

Melville United Church
Sunday, December 11, 2016
3rd Sunday of Advent - Joy



** Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today: Rev. Marion Loree

Call to Worship:

Our souls reflect God's glory

and our spirits rejoice in the Holy Presence.

Joy is near for those who love and revere God's ways.

The powerful will be sorry and the poor raised up.

The hungry are filled with good things, and the rich sent away empty.

Blessed be Love's presence.

Come, let us worship together!

***Hymn:** Hope is a Star

VU 7

Opening Prayer:

Liberating God, help us to know the insurrection you birthed in the form of a baby. As we are inspired by a young woman's humble, joyful obedience, remind us how you steer our lives, no matter how our ego struggles for control. May we hear your Advent call for revolution in our lives. Amen.

Advent Candle Lighting

This third Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for joy and remember God is the light on our path.

Strengthen our hearts, for the coming of the Christ is near.

God is a God of justice who brings food to the hungry and inclusion to the rejected. God lifts up the lowly and lowers the mighty.

Strengthen our hearts, for the coming of the Christ is near.

We join our hearts with that of the desert gushing with life.

We join our joy with that of Mary who sings with excitement for the child to come.

Strengthen our hearts, for the coming of the Christ is near. Amen.

Melville United Church
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Team Ministry

Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music:	Matthias Schmidt
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
Pastoral Care	Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree
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Song: A Candle is Burning - vs 3 VU 6**Theme Conversation:** White Gift**Hymn:** There Was a Child**MV 134****Scripture:** Matthew 11:2-11 (The Inclusive Bible)

(John's disciples visit Jesus)

While John was in prison, he heard about the works the Messiah was performing, and sent a message by way of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you 'The One who is to come' or do we look for another?"

In reply, Jesus said to them, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

'Those who are blind recover their sight;
 those who cannot walk are able to walk;
 those with leprosy are cured;
 those who are deaf hear;
 the dead are raised to life;
 and the *anawim* - the "have-nots" -
 have the Good News preached to them.'

"Blessed is the one who finds no stumbling block in me."

As the messengers set off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out to the wasteland to see - a reed swaying in the wind? Tell me, what did you go out to see - someone luxuriously dressed? No, those who dress luxuriously are to be found in royal palaces. So what did you go out to see - a prophet? Yes, a prophet - and more than a prophet! It is about John that scripture says,

'I send my messenger ahead of you
 to prepare your way before you.'

"The truth is, history has not known a person born of woman who is greater than John the Baptizer. Yet the least born into the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10 (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition)

(The desert blooms & rejoices)

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees. Say to all those of faint heart: "Take courage! Do not be afraid! Look, YHWH is coming, vindication is coming, the recompense of God - God is coming to save you!"

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be unsealed. Then those who cannot walk will leap like deer and the tongues of those who cannot speak will sing for joy. Waters will break forth in the wilderness, and there will be streams in the desert. The scorched earth will become a lake; the parched land, springs of water.

The lairs where jackals used to dwell will become thickets of reed and papyrus. And through it will run a highway, a road called the Sacred Path. The unclean may not travel by it, but it will be for God's people alone; and no traveler - not even fools - will go astray.

No lions will be there, nor will any fierce beast roam about it, but the redeemed will walk there - for those whom YHWH has ransomed will return. They will enter Zion shouting for joy, with everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them, and sorrow and lament will flee away.

Reader: Eleanor Johnston**Responsive Reading:** Luke 1:47-55

(Refrain 1)

VU 898

(Song of Mary (Magnificat))

Message: Joy Like Mary***Hymn:** Never Ending Joy**MV 40****Offering:****Ministry of Music:** Advent is Waiting for Bethlehem's Light - D Paterson***Offering Hymn:** What Can I Give Him? Vs 4 - VU 55**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.**

***Offertory Prayer:**

We are called to strengthen our hearts for the coming of Christ is near. Let us live in the light of God, that we may abound in joy and act for justice. We bring the best of ourselves and our offerings to God's church and world. Amen.

Joys and Concerns:

Prayer Prelude: May we but wait MV 175

**May we but wait upon Love's word,
Knowing our prayer is heard. (Repeat)**

Prayers of the People:**Prayer of Jesus:**

***Hymn: Joy to the World VU 59**

***Blessing:**

May God fill our hearts with joy

like waters breaking forth in the wilderness.

May God bless us with goodness

like a spring bubbling up in the desert.

May the God of joy fill your heart and your life

and spill over into all we say and do.

Go knowing that just as the desert has flowered among us,

God's transforming love has been planted and is at work in you.

Amen.

***Parting Song: O Lord, How Shall I Meet You? VU 31 - vs 1**

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?

Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!

O kindle, then, most holy, a lamp within my breast,

to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Postlude: J. S. Bach - Fantasia on In Dulci Jubilo

Prayer of the Week:

Loving and awesome God, in you all things are possible. We join in

Mary's song and lift our praise and hope to you. You do not abandon us. May your transforming grace and promise of justice live in our hearts this Advent as we align our hearts with yours. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Grace Christian Fellowship, Fergus

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: First Grantham, St. Catharines

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers:

Joan and John Cuming,

Isabel Weaver, Joyce Keizerwaard

Counters: