



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Rev. Gregory Daly: Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Carmen Llanos: Minister of Community Development

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Mary Cannings

December 19, 2021

Advent 4 - Love

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Call to Worship



Seasons come and seasons go,
but our God endures forever.
Our faith experiences ebb and flow,
but our God endures forever.
Our lives may freeze up or may grow,
but our God endures forever.
So let our souls magnify God in worship this day.

Response

In the Bleak Midwinter

VU 55

*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.*

*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.*

Life & Work of the Church

Welcome to online worship

Land Acknowledgement



Advent Four Candle Lighting



Light for the shadows:

may it show us the way.

A flame of love:

may our hearts be warmed.

A beacon of possibility:

*may there be light and love in our living
as we prepare to welcome Jesus.*

Come, bask in the light of Christ. May Love light the world this Christmas.

Opening Hymn

Gabriel's Message

*The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes aflame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
"most highly favoured lady." Gloria!*

*"For know a blessed Mother you shall be,
all generations laud and honour thee.
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favoured lady." Gloria!*

*Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name."
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!*

*Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!*

Prayer for Grace

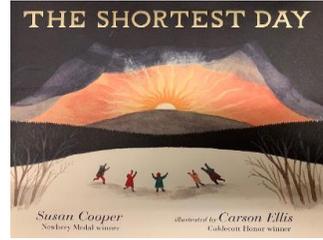


*God, to us you are mystery,
and yet you come to us often in the midst of ordinary life.
In our despair: you are the God of Hope.
In our turmoil: You are the God of Peace.
In our sadness: you are the God of Joy.
In our heartache: You are the God of Love.
Thank you for loving us just as we are. Amen.*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

And Now for Something Completely Different

The Shortest Day
By Susan Cooper



Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem

VU 64

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.*

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

Prayer of Illumination



*Join with us, living God, as we meet around your word and reflect upon it.
Encourage us, inspire us. Amen.*

Micah 5:2-5

New Revised Standard Version

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ God shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;

then the rest of the kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And this one shall stand and feed the flock in strength, in majesty.

And they shall live secure, for now this one shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

⁵ and shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1:39-55

New Revised Standard Version

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of God comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by God."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for God has looked with favour on the lowliness of God's servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is God's name.

⁵⁰God's mercy is for those who fear God
from generation to generation.

⁵¹God has shown strength with God's arm;
and has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³God has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴God has helped God's servant Israel,
in remembrance of mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise God made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

This is the word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God

Hymn

My Soul Cries Out

MV 120

*My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things*

*that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?*

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

*Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shames,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.*

*From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears,
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.*

*Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.*

Sermon

Magnify Love



*All poor ones and humble and all those who stumble,
 come hastening, and feel not afraid;
 for Jesus, our treasure, with love past all measure,
 in lowly poor manger was laid.
 Though wise men who found him
 laid rich gifts around him,
 yet oxen they gave him their hay,
 and Jesus in beauty accepted their duty;
 contented in manger he lay.
 Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
 our service he ne'er can despise;
 whose love still is able to show us that stable,
 where softly in manger he lies.*

*The Christ Child will lead us, the Good Shepherd feed us
 and with us abide till his day.
 Then hatred he'll banish; then sorrow will vanish,
 and death and despair flee away.
 And he shall reign ever, and nothing shall sever
 from us the great love of our King;
 his peace and his pity shall bless his fair city;
 his praises we ever shall sing.
 Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
 our service he ne'er can despise;
 whose love still is able to show us that stable,
 where softly in manger he lies.*

*Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
 our service he ne'er can despise;
 whose love still is able to show us that stable,
 where softly in manger he lies.*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering our Gifts to God

Prayers of the People



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed 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. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High

VU 38

*Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.*

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

*Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.*

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

*See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.*

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Benediction & Commissioning



Postlude

Wexford Carol

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Other Resources for Today

Sermon: Statement of Faith ~ written by Ann Siddall posted on the **Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community** website.

[Prayers & Liturgies – Stillpoint Spirituality Centre \(stillpointsa.org.au\)](http://stillpointsa.org.au)

Lectionary Readings

Psalm 80:1-7

New Revised Standard Version

¹ Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
² before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

³ Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

⁴ O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.

⁶ You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Hebrews 10:5-10

New Revised Standard Version

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.