

Gathering Song: VU 7 Hope Is a Star

Announcements

Welcome

One: In the Northern Hemisphere, we find ourselves entering a time when the light fades early and coldness settles in. And yet, as the darkness grows, this is the time when we who follow Jesus light candles and lights to remind us that God's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never and *will* never overcome it.

And so, we light the Peace candle (*Elder lights Peace Candle*) as a reminder that Jesus taught us to live in peace with all Creation. As the congregation of Knox United, we acknowledge that we live, work, worship and play within the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. As those who follow Jesus' path of peace,

All: we commit ourselves to upholding the Treaties of Peace and Friendship so that we will live in a good way with all peoples, the land, the waters, and all of Creation, for we are all treaty people.

One: We light the Affirmation Candle (*Elder lights Affirmation candle*) as a celebration of all the wonderful diversity in which God creates us and calls us good! In this community of faith, we celebrate that all are welcome in this place.

All: All are welcome by God's grace.

Call to Worship

One: For those times when the way ahead seems strewn with obstacles, for those times when tasks compete urgently for our attention,

All: God's word is *hope*.

One: For those times when conflict rages, for times when it is so hard to get along,

All: God's word is *peace*.

One: For those times when we need a break in the action, for those times which call for a celebration,

All: God's word is *joy*.

One: For those times when we keep our distance, for those times when we cannot forgive,

All: God's word is *love*.

One: let us reflect on God's words for us and for our church in this time of worship. Let us pray together:

Opening Prayer

All: God of mercy, a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious, to assume the best in others, to give the benefit of the doubt. A million times a day we could choose the better way, but so often we don't.

Fear and greed kick in. Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel. Comparison and critique lead the charge. Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood. Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you. Give us the courage to love even bigger than before, and the wisdom to choose a better way. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: Family of Faith, hear this good news: We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance. We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community. We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known. This is the good news of the gospel. No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way, God continues to be a God of second chances, community, and love. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Candle Lighting Hymn: We Light a Candle vv.1-3

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy:

Worship Leader: Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked the question, “What brings you joy?” From the voices of different generations, hear their answers:

Voice One: A clean kitchen.

Voice Two: Sand between my toes.

Voice One: Being outside.

Voice Two: Sleeping in my own bed after a night away.

Voice One: Having a camera in my hands.

Voice Two: My partner’s laugh.

Voice One: Mountain air.

Voice Two: When my parents pick me up from school.

Voice One: The end of my to-do list.

Voice Two: Hugs from my niece and nephew.

Voice One: Baby giggles.

Voice Two: My cat.

Voice One: Putting my hands in the garden.

Voice Two: A chord resolved.

Voice One: Stargazing.

Voice Two: Reading a book at bedtime.

Voice One: A warm cup of coffee with friends.

Voice Two: My new granddaughter.

Voice One: Lingering at the table after dinner.

Voice Two: Time with family.

Voice One: Today we light the candle of joy. May its light remind us of all the good news this season brings. May its light remind us of the many sources of joy in our lives, and may that joy not only draw us closer to one another, but closer to God. (*Another worship leader or reader lights the candle.*)

Voice One: Family of faith, what brings you joy? Amen.

Hymn: VU 445 A Little Child a Saviour Came

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism Team Member: In The United Church of Canada, we believe that each child born into the world is already a beloved child of God. Nothing can take that away from any of us.

Believing this, we celebrate the sacred act of baptism through which we recognize the love of God that is already working in a person's life, and we bless the person with the name and love of God and the sign of the cross on their forehead as a reminder that they are now members of Christ's family and are called to live as Christ teaches us to live—loving our neighbours as ourselves, loving kindness, and working for justice in our world.

As such, a person is transformed through this blessing and receives welcome into the family of Christ.

Representative of SOC:

On behalf of the **Congregation of Knox United Church**, I present Allysha Leaman and Joshua Richards who desire baptism for their **child Gracie Leaman Richards**.

Rev Penny: Allysha and Josh, the act of Baptism proclaims that you are loved by God, and that you desire to live as Christ teaches his followers to live. As parents, you make these vows on behalf of Gracie until she can claim these vows for herself. As such, I ask you these questions as a profession of your faith, and the life in which you hope to raise Gracie as your child.

Do you believe in one God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Allysha and Josh: I do, by the grace of God.

Rev Penny: Desiring the freedom of new life in Christ, do you seek to resist evil, and to live in love and justice?

Allysha and Josh: I will, God being my helper.

Rev Penny: Will you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as Saviour and Lord?

Allysha and Josh: I will, God being my helper.

Rev Penny: Will you join with your brothers and sisters/siblings in this congregation to share in the life, work, and ministry of Jesus Christ?

Allysha and Josh: I will, God being my helper.

Rev Penny: Will you teach Gracie to honor the faith questions that belong to her throughout her life? Will you journey with Gracie to discover the wonder of God's love made manifest here this day?

Allysha and Josh, Nicole and Jordy: I will, God being my helper

To the **Elders** (*Please stand*), As **Sponsors** to this child and her family, do you covenant to give your time and yourselves, sharing your faith stories and life experiences; encouraging this **whole family** to explore a growing experience of God and self? If so, please answer: **We do, God being our helper.**

And this **faith community** (*Please stand*): Do you covenant to receive **this child** and all children under your care, affording them every opportunity to know Jesus Christ and grow in faithful witness to His Saving power? If so, please answer together: **We will, God being our helper.** (*All may be seated*)

Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Water:

Minister: Lord, bless this water and all that we do in your name, for it is not the words and rituals we share, but the living presence and power of

your blessing in our lives that makes baptism a Sacrament of grace and praise. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Rev Penny: What is the name of this child?

Allysha and Josh: Gracie Leaman Richards.

Rev Penny: Gracie Leaman Richards, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen._

Marking the Sign of the Cross and Laying on of Hands:

Rev Penny: Gracie Leaman Richards, child of God, from this day forward, you bear the sign of Jesus Christ. And from this day forward, may the Holy Spirit, Love's power, guide you, inspire you, and work within you, all the days of your life. Amen.

Baptismal Song: MV 161 I Have Called You By Your Name v. 1

Elder/Baptism Team Member: Allysha and Josh, receive this candle lit from the Christ candle. May it be a reminder of God's light that shines within , and all creation. May the blessing of a shared life of love and light be alive in you today and always. *(give the parents the baptismal candle lit from the Christ candle and the baptismal certificate)*

Elder/Baptism Team Member: Gracie, receive the gift of scripture as a way to learn of the Love that was born as a child like yourself. May you share the story of this day often, that you may know you are loved and embraced come what may. Amen. *(give the parents a Bible)*

Baptismal Hymn: MV 161 I Have Called You By Your Name vv.3&4

Prayer of Illumination

Reader: Holy God, scripture tells us that you came to Joseph through an angel—loud and clear, impossible to miss. Scripture also tells us that Joseph listened. He rearranged his life to follow your invitation. God, we long for that— all of that. We long to hear your voice—loud and clear, impossible to miss. We long for invitations to something more, something deeper. And we long to be like Joseph and find the courage to follow. So clean out our ears. Brush the dust off our hearts. Trace us back to our roots—back to Joseph—who heard and followed. With gratitude we listen. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1: 18-25

offered by Heather Jones

Words of God that are still speaking.

Thanks be to God!

Reflection

Ministry of Music: A Strange Way to Save the World

Offertory: MV 158 Dream a Dream

Offertory Hymn: Each of Us Have Treasures

Offering Dedication

All: Just as shepherds and wise ones came to offer praise and gifts to baby Jesus, we offer our gifts and praise to you, O God.

Bless all those who receive these gifts of time, talents, and finances so that your message of love may be received here in Sackville and around this world.

Amen.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Hymn VU 59 Joy to the World

Blessing:

One: As you leave this place, may you go knowing that from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation, God has been by our side.

From generation to generation, we are not alone.

The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth, saying,

“Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice, and come back soon.”

May it be so! Amen.

Parting Song: MV 220 Joy Shines as the Solitary Star

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