

**Melville United Church
Sunday, December 13, 2015
3rd Sunday of Advent**

* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today: Rev. Marion Loree

Welcome & Announcements

Sharing the Light

Prelude/Centering Time: Improvisation

Call to Worship: *(based on Zephaniah 3:14-20)*

Sing Aloud! Rejoice and exult with all your heart for we have much to celebrate!

Sing! Shout! And rejoice with all your heart!

God is in our midst, we have nothing to fear;
we are renewed by Love's song exulting over us with loud singing as though it were a festival day.

Sing! Shout! And rejoice with all your heart!

Healing Presence is among us gathering in our neglected souls
and enabling that which is feeble.

The shame of yesterday is transformed into praise
and in wholeness we sing out across the earth.

Sing! Shout! And rejoice with all your heart!

We have been brought home,
gathered into the heart of the Homemaker;
here our deepest longings are fulfilled before our eyes -
praise be to God!

Sing! Shout! And rejoice with all your heart!

Come, let us worship.

*Hymn: All Earth is Waiting

VU 5

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, as we get closer and closer to Christmas,
it gets easier to get caught up in the excitement and the bustle around
us.

Today, we joyfully gather together to worship.

Help us to set aside our planning and our fretting,
our wish lists and our to-do lists,

so that we may focus on you.

We pray that your Spirit would fill us and this place,

that we might hear you speaking to us. Amen.

Prayer for Inner Healing:

We will not find you, Loving God, in the busy stores, or among the
Christmas lights.

But where a young couple struggles to get basic housing, you are there.

We will not find you, Caring God, in the packed casino, or on the
Internet.

But where a refugee seeks a safe place for her family, you are there.

We will not find you, Compassionate God, at the bank machine or in a
high class restaurant.

But where a newly bereaved person searches for a comforting presence, you are there.

Ever-present God, open our eyes to the places where you are found

that we may focus on your ways and move out of our places of distraction. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

God's voice can be heard above all voices, if we listen for it.

God's voice is one that proclaims release for the captives,

forgiveness for the contrite, and grace to all who will accept it.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

Chorus: Jesus Came Bringing us Hope

MV 33

Jesus came bringing us joy.

Jesus came bringing us joy.

Jesus came bringing us joy.

Hallelujah forever more! (Repeat)

Advent Candle Lighting: (written by Richard Bott. **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 1015-1016. Page 60. Used with permission.)

(Two candles are lit)

East Side:

-to the tune of Silver Bells

**It's a story, quite a story,
that began long ago,
when the prophets foretold a messiah**

West Side:

**Line of David, it was stated
would bring forth a new son,
who would change the world -
turn upside down!**

All:

**Angel's words, angel's wings -
new life is growing, my heart sings:
"Peace on earth, enough for all!
Soon we'll be living God's way!"**

East Side:

**Then there's Mary (not yet married)
gave her "Yes" to the plan
with her love, she became co-creator.**

West Side:

**Child of Wisdom, Child of Promise,
here comes E-mmanuel!
And with that joy, she sang out her song -**

All:

**Angel's words, angel's wings -
new life is growing, my heart sings:
"Peace on earth, enough for all!
Soon we'll be living God's way!"**

(The third candle is lit)

Prayer:

**For the mothers who are ready
to tear tyrants from their thrones,
so that their children may live and love;
for the fathers that stand beside them,
to offer strength and support -
Alleluia, God!
May the joy that we feel in your Presence,
fill us with life abundant,
so that, when the time is right,
that joy can be birthed, new,
into your Creation.
Alleluia. Alleluia! ALLELUIA!
Amen!**

Theme Conversation: Joy

Candle-Lighting Hymn: Hope is a Star vs 3 VU 7

**Joy is the song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born.
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.**

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18 (the Inclusive Bible-The First Egalitarian Edition)

(John warns the crowd to live and work honestly)

John said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "You pack of snakes! Who warned you to escape the wrath to come? Produce good fruit as a sign of your repentance. And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Sarah and Abraham as our mother and father,' for I tell you that God can raise children for Sarah and Abraham from these very stones. The ax is already laid at the root of the tree; every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and tossed into the fire."

When the people asked him, "What should we do?" John replied, "Let the one with two coats share with the one who has none. Let those who have food do the same."

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to John, "Teacher, what are we to do?"

John answered them, "Exact nothing over and above your fixed amount."

Soldiers likewise asked, "What about us?" John told them, "Don't bully anyone. Don't accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were full of anticipation, wondering in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all by saying, "I am baptizing you in water, but someone is coming who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to untie! This One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. A winnowing fork is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the granary, but the chaff will be burnt in unquenchable fire." Using exhortations like this, John proclaimed the Good News to the people.

Responsive Reading: Isaiah 12: 1a-6

VU 880

(Proclaim God's deeds to the nations)

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7 (New Revised Standard Version)

(Rejoice in God always)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Message: Joy vs Happiness

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.

(Where?) **Down in my heart. (Where?) Down in my heart.**

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.

(Where?) **Down in my heart to stay.**

And I'm so happy, so very happy.

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

Yes, I'm so happy, so very happy.

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus down in my heart....

And I'm so happy....

I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart...

And I'm so happy...

***Hymn:** Rejoice in the Lord Always (sung as a round)

VU 249

Offering:

Ministry of Music: Come, Messiah, Come - Jack Schrader

(from Cantata Go Tell It)

Offering Hymn: As With Gladness Men of Old - vs 3

VU 81

**As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger crude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our new born King.**

***Offertory Prayer:**

Gracious God, you have loved us and blessed us beyond our comprehension. This offering is a humble portion which we desire to give back to you. We pray that you will use these gifts to bless others, that they may know your love as we do. Amen.

Joys and Concerns:

Prayer Prelude: Wait for the Lord

VU 22

Wait for the Lord, God's day is near.

Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart! (Repeat)

Prayers of the People:

Prayer of Jesus:

***Hymn:** Joy to the World

VU 59

***Blessing:**

May the candles of Hope and Peace burn brightly in your hearts,
preparing the way for the Christ child.

**May we be the signs of peace in our world as we continue our
journey toward Bethlehem.**

And may the God of hope fill you with the Joy of knowing
you are loved - always!

Amen!

***Parting Song:** People Look East - vs 1 **VU 9**

**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.

Postlude: Prelude on Lo, How a Rose - J. Brahms

Prayer of the Week:

As we sing the songs of the season, O God - songs of hope, peace, and
love - show us the way to transformation. We desire to be different.
We desire to be a source of hope, peace and joy in this troubled world.
Send your Spirit to help us find direction and purpose in all that each
day brings. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Elora Road Christian Fellowship

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: Freelton-Strabane

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers:

Richard Wright, Elizabeth Stintson,
Joan and John Cuming

Counters:

Kaillie Rawn, Lloyd Ross