

Quispamsis United Church

December 17, 2023 -3rd Sunday in Advent

Liturgical Colour: Blue

Presider: Rev Ian Manson

Music: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Robert Orchard

Centering Reflection: *God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.
- Rainer Maria Rilke, "Go to the Limits of Your Longing"*

GATHERING TOGETHER

Opening Music (Go Tell It On the Mountain - arr. Lloyd Larson) & **Time of Prayer and Candle Lighting**

Welcome and Lighting of the Christ Candle

Lighting of Affirm Candle & Acknowledgment of Territories

Celebrations

Introit: Come Now, O God VU 34
Come now, O God of joy
We are your people
Pour out your spirit
That we be one body.

Call to Worship (Responsive):

Arise and be bold, for good news and glad tidings are here.

We dream of a new and better future, where justice and peace prevail.

We imagine a world where mercy abounds and where exiles and strangers find a home.

The way to a more just and joyous future has been shown to us. Let us worship the One who leads us onward.

Prayer of Approach (Unison)

God of joy and justice,

You are our strength and our song, and we praise you for

the wonders of this world and beyond it.
You bring healing to those who are broken in body and spirit,
care for the weak and vulnerable.
and draw close to those who walk alone.
Receive our prayers and praise this morning,
and fill our hearts with your grace and joy.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn:

Hail to God's Own Anointed

VU 30

Hail to God's own anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed, God's reign on earth begun!
Christ comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

Christ comes with justice surely to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong,
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.

Christ shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go,
and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.

To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove.
His name shall stand for ever: that name to us is Love.

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy (Responsive)

When darkness grows, Hope reminds us that it only takes a spark to scatter shadows.

When darkness grows, Peace reminds us that we carry that spark and shine brightest together.

light HOPE & PEACE candle

And when we share that light with one another, we experience the Joy at the core our creation.

Because we were created to be in community, in relationship. Joy is finding one another.

It's hearing God's call to serve, giving of ourselves eagerly for the building up of the kingdom.

It's serving our kindred in this world and knowing that each hand reaching out is Christ's own hand, that each smile is Christ's own smile.

Joy is being a mirror to reflect God's love light on the world,

so that none are lost and alone in the dark.

light JOY candle

We light this candle because our Joy in the Lord is overflowing within us and we cannot help but share the news:

Christ is alive in us. Christ is coming soon.

Candle Lighting Hymn

A Candle is Burning

VU 6 (vs 3)

**A candle is burning, a candle of JOY,
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.**

Jammers: Let It Be Christmas – Alan Jackson

Time for All Ages

Prayer of Illumination (Unison)

O God, by your gifts of Word and Spirit, open our minds to greater understanding, our hearts to deeper love, and our wills to eager service, through Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 1: 18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Sung Response to Scripture

Watch and Pray

VU 33

**Watch, watch and pray
Jesus, the word will come**

Jammers: Christmas is Coming – Jason Grey

Message “A Moment of Decision”

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Hymn:

Angels From the Realms of Glory
**Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

VU 36

Refrain

*come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant Light: R

Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star: R

Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear: R

Life and Work of the Church

Sharing of our Gifts

Offertory Dedication Hymn:

In the Bleak Midwinter
**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.**

VU 55 (vs. 1)

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

**God of justice and joy, we bring our gifts to you in gratitude for your unfailing goodness to us.
Bless these gifts and use them to create justice and bring joy into the world in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

Jammers:

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen/We Three Kings medley – Barenaked Ladies

Sung Invocation to the Prayers of the People: I Waited, I Waited on the Lord

VU 954

**I waited, I waited on the Lord.
I waited, I waited on the Lord.
Who bent down low and remembered me,
And who heard my prayer.**

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn:

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold,
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

VU 44

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the love song which they bring.
O hush the noise, and cease your strife,
to hear the angels sing.

For, lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

Commissioning (Responsive):

Go with joy renewed this day,

Let us share that joy with justice and generosity in the world God loves!

Benediction

Choral Closing:

Rejoice, Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Closing Music

Joy to the World - arr. John Ness Beck