

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH



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Ministers: The people of St. Andrew's

Pastor: Rev.Cheryl Bolton

Ministry of Music: Brian and Lynn Sloan/Merna
Edison

December 18th, 2022

WE GATHER

Welcome - Good morning and welcome to this 4th Sunday of Advent. In this time of worship, may we be open to God's promises, love, and transformation.

May we vision and dream.

May we be surprised.

May we receive the life God gave us.

May we encounter Emmanuel—God with us.

And may we never be the same. Amen.

Announcements

Acknowledging Our Kinship -

As we gather in this time of expectant waiting, we begin by acknowledging the gifts we have already received and thanking Creator God, from whom all blessings flow, for this land on which we live and worship. We acknowledge and give thanks to those who were stewards of the land before our ancestors came and we give thanks to them for the blessing of the sharing of this land. With open hearts we commit ourselves to living into Advent with love and respect for all our relations.

Advent Candle Lighting -

Voice 1: "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (*Luke 2:19*)

Voice 2: What does love feel like in the new world?

All:

Love feels like knowing I am a sacred piece of a magnificent whole.

Love feels like acceptance and gratitude.

Love feels like being cherished.

Voice 2: Advent is the beginning of this new world, a better world, where you, and me, and all of God's creation are treasured and loved.

(Fourth Advent candle is lit.)

Amen.

Gathering Hymn - Hope is a Star - 7 VU 1-4

Call To Worship

L: This is the fourth Sunday of Advent, a time to rejoice in the wondrous things that God is doing.

P: Our hearts are filled with the hope that is coming into the world.

L: The time is fast approaching, not for parties or presence, but for the awareness of God's loving gift to us--the gift of the Christ child.

P: Help slow us down, Lord, that we may realize that your gift of love is at the center of our lives and our celebrations.

L: Thanks be to God who again reminds us of God's eternal love.

P: Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive your blessed gift. AMEN.

Young at Heart -

Hymn - Gentle Mary Laid Her Child - 46 VU

Prayer of Confession

O God, we are easily distracted and slightly jaded, and cannot believe Christ is almost here.

There are still presents to be bought—never mind wrapped.

There are parties to attend, cookies to be baked, trees to be trimmed.

Sometimes we cannot wait until all this hubbub is over.

Where is the time to sit, to sleep—never mind to dream?

We can get so caught up in the busyness of the season that we miss the gift the season is meant to be.

We have heard the scriptures and stories so often that they have become white noise.

For our frenetic pace, for our exhaustion,
for our tunnel vision, for our missing the wonder
and awe of a baby born to fulfill promises made long ago, forgive us.
Restore to us the sense of surprise that you came to us as a little baby,
unexpected, yet longed for.
God of the visioners and dreamers, may we always be ready
to receive your gifts. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God comes to us in dreams and visions,
in prophecies and affirmations, in longing and in hope,
in salvation through a little child.
Claim this promise for yourself, and let God's healing love fill you

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 7: 10-16, Matthew 1: 18-25

Meditation - *Signs, signs, everywhere there's signs.*

Hymn - Go Tell it on the Mountain - 43 VU

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to Offering

Offering Hymn - In the Bleak Mid-winter - 55 VU - Verse 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.

Offering Prayer

Holy One, this Advent season we wait with love,
And we give with love.
Love for you, our God;
Love for your beautiful people.
Receive these offerings,
And use them for your works of love in our world.
Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern -

Holy One, be the light in our darkness.
As we have lit the candle of hope,
we pray for those who feel hopeless . . .

As we have lit the candle of peace,
we pray for all victims of violence . . .

As we have lit the candle of joy,
we pray for those whose hearts are weighed down by sorrow . . .

As we have lit the candle of love,
we pray for those who do not feel loved,
for those who struggle to love others . . .

Holy One, be the light in our darkness,
that we might reflect your light into the dark corners of our world. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Communion Service

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise: “I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up.” (Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for the Refiner’s fire, repair, and renewal, the promised birth and rebirth of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise, Mary sings ancient trust—the song of generations—that God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble. She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples: Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear that the kingdom of God is near. In the deep of our own winter, we look for them: bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope. You, O Wisdom, O Endless Love, O Radiant Dawn, are there, keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight, that valley’s peace be lifted up and mountains might brought low so that all God’s people might rejoice together, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night, as humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable and were witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared with all whom he met, in food and story. We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,

Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body, which I give for you. When you share it, remember me."

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks, said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me."

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all. With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

Bless us, O God, and these your gifts. Encourage us to share your life and love, which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy. Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children: those who feel alone or afraid...those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence... those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...those who long only to hear that they are loved...

God made known in Jesus Christ, hear our prayer. We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Sharing the Bread & Cup

Prayer after Communion

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger. At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always, that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives, and become hosts to God's presence and people.

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world, where the lonely and longing gather. Lead us to the mangers of our time, where hope and renewal are born again. Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.

Final Hymn - O Come, O Come Emmanuel - 1 VU

Commissioning and Benediction

Go forth with a dream in your soul
and a song in your heart,
knowing that God's promises
are always fulfilled.

The time is almost here.

Get ready for wonder!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Events

December 24- "Christmas Eve Service" 5pm

December 25-No Service today

December 26,27-Office Closed

December 28,29,30-Office Open

December Celebrations

December 20-Kim Perry

December 22-Pam North

December 23-Erika Broadbear

December 28-Alli Joseph



St. Andrews Christmas eve service will begin at 5pm. All are welcome.



You can now etransfer givings to St.Andrews. This can be used to make a donation, pay for camp, buy dinner tickets etc. You can do etransfers thru your bank and the email address to use is:

statreasurerst@gmail.com. Feel free to ask Rev.Cheryl or Susan or our treasurer Belinda any questions you may have about etransfer.



Lynn and Brian Sloan would like to invite you to check out their Winter Wonderland display at 70 Mandeville. The lights and blow ups are on every night between 6pm and 9pm! You are even welcome to check out the backyard display.



Reverse Advent Calendar items(see newsletter) can be brought in on Jan.1st to be dropped off at the foodbank.



Christmas Word Search

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| H | Y | S | E | M | E | A | N | S | A | M | T | S | I | R | H | C | N |
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SANTA

CELEBRATE

BELLS

RUDOLPH

MISTLETOE

STOCKING

CANDY CANE

FROSTY

REINDEER

WREATH

ELVES

CHRISTMAS

TREE

JOLLY

HOLIDAY

SLEDGE

