

WESTMOUNT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

London, Ontario

Advent 2

December 6th 2020

Call to Worship

Now is the time to get ready;
let us prepare the way of the Lord!
Now is the time to be changed;
let us repent and seek forgiveness.
Now is the time to welcome God into our midst;
let us worship God in humble expectation!

Gathering Prayer

O God of peace, your way is sure and leads to salvation. You send your Son, the promise of life eternal; your Holy spirit guides us to truth. We hear your heralds proclaim the good news of peace and good will and receive your abounding grace, making firm our footsteps; we know that all is made ready to follow you faithfully. We praise you in thought, word and deed. By your mercy, affirm your unending love for us and in our worship make us alive in your promise.

O God of forgiveness, with our tongues we speak evil against our brothers and sisters. By our actions, we disobey your commandments. We breed hostility through our suspicion and envy; we remain angry in spite of Christ's peace. You open our eyes to His righteousness, yet we remain blind to the truth of his reconciling presence. Forgive our deliberate misuse of your mercy and in Christ hear our prayer as we pray as He has taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

Words of Grace

Jesus said, Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Friends, trust that peace and forgiveness are God's gift to you this day.

Be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit that moves with you into each new day.

May the peace of Christ be with you always.

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Peace

Our lists are long, even in this strange mess where we live these days. And we want to do it right, we want to be safe, but we want to be able to enjoy the season. We've got work to do to put right what has gone wrong, to heal what is broken, to mend the relationships, and to prepare for the company that will come.

The prophet Isaiah reminded us that there is work to be done. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." When God comes in, then healing is to be found, but we need to make the way; we need to open the door into our hearts and lives.

We light these candles as a sign of our faith that the God we worship is not far from us and that we can clear the way for that God to come and dwell with us. We light these candles in faith that company is coming.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

Hymn: #119 *Hope is a Star* verse 2

Hearing God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

O Lord, you have given us your word for a light to shine upon our path. Grant us so to meditate on that word, and to follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Prophetic — Isaiah 40:1-11

¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our
God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the Lord blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

Gospel _____ Luke 1: 57-79

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth,
and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbors and
relatives heard that the Lord had shown great
mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And
on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the
child. And they would have called him Zechariah
after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother answered, “No;
he shall be called John.” ⁶¹ And they said to her,
“None of your relatives is called by this name.”
⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring
what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³ And he asked
for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is
John.” And they all wondered. ⁶⁴ And
immediately his mouth was opened and his
tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.
⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbors. And all
these things were talked about through all the
hill country of Judea, ⁶⁶ and all who heard them
laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then
will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was
with him.

⁶⁷ And his father Zechariah was filled with the
Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has visited and redeemed his people

⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰ as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets
from of old,
⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham,
to grant us
⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our
enemies,
might serve him without fear,
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all
our days.
⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the
Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his
ways,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in
the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

P: Thanks be to God.

Hymn: #113 *Comfort, comfort you my people*

Message: “Peace”

Anita Evans, M.Div.

Responding in Faith

Prayers of the People

Eternal God, ruler of creation, whose hand holds us and guides us in accord with your purpose, we give you thanks this day for all those whose talent and calling it is to hold things together. Most of all we are thankful for Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, the firstborn of all creation.

Gracious God, we give thanks as well and we pray for those who have been given the ability to reconcile, to hold together people, enterprises and efforts for your high purpose; those who bring a welcome perspective, competence, grace, and stability to all their endeavors.

We pray for public servants who hold our government together to work for the common good.

We pray for community leaders who are people of vision, who give of themselves and of human and material resources in order to encourage community, lift hearts and hopes, and hold together the life of our cities.

We pray for our physicians, nurses and other medical personnel who hold together the working of our bodies and minds in health and wholeness.

We pray for teachers in our schools and churches, interpreters of ideas who help us hold onto and hold together the best of human thought and discovery.

We pray for artists, musicians, poets and writers; for all those who feed our souls and lift our spirits.

We pray for law enforcement officers and all those who place themselves at risk or in danger in order to hold together the defense of our homes, cities, and nation.

We pray for all those who work unseen and often unappreciated behind the scenes to hold together institutions and organizations which could not function without them.

We pray for all those who have been affected by the pandemic – for those who are sick, for their caregivers and loved ones, for those grieving loved ones lost, for all those who are struggling to take make ends meet, for those who find the isolation particularly difficult.

O God, hold us together we pray as we seek to be your people through the ministry of this church, that we may help hold together people whose lives are tossed and torn, whether by

illness or grief, by hunger and poverty, or by whatever struggles they face. Help us to know what we can do as individuals, and as a church to help those around us.

We offer all these prayers in the name of him in whom all things are held together, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: #746 *What a friend we have in Jesus*

Sending

Benediction

Go now in the hope and peace of Advent to love and serve the Lord.

Amen.