

St. James United Church

December 20, 2020/ Fourth Sunday of Advent

Minister: Rev. Jim Von Riesen
Minister of Youth/Christian Education: Susan Sheppard, DLM
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donovan Brown
Music Director: Amy Dalziel
Associate Music Director: Branden Olsen

St. James United Church is a safe place for all people to worship, regardless of race, creed, age, ability, cultural background or sexual orientation.

We Gather as God's People

MUSICAL PRELUDE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY/FIRST PEOPLES
WELCOME
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & WORK

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE: (One) We light this candle to remind us of the "Light of the World" whose arrival on earth we still remember and celebrate.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: How long have we been waiting?

All: It seems like a long time, but we have not been alone.

One: God is with us. God has always been with us.

All: We gather with those who have seen the signs, heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.

One: We gather with those who have seen the glimmers of light.

All: The light of love was born into our world and still lives in our hearts.

One: Let us worship with hearts open to love.

OPENING PRAYER: (All) **We worship the God of Love, on this last Sunday of Advent. May we live the Love which was born within us when we first saw the light and breathed our first breath. In the words we say and hear, may we be blessed with a deeper awareness of God's loving presence within and around us. Amen.**

HYMN: *Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming* VU 08

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE:

One: The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love. Jesus was the epitome of love. His love held nothing back. His love was for all, with no exceptions.

All: The bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

One: Jesus shows us God's perfect love. This is what love is like:

All: Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends.

One: We light the candle of love to remind us that Jesus lived that kind of love and showed us how to love each other.

(Lighting of the candle of love.)

One: Love is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle, we celebrate the love we find in Jesus Christ. Let us pray:

All: We are thankful for the love Jesus lived. May we follow his example and share our love with others here and around the world. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

HYMN: *A Candle is Burning*

VU 06 vs 1-4

We Respond to God's Love

OFFERING INVITATION:

OFFERTORY PRAYER: (All) **God of love and generosity, we ask you to add your blessing to the gifts we offer in your name. May what we offer serve the work of love that reaches out to those in need. Amen.**

ANTHEM/SOLO/SPECIAL MUSIC

We Listen for God's Word

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

RESPONSIVE PSALM:

Psalm 80

VU 794

Shepherd of Israel, hear us

You who lead Joseph like a flock,

You who are enthroned amidst the cherubim.

Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh;

Stir up your might, come and save us. R

God of hosts,

How long will you be angry with your people's prayer?

You have fed us with the bread of weeping,

And given us tears in plenty to drink.

You have made a mockery of us to our neighbours,

And our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Let your hand rest on the one at your right hand,

On the one you have made strong for yourself.

**Then we will never forsake you;
Give us life, and we will call on your name. R**

Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
**You who lead Joseph like a flock,
You who are enthroned amidst the cherubim.**
Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh;
Stir up your might, come and save us. R

You brought a vine out of Egypt,
You drove out the nations and planted it.
**You cleared the ground for it;
It sank deep roots, and filled the land.**

The mountains were covered with its shade,
The mighty cedars with its branches.

**It stretched out its branches as far as the Sea,
And its shoots as far as the River.**

Why then have you broken down its enclosure,
So that all who go by pluck its grapes?
**The boar from the forest roots it up,
And the beasts of the field devour it. R**

Turn to us again, God of hosts, look down from heaven and see.

**Bestow your care on this vine,
On the stock which your right hand planted.**
As for those who set it on fire, who cut it down,
May they perish at the frown of your face.
**Let your hand rest on the one by your side,
On the one you have made strong for yourself.**
Then we will never forsake you;
Give us life, and we will call on your name.

HYMN: *O Come, All Ye Faithful* VU 60

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 1:18-24

MEDITATION: Living Love in the Animal World

MUSICAL INTERLUDE:

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

We Are Sent Forth to Live our Faith

HYMN: *Joy to the World* (masks on please) VU 59

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 Savior 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.

No more let sins 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 earth 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.

COMMISSIONING:

One: In Love we are born; In Love we live.

All: In Love we receive; In Love we Give.

One: In Love we love, we serve, we kneel.

All: In Love we grieve, we hurt, we heal.

One: In Love we are held; in Love we belong.

All All of our living tuned to love's song.

One: The Spirit is sending us to be messengers of Love.

We will go to share the gifts of Love which have been placed in our hearts.

BENEDICTION

SUNG BENEDICTION:*May the God of Hope Go with Us* VU 424

May the God of love go with us every day,
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and love to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace, singing, share our joy with all,
Working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

ORGAN POSTLUDE

Life and Work – December 20, 2020

We gratefully acknowledge a donation to the Hymn Sing In memory of William Benson from Daphne Benson.

We gratefully acknowledge a donation to the General Fund in memory of William Butt from Menetha and Sid Dyke.

We gratefully acknowledge a donation to the General Fund in loving memory of Phil Saunders from Alice and Howard Forsey.

We offer our condolences to Herb Mullett, his family and friends, on the passing of Herb's beloved wife Grace on December 11. A private family service on Friday, December 18 at 2pm will be live-streamed on Barrett's Funeral Home website.

We offer our condolences to Wayne & Michelle Skinner, their family and friends, on the passing of Wayne's oldest brother Terrance on December 14. Funeral details will be announced as they become available.

Christmas Eve Services

Due to the exceptional registration already received, two services on Christmas Eve will be going ahead as scheduled: 4:00 pm and 7:30 pm.

The front doors will open 30 minutes before each service.

The deadline for registering for either service will be 4:00 pm on December 18 – that's tomorrow! Call now to reserve your seat: 700-6064

We wish to advise the congregation that SuAn Randall, our Office Administrator, will be finishing her work at St. James on December 31. SuAn has provided excellent service during her time with St. James, and we have thoroughly enjoyed her presence with us. We are very sorry to see her leave and wish her good health and a well-deserved retirement from her work at St. James.

Join the Chorus!

St. James' Outdoor Community Carol Sing December 20

Need a little cheer? Come "***Join the Chorus***", an ***Outdoor, Drive-in, Community Carol Sing*** in St. James' parking lot on **Sunday, December 20 at 7:30 to 8:30 pm**. 'Tis the season to sing carols to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth, and show charity, peace, and love! Wear your Christmas mask, hat, scarf; bring a hot beverage, and a candle or flashlight. Members of St. James Band, Sight Restored, St. James choir, and other community choruses will participate. ***Masks and physical distancing of cars and people are required.*** Come one, come all! It's a fun, free community event for all ages!

We need more ushers! For more information or to usher, call Robin, 682-3927 or Amy, 765-1005; or visit St. James' Facebook page or stjamesuc.org.

Important logistical notes!...

The hump by the doors will serve as the outdoor stage. People standing on, or in front of, the "stage" to sing, must stand 2 m apart. Parked cars ("bubbles") will face it and the church.

Drivers, for smooth controlled, traffic flow, please arrive and enter from Elizabeth Avenue only by 7:15 pm to be ushered to a designated, physically distanced, parking spot in lines, like lining up for the gulf ferry, and in a checkerboard pattern, to ensure you are 2 m from other cars, safe in your "bubbles" with the windows down. Exit onto Paton Street only at the end.

To ensure visibility, ushers will try to designate the spots in front for smaller cars, while SUVs and pick-up trucks will be designated to park behind them.

Registration Christmas hours

December 21,22, 23: 11am - 4pm

December 24: 10am - 3pm

December 25: Closed

December 28, 29, 30: 11am - 4pm

December 31, January 1: closed

Regular hours will recommence on January 4, 2021. Monday to Friday 11-4 and closed on weekends.

New 10 week book group starting in January

The book will be *The Beatitudes for Progressive Christians* by Donald Schmidt and costs \$12.50. If you would like to order a book and join us for our weekly 1 hour discussion on zoom please contact Susan Sheppard, susan@stjamesuc.org , by December 31.

2021 Envelopes: Our Zone Captains will be delivering the 2021 envelopes that have not been picked-up. If you have received *The Visitor* by snail mail in the past, your envelopes remain at the church, so when you attend a Service, please ask an usher to collect them for you.

We would like to send our congratulations to Jake Thompson, St. James' tech advisor, on his nomination for the MusicNL Media Person of the Year Award. His tv show, NL Now, was broadcast on the Rogers community channel for five years but has since been picked up by NTV and will be airing in 2021. The show is hosted by Gary Wheeseltin (one of Jake's numerous puppet friends) and has featured 208 guests and 52 puppets. Good luck Jake! We are all rooting for you and cannot wait to see what your show brings in 2021.

Sunday, December 20: A Service of Lessons and Carols will take place at 7pm at Cochrane Street United Church. Soloists this year are Mary Antle, Meg Herder, and Darrin Martin along with our Music Director Evan Smith and our choir. To register to attend, visit: www.cochranestreetuc.com/christmas-instjohns

George St. United Church is offering fresh, locally grown, Christmas vegetable hampers for \$20 each, containing potatoes, carrot, turnip, and cabbage (13 lbs of fresh local vegetables). Orders must be in by Sunday, December 20th to be picked up or delivered on December 23rd. To order or request more information, please call George Street UC church office at 726-8775.

As a reward for your support, one purchaser and one seller will win a full turkey hamper with a fresh local turkey or a Butterball Turkey and all the trimmings including the Old Port Salt beef and local vegetables from Keith's Farm and Roadside Market In CBS.

Humanitarian Aid for Rohingya

No person should ever be persecuted because of their religion or culture.; have to struggle daily to find enough food, a place to sleep, or simply a place to exist, yet that has happened repeatedly to the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. For decades they faced religious and ethnic persecution, which escalated in 2017. They were tortured and killed in Myanmar, and their homes and villages were burned to the ground.

Almost a million escaped to the town of Cox's Bazar in nearby Bangladesh to what became, in November 2018, the largest refugee camp in the world.

ACT Alliance, a Mission & Service global ecumenical partner, is on the ground at the Cox's Bazar refugee camp distributing humanitarian aid in the form of food, shelter materials, warm clothing, hygiene kits, safe water, and emergency medical help. ACT Alliance also hosted the organization Clowns Without Borders to share the importance of hygiene in a fun way. The Cox's Bazar camp is located in a floodplain; mix that with almost a million people and the result can be a variety of diseases, some of them life-threatening. Thanks to ACT Alliance, many of the Rohingya refugees are able to keep disease at bay by using the skills they were taught and the hygiene kits they received. Through our gifts for Mission & Service, lives are truly saved every day in Cox's Bazar camp.