

Quispamsis United Church

December 3, 2023 -1st Sunday in Advent

Liturgical Colour: Blue

Presider: Rev Ian Manson

Director of Music: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Heather Haché

Centering Reflection: *Observe and contemplate.
The cosmos and our little earth.
Observing, we affirm the worth
Of sun and stars and light unfurled.
So, let us, seeing, celebrate
The glory of Love's incarnate birth
And sing its joy to all the world.*

- Madeleine L'Engle

GATHERING TOGETHER

Opening Music & Time of Prayer and Candle Lighting

(Music by Valley Woodwinds)

Once in Royal David's City

Twasi in the Moon of Wintertime - Huron Carol

Quem Pastores - trad. German Carol

Away in a Manger

Welcome and Lighting of the Christ Candle

Lighting of Affirm Candle & Acknowledgment of Territories

Celebrations

Introit:

Come Now, O God
Come now, O God of hope
We are your people
Pour out your spirit
That we be one body.

VU 34

Call to Worship (Responsive):

On this first Sunday of Advent, we come to worship,
seeking the light of Christ in our lives and world.

**We know that God's Spirit is with us in every moment, in
every task we do, and in every breath we take.**

Today we celebrate the many ways that God fosters
a spirit of hope in places near and far.

**Today we pray that God's light will shine into our lives and
community this Advent, bringing hope and strength to all.**

Prayer of Approach (Unison)

Eternal God,

You have given us the gift of life,

and stand by us in times of joy and sorrow.

In a tired and violent world, you offer hope.

In a cold and troubled world, you give us comfort and strength.

Through our worship today, fill our hearts with your Spirit.

Make us one in devotion and service,

so that the world will see your hope at work in us and

through us, making all things new. Amen

Opening Hymn:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

VU 1 (vs. 1,2,4,7)

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go. R

O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave. R

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us the Prince of Peace. R**

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy (Responsive)

Advent is the beginning of a new world, a better world, where we can dare to hope boldly.

We hope for a future that is more amazing than anything we could ever imagine.

We hope for the healing of creation.

We hope that wars and conflicts will cease, that peace will reign, and that all people will have enough.

We hope for a world where everyone seeks the good, and light this candle to symbolize our Hope in the Lord,

Our trust in the one who never fails to bring us from what is into what might yet be.

light HOPE candle

Candle Lighting Hymn

A Candle is Burning

VU 6 (vs 1)

**A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of HOPE in November's dark night
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh**

Time for All Ages

Prayer of Illumination (Unison)

God of grace, you speak words of hope in the midst of anxious times. Send your Holy Spirit to open our ears to that hope, and help us find comfort, courage and peace. Amen.

Readings: Luke 1: 5-25

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying

outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

Sung Response to Scripture

Watch and Pray

VU 33

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

The Gift of Music: Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

Message "An Unexpected Word"

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn:

All Earth is Waiting

VU 5

**All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows await the seed of God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.**

**Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
'A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel.'
One whose name is 'God with us', our Saviour shall be,
through whom hope will blossom once more
within our hearts.**

**Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain,
open new highways, new highways for our God,
who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.**

**In lowly stable the Promised One appeared.
Yet, feel that presence throughout the earth today,
for Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, on arriving, Christ brings us liberty.**

Life and Work of the Church

Sharing our Gifts

Special Music - Valley Woodwinds: Douce Nuit, Sainte Nuit - Gruber arr Dewagtere

Offertory Dedication Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter VU 55, vs. 4

**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.**

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

God of purpose and promise, we offer our time, talent and money to help fulfill your purposes on earth. Bless our gifts and our actions so that the promise of your love will be made real, here and elsewhere. Amen.

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:

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
**Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free:
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.**

VU 2

**Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Commissioning (Responsive):

Go in hope this day, and keep awake!

May the God of hope fill us with grace and peace.

May we watch for signs of God at work around us and within us.

May we look for opportunities to serve others in Jesus' name.

Benediction

Choral Closing:

VU 1 Refrain

**Rejoice, Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Closing Music - Valley Woodwinds: Christ was Born on Christmas Day - Trad
Jingle Bells Boogie - David Bruce