

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 12 04

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 2nd Sunday of Advent December 4th .

Announcements

HYMN Let There be Light [v 1, 3, 5]

#727

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

Insert

Hymn

Hope is a star (v 1, 2)

#119

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of wisdom and understanding, of peace and promise, you are the giver of life and you live within each of us. You welcome us as your children and call us to live with hospitality toward each other. In Jesus Christ, you offer us living water to wash away our sin and sorrow, and call us back to paths of justice and righteousness. With the Holy Spirit, you baptize us for service and life in community, refreshing us each day with your presence and purpose. Glory and honour and praise be yours, Creator, Christ and Spirit, this day and every day, now and evermore.

God of peace, we confess that we find ourselves taking your commitment to us for granted. We fail to be accountable, yet we judge others harshly. We are slow to welcome others, especially if their cultures or convictions differ from ours. You call us to repent and we resist. Forgive our sense of entitlement and challenge us with your vision of peace within your creation. Amen

Receive the Good News in peace. With great mercy, God forgives what we confess and offers us new life in Christ. Receive the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination

God of peace and possibility, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Prince of Peace.

SCRIPTURE

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

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Tanakh*	Isaiah 11:1–10	[B#640/W#710]
Tanakh	Psalms 72:1–7, 18–19	[B#533/W#589]
Epistle	Romans 15:4–13	[B#163/W#170]
Gospel	Matthew 3:1–12	[B#2/W#2]

May God bless our understanding of this, God's holy word. **The word of the Lord.**

Between times

O holy One, by the power of your Holy Spirit at work in the word read and proclaimed, may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you. Amen. The season of Advent encourages us to consider our existence "between the times." On the one hand, Advent reminds us of God's promise to the people of Israel. God arrived in human flesh to deliver God's people. On the other hand, Advent calls us to anticipate the day when Christ will return. Each way of understanding calls us to live between the times. We are encouraged to become more aware of our actions, our motivations, our way of being in the here and now.

The prophet Isaiah offers a promise of hope, the glimmer of possibility, that all people will hear and live out the word of God. He speaks of God's judgement that provides the gift of justice. God will hear the grievances, disputes, and concerns and justice will be done. Isaiah points us toward a time when all people will walk in the light of God ... and... he encouraged the listener to begin now.

Yet we continue to live in a time of major wars, civil unrest, economic oppression, and failed relationships. How is it possible to hold on to this hope? Are we able to see the ways in which this vision is alive? There is a sense of learning to see that there is more there than meets the eye. Isaiah spoke with anticipation of the word of God revealed through the sacred stories.

Isaiah helped his community to see the need to re-direct efforts toward justice for the exploited and marginalized. He guided them toward the vision of justice, mercy, and relationship with God. He encouraged them to see that they had wandered from God and that there was hope in returning to God. In chapter two, Isaiah spoke of peace as enemies prepared for war against them. In his time the northern kingdom of Israel and the Aramaean kingdom of Damascus tried to force Judah into an alliance. Their intention was to form a united opposition to the Assyrian Empire. In that setting King Ahaz turned to the

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prophet for advice. Isaiah offered the vision of God as the source of guidance in life and community.

We continue to long for the day when all weapons are transformed into useful tools and frozen hearts are thawed. For the day when more people are able to discuss opposing views with the intention of learning about other perspectives. Yet there is the reality of failed peace treaties, violence and disruption within our communities, and broken relationships. Each of us hold the pain inflicted by unresolved conflict. It is difficult to hold the reality of harms done and the promise of hope. It is challenging to hold our yearning for peace within our lives and the world with our anger at the injustice done. Yet, there is comfort and relief in holding onto the hope of God's vision for humanity.

Advent calls us into this present life that continues the relationship between Christ and creation. Jesus meets us wherever we are, whichever way we might turn. Last week our reading from Matthew shared that Jesus will appear just around the corner, suddenly, like a hungry person, or a neighbor in need, or someone sick or imprisoned. Could it be that these teachings were intended to help us to be aware and respond to the needs of others?

Advent is a season of reflection and waiting. A time set aside to consider what God has done in Jesus Christ. The rhythms of our society tend to focus on preparations that are far removed from celebrating the birth of Christ. For many people, the ancient covenant with God has been displaced by our own desires. Our cultural preparations during Advent are in stark contrast to the preparations described by John the Baptist. He called to the people of Israel to remember the promises of God. Rather than relax in holiday wonder -John asks us to examine ourselves. We are to bear good fruit, rather than worry about material possessions. John has a clear message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance is a confusing concept for many people. Does repentance mean we feel sorry for our mistakes? Is it the action of trying to be a better person? Some hear the word repentance and have feelings of guilt and a sense of being unworthy. Some wonder whether they can be good enough to experience God's mercy rather than God's anger. John the Baptist and the season of Advent are reminders that repentance is about God's power to transform us. Warm and fuzzy feelings at Christmas are not wrong. It is simply that such feelings are not enough. They fail to capture the fullness of what God has done, is doing, and will do, through each of us.

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John the Baptist reminds us that who we are and what we do makes a difference. Our choices and our actions matter. We are reminded that we are able to live in the present and look forward only by looking back. Can you dig into your imagination to see John preaching in the wilderness? The bellowing John wore hair shirts and ate wild honey. I imagine a big bear of a man, smelling of the wilderness, of fresh air and lake water. This image of wilderness helps to draw us into the complex and troubled history of Israel. God led the people out of bondage in Egypt through the wilderness into the promised land. In the wilderness they were afraid that God would abandon them and leave them to die ... and in fear they turned away from God. In their story we recognize that God calls each of us out of bondage during this 'between time'. Hold onto the light shed by the candles of hope and peace. The light of advent symbolizes our belief that the darkness of the world will not prevail. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Lord the light of your love [v 1] #376

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE Stewardship encourages people to lead generous lives, strengthens faith, and impacts the world. Michael Durall – author, consultant

We bear good fruit when we share our time, talent, and financial resources for the well-being of those in need.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, BLESSING OF GIFTS

We come to you this day, O God, with anticipation of celebrating your birth among us. We thank you for the gift of your love. God, of peace, receive our gifts with gratitude for your many gifts to us. Bless these seeds so that peace will take root in people who face conflict and danger, and places seeking to establish peace in the face of violence. Be their peace and their promise, through Christ our Lord.

We pray for the church throughout the world. May their ministries build up the body of Christ, that in our many vocations we may serve to your glory. We pray for the people of Canada and for all nations, particularly victims of political and social injustice. We pray for all leaders, that they will govern with courage and equity.

We pray for all in need at this time: for the sick, the destitute, and the dying; for strangers in our land, for the marginalized; for the elderly and children; for parents and grandparents; for those who live alone and those who are lonely in the midst of family.

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We remember with mercy those who sleep without shelter, cold and vulnerable, lacking enough food; and, those who are overworked and those who have no work. God of mercy, stir within us the ability to recognize their struggles and to act so that others may have life abundant.

We pray for this community, for our neighbors and friends, and for those with whom we study and work. Guide and strengthen us to recognize the gifts of your grace and love within our community.

Loving God, we pray for those who know sickness, pain, grief, loneliness, and anxiety. By your Spirit, surround each one with strength and love. Equip us to offer support for those who are near to us. God of hope, we ask you to linger with Lyle, Deb and family; Stephani, Judith & Gerry; Rob; and, Grace & Rudy. We lift up all those who are on our hearts as they face immense challenges.

Before we call, you answer, God. Before we speak, you know our voices. Hear our prayers. Let there be joy in Jerusalem and peace among all nations. Let sounds of weeping and cries of distress turn to shouts of joy and laughter. Let infants grow and thrive; let the old dance like children. Let every person find a home and enjoy the fruit of their labor.

We join our voices together across space and time to speak the words that Christ taught his disciples ... **Our Father who art in heaven, hallow'ed be thy name. Thy Kingdom 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

HYMN **People in darkness [v 2, 3]** **#124**

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

May the God of steadfast encouragement encourage you to live in harmony with one another. May you join together with one voice to glorify the God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

POSTLUDE **Amen** **[3-part choral]**
Postlude **Amen**

64 Be still and know

Be still and that I am God x3

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Resources include: PCC Worship Planner, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/> Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, and Feasting on the Word Companion, NRSV Bible

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I am the Lord that health thee x3

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust x 3

#727 Let there be light

Let there be light; let there be understanding; Let all the nations gather; let them be face to face. Open our lips; open our minds to ponder; Open the door of concord, opening into grace.

Perish the sword; perish the angry judgement; Perish the bombs and hunger; perish the fight for gain. Hallow our love; hallow the deaths of martyrs; Hallow their holy freedom; hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come; your spirit turn to language; Your people speak together; your spirit never fade. Let there be light; open our hearts to wonder; Perish the way of terror; hallow the world God made.

124 People in darkness

1. People in darkness are looking for light. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People with blindness are longing for sight. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of love.
2. People with sickness are praying for health. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People in poverty want to have wealth. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of hope.
3. People in trouble would like to be free. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People with arguments want to agree. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of peace.
4. People in sadness are trying to sing. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. Bells in the steeple are waiting to ring. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of joy.

119 Hope is a star

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

Refrain 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.

2. Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth. **Refrain**
3. Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born. **Refrain**
4. Love is a flame that burns in our heart. Jesus has come and will never depart. **Refrain**

376 Lord, the light of your love is shining

Lord, the light of your love is shining in the midst of your 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.

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Refrain 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 your blood I may enter your brightness. Search me, try me, consume all my darkness. Shine on me; shine on me. **Refrain**

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.

Refrain