

Order of Service – 3rd Sunday in Advent – December 17, 2023 10 AM Prayer Service

Presiding: Pastor Bart

Preaching: Pastor Bart

Music Team: Erica, Melodi & Parker, Lynn, Lyndsay, Robin, Kathy .

Welcome to worship!

If you are a visitor today, please pick up a gift bag and learn more about our programs at the Welcome Table at the back of the narthex. Grab a coffee and mingle or sit for a conversation in the “Gateway.” If your children require a quiet place during the service, feel free to take them to the narthex near the fireplace area.

If you are a visitor, we welcome you to come forward for communion. If your children have gone through communion instruction, they are welcome as well. If they are not taking communion, please bring them forward for a blessing. If you would like personal prayer this morning, you are invited to meet with our prayer team in the narthex either before or after you have taken communion. Individual prayer is also available following the service.

OPENING HYMN: JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

No more let sin and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love

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George Frideric Handel | Isaac Watts
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LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

WELCOMING

ADVENT VIDEO – Skit Guys

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE - The Joy Candle (Pink)

ADVENT PRAYER

All: Dear Lord, we wait for Your coming as our Good Shepherd. Please gather us in your arms, feed us with spiritual food, and wipe away every tear from our eyes. Let your face shine on us, that we may be saved! Amen

ADVENT CAROL: IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

As we light this candle darkness disappears
Blue or Purple, pink or white, comfort through the years.
Hope and peace, rejoicing, we celebrate God's love
Jesus came to save us, live with him above

Heaven cannot hold him, Nor the earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away When he comes to reign;
In the bleak midwinter A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

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Christina Rossetti Gustav Theodore Holst
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CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, beseeching Him, in the name of our Lord Jesus, to forgive the iniquity of our sin.

P: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Most merciful God.

C: We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we

have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. Amen

Advent Gloria

Glory to God in the Highest
And peace to his people on earth
We praise your name
We bless your name
We worship and glorify you
Gloria! In excelsis Deo!
Gloria! In excelsis Deo!

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PRAYER OF THE DAY – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, you once called John the Baptist to give witness to the coming of you Son and to prepare his way. Grant us, your people, the wisdom to see your purpose today and the openness to your will, that we may witness to Chris’s coming and so prepare his way; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NIV)

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

⁸ “For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.” ¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

PSALM 126 NIV

¹ When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

³ The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, LORD, like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

Special Music Riu Riu Chiu – arr. Erica Phare-Bergh

• **Trio: Pastor Bart, Melodi Gawryletz & Erica Phare-Bergh**

Translation from the 16th century Spanish as information not to be sung by the congregation:

River, roaring river, guard our homes in safety
As God kept the wolf from our Lamb
One who is born is the Great Monarch
Christ the Patriarch clothed in flesh
He has redeemed us by making himself small
Though he was infinite, He became finite
Many a prophecy told of his coming
And now in our days we have seen them fulfilled
God became man, on earth we behold him
And see man in heaven because he so willed
He comes to give life to the dead
He comes to redeem the fall of man
This child is the light of day

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 NIV

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil. ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Pastor Bart

CHILDREN'S SONG: I'VE GOT PEACE LIKE A RIVER

I've got peace like a river (2x)
I've got peace like a river in my soul
(repeat)

I've got joy like a fountain (2x)
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul
(repeat)

I've got love like an ocean (2x)
I've got love like an ocean in my soul
(repeat)

I've got peace like a river
I've got joy like a fountain
I've got love like an ocean in my soul
(repeat)

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GOSPEL LESSON – John 1:6-8, 19-28 NIV

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders^[a] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" ²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Alleluia!

Alleluia! Lord to whom shall we go, shall we go?
Alleluia! Lord to whom shall we go, shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life, O Lord
You have the words of eternal life, O Lord

Alleluia! Lord to whom shall we go
Shall we go, shall we go?

By Pastor Bart Eriksson
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SERMON: Pastor Bart

OFFERTORY HYMN: HARK THE GLAD SOUND (LBW 35)

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

He come the pris'ners to release
In Satan's bondage held
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind
The bleeding soul to cure
And with the treasures of His grace, enrich the humble poor

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace
Your welcome shall proclaim,
And Heaven's eternal arches ring with your beloved name

TUNE: Chesterfield
PUBLIC DOMAIN
Text: Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)
Melody: Thomas Haweis (1734-1820)

OFFERTORY PRAYER (LBW, p. 68)

P: Blessed are you.

C: O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your Goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of Him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE

L: The Peace of the Lord be with you always

C: And also with you

The Prayers (Dialogue to be read responsively).

L: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C: and his mercy endures forever.

P: They cried to the Lord in their trouble,

C: and he delivered them from their distress.

L: He sent forth his Word and healed them,

C: and saved them from the grave.

L: The Lord is righteous in all his ways,

C: and loving in all his works.

L: The Lord upholds all who fall;

C: he lifts up those who are bowed down.

L: The Lord sustains them on their sickbed,

C: and ministers to them in their illness.

L: The Lord is my strength and my song,

C: and he has become my salvation.

L: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C: and his mercy endures forever.

L: Let us pray for those who minister in healing. Almighty God, source of human knowledge and skill: Guide physicians and nurses and all those you have called to practice the arts of healing. Guide scientists and medical researchers. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that, by their ministries, the health of all people may be promoted and your creation may be glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen, Come Holy Spirit.

Other Prayers

P: Praise to you, almighty God and Father. You sent your Son to live among us and to bring us your salvation.

C: Blessed be God.

(Prayers said for each person as they come forward)

L: Father in heaven, we ask for your blessing on this, your servant and his/her friends and family. For Jesus' sake, send your Holy Spirit upon them to increase in them the gifts of: wisdom and understanding, council and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord and joy in your presence. In the name of Jesus drive away any ailments of body, mind and spirit, heal all that is broken, deliver them from the power of evil, and preserve them in the true faith now and forevermore. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

L: Let us pray:

C: Merciful Lord God, constant source of all blessing, we give you thanks for all your gifts of strength and life, and above all we thank you for the gift of your Son, through whom we have salvation. As in this time of Advent, we wait for that day when there will be no more pain, sorrow and injustice, and all people will know you, help us by your Holy Spirit to be assured of your power in our lives, to work for the fulfilling of your purposes and to trust in your eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father, who are in Heaven....

BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Please see below

CLOSING HYMN: MARY'S BOY CHILD

Long time ago in Bethlehem, so the Holy Bible say
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ, was born on Christmas day

CHORUS

Hark, now hear the angels sing: "New King born today!
And man will live forevermore because of Christmas day!"

While shepherds watched their flock by night, they saw a bright new shining star
They heard a choir of angels sing, the music came from afar

CHORUS

Now Joseph and his wife Mary came to Bethlehem that night
They found no place to bear her child, not a single room was in sight

CHORUS

Trumpets sound and angels sing, listen what they say!
That man will live forevermore because of Christmas day

CHORUS

P: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week at a Glance:

Tuesday Dec 19, 1 PM – Celebration of Life for Peter Christiansen, fellowship lunch following service. Small Group Ministries – Various times during the week. Please contact Florence Toth or the church office for details.

Month in Advance:

December 17 – 6:00 PM – **Cancelled** - Christmas Blues Dinner

December 19 – 1:00 PM – Celebration of Life Peter Christiansen

December 23 – 8:00 AM – Men's Breakfast - **Cancelled**

December 24 – 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM – Christmas Eve Services

December 25 – 10:00 AM – Christmas Day Service

December 31 – 10:00AM – Lay Service

The Season of Advent

The Advent season is a four-week period before Christmas in which we celebrate with anticipation the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The origin of "advent" is from the Latin word *adventus*, which simply translates as "coming" or "arrival." May you find time to slow down this season – say "no" to the things that distract you from Jesus and say "yes" to the gift that God wants you to experience.

Journey to Bethlehem

As part of the daily devotional advent series, our children have drawn pictures and written poems to the Christ child. Make sure to stop by our mural downstairs each week to see their pictures on the surrounding doors. Watch the mural come to life as we approach Christmas. This goes with the daily advent devotional that comes to your e-mail each weekday. You can also access the videos directly at <https://saintpeters.ca> Thanks to Diana Scott and Art Zoethout for creating this painting.

Christmas Blues – December 17 @ 6 PM **Cancelled**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services – December 24

We are blessed to have three pastors to lead our Christmas Eve services: Pastor Bart at 4 PM, Pastor Paul at 7 PM, and Pastor Rick at 10 PM (Holy Communion). Because the 4 PM service is usually very full (to overflowing) with visitors and young families, we encourage people to come to either to the 7 PM or 10 PM if it is convenient.

Christmas Day – December 25

Enjoy the quietness of Christmas Day as we celebrate the incarnation. Pastor Rick will be reflecting upon the question *Is Less More?* as he digs deeper into John 1:1-3. We will also celebrate Holy Communion.

Pray for St. Peter's

Please remember to keep praying for the church, our pastors, leaders, members and their families.
November Month End

Youth Committee

We are looking for volunteers to join a youth committee. If you are interested talk to Pastor Bart.

Learn Guitar

The last three months we have run guitar classes after church. We would like to do the same in the New Year, starting over at very beginner level and aiming at grade 4 children and up to and including adults. This is a group class, not private lessons, and we just learn basic chords and strumming, but it's free. Some kids can have troubles playing guitar, others have no troubles. But if you are interested, talk to Pastor Bart.