn: MV 220 Hope Shines as the Solitary Star**

Hope shines as the solitary star.  
Faith is the inner light.  
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,  
and illumine the pathway home.

### **Postlude**

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Almost all Prayers and Responses, as well as the Paraphrase of the Jeremiah reading, come from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Advent Year C. ©2021 Wood Lake Books Inc.

Call to Worship written by Éric Hébert-Daly. *Gathering, Advent Year C*, page 69.

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