

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
November 29th, 2020
Trinity ~ 9:30 am; St. Andrew's ~ 11:00 am
Hanging of the Greens Service
Gathering in God's Presence

Minister: Rev. Kevin Moratz

Ministers: The People of the Congregation

Organist: Heather Campbell

Pianists: Barry Stephen, Murray Gutz

Our Shared Mission Statement

The congregations of St. Andrew's & Trinity United Churches celebrate and share God's accepting love known to us through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit calls us to discern God's Word as we reach out with concern and compassion to others, seeking justice, healing and hope for the world.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome and Announcements:

I would like to thank and acknowledge Andy O'Neil for this service, the minister at St. Paul's United Church in Riverview, NB.

This year is a very different year for all of us. Everything has become simplified. Christmas is going to be very different for most of us. How do we embrace the Advent season in these times? How do we keep traditions alive? How do we create memories for our children and our loved ones? What does decorating mean and look like this year?

As communities of faith, we aren't so much decorating our sanctuaries and buildings as preparing them to be a symbol of preparing ourselves for the birth, and rebirth, of Jesus. Our Hanging of the Greens service is an opportunity to make this connection either at the beginning of Advent or throughout the next four weeks.

Most of the signs of Christmas are ones that have been inherited from Germanic traditions popularized in Victorian England: wreaths on doors; branches, boughs, and lights inside; and an evergreen tree where people gather. Many churches have simply borrowed these for their own spaces. That these are not exclusively Christian symbols, however, they do support the Christian message.

Fir and pine boughs are natural signs of everlasting life, persisting in summer and winter and retaining their colour even as leaves change and fall. Cedar wood is associated with royalty, including in the Hebrew scriptures. Holly and ivy—the green leaf and the red berry—are sung about as symbols of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, especially in the popular carol, "The Holly and the Ivy." So, these familiar signs of Christmas can serve as symbols of our deeply lived faith. I welcome you to join me today as we prepare for the birth of Jesus.

Call to Worship

Leader: With what shall we come to God's house?

All: **We come bringing branches of pine and fir, evergreens for wreaths of welcome, and garlands of joy.**

Leader: What is this lovely fragrance that follows us here?

All: **It is the smell of cedar—bough of wisdom, wood of honour; the holy breath and presence of God in our midst.**

Leader: What will these things become in this place?

All: **The promises of God, the words of prophets, and the blessings of disciples—**

signs of the temple not made with human hands—all brought to life in the one called Jesus, and reborn in us this season.

Hymn: "Hark the Glad Sound," VU 29 vs 1 and 4

***Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Saviour promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.***

***Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.***

Advent Reading Week 1

Hymn - "We Light this Candle" vs 1

We light this candle for Hope,

Await the new life within.

May our hearts now live each day,

so Hope can find a way,

so Hope can find a way

Reader 1: Who do you say Jesus is?

Reader 2: To me, a student, Jesus is like a teacher, who helps me to learn and grow.

Reader 1: To me, an explorer, Jesus is like a guide, leading me in new directions. (Invite people to add their own sentences.)

All: We wait for Jesus, the wise teacher and guide, who leads us to hope.

Reader 2: (Lights first Advent candle)

Reader 1: We wait for Jesus. (Reader 1 leads congregation in prayer)

Let us pray:

(All): Holy One, Give us the courage to be welcoming, as we prepare for Christ's arrival, so that, like the Innkeeper and animals, we can share what we can, like Mary and Joseph, we can trust in the kindness of others, and like the Holy Family, appreciate the unexpected joy in Christ's story. Help us to be welcoming, as we prepare. Amen.

Hearing God's Word

The Advent season is one of wonder and mystery. Evergreens are familiar to us as part of our decorations, but the intent during Advent is to offer a deeper connection. Cedar was a highly valued wood for Israel – as witnessed by David's intention to build a temple out of it to house the ark of the covenant – and is also a traditional medicine in many Indigenous communities in Canada. The evergreen, ubiquitous in Canada, is resilient and strong, offering life-giving breath and also giving shelter to us and to so many creatures.

These things we use to decorate our homes, however, also offer a symbol of the universal and eternal presence of God and have long

served as an image of hope in God's promises. During this time, we see the traditional themes of Advent – hope, peace, joy and love – are rooted in the words of the prophets and in the teachings of Jesus concerning God's coming kingdom of peace and justice. This amplification of the meaning of Advent will help to deepen the meaning of the liturgical symbols. Hope is needed at this time more than ever. We hang on to hope as a desire that someday things will be better, also as trust in God's promises – a trust borne out by God's steadfast presence in our lives.

Light in the Night

Reading: John 1:1-14

Hymn: #54 "Unto Us a Child is Born"

*Unto us a boy is born! King of all creation,
came he to a world forlorn*

The Lord of every nation, the Lord of every nation.

*Christ from heaven descending low, comes on earth a stranger;
ox and ass their owner know,
be cradled in the manger, be cradled in the manger.*

*Now may Mary's son, who came so long ago to love us.
Lead us all with hearts aflame,
unto the joys above us, unto the joys above us*

(Lights of the tree are turned on)

Let us Pray:

Leader: Bless these lights, as we await the Light of Life, Holy One.
All: May your light shine hope into our lives and in your world and remind us of your living presence in all things.

Branch of Peace

Reading: Jeremiah 23:5-6

Hymn: #44 "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" vs 1 and 2

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold,*

*“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.*

(Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus are placed with cedar branches)

Let us Pray:

Leader: With this fragrant wood, we lift our voices in song, that our prayers might rise up like incense before you, O God.

**All: The gift of cedar is a branch of promise:
that your justice will prevail among all people,
and that your wisdom will guide us to true peace and friendship,
here, and in all places.**

Wreath of Welcome/Garland of Joy

Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Hymn: “Joy Is Now in Every Place,” VU 45 vs 1 & 2

*Joy is now in every place, Christmas lightens every face,
Now be with us in your grace, O, hear us bless us Holy Jesus.*

*May the star that shone that night, making your poor stable bright,
Fill our hearts with love and light, O, hear us bless us Holy Jesus.*

(Wreaths are placed)

Let us Pray:

Leader: With these wreaths, and in our hearts and lives, we prepare the way for the Lord!

**All: Open wide the doors of God’s house,
go out into the highways and byways
to welcome all and make neighbours of those we meet!**

Story: “The Christmas Miracle of Jonathon Toomey”

Hymn: “Joy to the World” (VU 59) vs 1 & 2
*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.*

Bough of Love

John 13:34-35

Hymn: “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” VU #48 vs 1
*Hark the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
(Boughs of ivy with holly are placed)*

Let us Pray:

Leader: With these boughs we remember the love of God, revealed in Jesus’ self-giving, becoming the Christ for us, that love might heal God’s people and world.

Open our hearts, that we might receive him still.

Open our hands, that we might share his loving example.

Open our lives, that we might be transformed in love.

Song - “The Holly and the Ivy”

Passing the Peace:

In many congregations we may pass the peace during a mutual greeting, after words of assurance, prior to celebrating the Lord’s Supper, during Advent and Christmas, or at the conclusion of a worship service. Traditionally, we leave the comfort of our seat, turn to our neighbors, grasp their hands, or hug, and speak the words, “The peace of the Lord be with you” and receive the words in turn, “And also with you.” The gesture is simple, but the meaning is profound. When we extend our hand to another, we identify with

Jesus, who extended his life to the point of death to make peace with humanity (Col. 1:20-21). We symbolize our unity through handshakes and hugs (Eph. 2:14-21). Likewise, when we regularly pass the peace we practice God's call to make every effort to maintain the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).3 Passing the Peace is an affirmation of Christ's peace—a peace that he offers to us through his sacrifice and resurrection.

Please join me and take a moment to Pass the Peace, Covid style.

All: *(Raise your hand to your fellow congregants)*

“Peace be with you.”

“And also with you.”

Responding to God's Word

Community at Prayer

Let us Pray:

Leader: In the midst of our busy lives and preparations, O God, you come to us in the child of promise and surprising joy.

With hope, we await the coming of your kingdom, when your love will fill the world.

We thank you for the beauty of winter, of gentle snow cloaking trees and land with life-giving moisture. We wonder at the infinite glory of your creation and know you by the works of your hand.

We thank you for all the gifts we enjoy as part of our holiday preparations, especially the company and love of family and friends.

We thank you for the love and joy that fill our hearts at this time of year. May we also be filled with your spirit, compassion, and vision, that your loving kindness will be known through all our thoughts, words, and actions.

We remember those for whom this season will be difficult, even painful: those who grieve lost loved ones,

relationships that have been broken, health issues that fracture peace, those without enough to eat or a safe place to live.

Help us to be present to those who feel alone, to share with those in need, to offer our time and attention to those who are anxious, to seek the strengthening of the lives and communities around us.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus, the One who comes, who taught us to pray, saying..."**Our Father, ...”**

Hymn: # 9 People Look East VU #9

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.

2 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.

3 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.

Dedication of Offering

Offering Prayer

Leader - Let us Pray:

Leader: God of hope and peace, joy and love, made known in Jesus who became the Christ, receive these gifts that they may bless the work and witness of this place and these, your people. Amen.

Hymn: “Prepare the Way (Isaiah 40),” VU p. 882 vs 1

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!

Let every hill and valley a level way appear.

Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story,

O blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

Going Out in God's Love

Commissioning and Benediction:

Joy is now in every place, the light of promise shines on every wall and window and door. So does that same light shine in each and every heart gathered here. Let us go into God's world to share that same light, the light of the One who comes. Amen.

November bulletins are sponsored by: Audrey Gutz & family in loving memory of Ritchie Gutz. And by: Eleanor McLaughlin in loving memory of Marvin McLaughlin and Harold & Marjorie Dougherty.

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CD of Sunday's Service available—contact Jean at 613-582-3597.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will be holding our regular Christmas Eve services in person. Due to current COVID restrictions on how many people we can have in our church space we will need to pre register to get an approximate idea on how many will be attending. Please indicate if you are planning to attend and how many from your "bubble" will also be attending.

For Trinity: Contact Faye Mick-Johnston. Contact info: By phone or text 613-646-2777 or by email: fayemj777@hotmail.com

For St Andrew's

Service Times

December - Trinity ~ @ 9:30 a.m., St. Andrew's @ 11 pm.

**Dec 6th – Communion will be celebrated at both churches.
Dec. 24th ~ St. Andrew's @ 6:30 p.m. Trinity @ 8:00 p.m.,**

Dec. 27th and Jan 3rd ~ there will be no service at either church.

**Church will resume on January 10th at the following times:
St. Andrew's @ 9:30 pm. And Trinity ~ @ 11:00 a.m.,**

Prayer List: Let us keep the following people in our prayers for healing at this time.

Paige Atherton, Ezma Weedmark, Rob Marson, Murray Anderson, Bernie Lemke, Audrey Gutz, Lorna Stevenson, Ruby Bell, Freda Kinnear, Mervin Kinnear, Elaine Moore, Lola Byce, Bill Douma, Keith Johnson, Nora Bennett,

**Please contact me if there is someone that you would like to add to our list for special prayers or you feel is in need of a pastoral care visit. I would request that you please ask the person's permission before submitting their name to be put in the bulletin.
Rev. Kevin**

Please join us this evening at the Lighting of the "Lights of Hope" at 7:00 p.m. at the Beachburg Lions Hall.