

Sunday December 5, 2021

Make Ready

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

A brief **Special Meeting of the Congregation** will take place today, **Sunday, December 5**, immediately following the worship service to vote on a revision of the church By-Laws regarding the number of people needed to serve on a Pastoral Search Committee. Our current By-Laws call for a Pastoral Search Committee of 9-12 members. In consultation with Rev. Marvin Silver (Associate Conference Minister) who will be guiding us through the Pastoral Search process, the Church Council recommends revising the By-Laws to call for a Pastoral Search Committee of 5-7 members as more in keeping with the size of our present congregation.

This meeting will take place via Zoom, and for those church members who will not be attending service on December 5, but who wish to attend the meeting, we ask that you join the Zoom meeting as close to 11:15 as possible. We will go directly into the meeting after the Benediction. This will be the only item on the meeting agenda, so we expect it will be a fairly short meeting.

Call to Worship

Leader: Righteous one! Equitable one!
People: Refining one! Delightful one!
Leader: Blessed one! Redeeming one!
People: One-of-flesh to save all flesh!
Leader: Emmanuel, One of Us – praise be your coming!

Opening Prayer **Unison**

**God of timeless grace,
you fill us with joyful expectation.
Make us ready for the message that prepares the way.
Out of the embrace of mercy and righteousness,
you have brought forth joy and dignity for your people,
O Holy One of Israel.**

**Remember now your ancient promise:
make straight the paths that lead to you,
and smooth the rough ways,
that in our day
we might bring forth your compassion
for all humanity.
With uprightness of heart and holy joy
we eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**

Advent Two Candle Lighting (Peace)

Stacy Hindalong

Advent Calendar Reader: We now light our first Advent candle representing Hope and Faith.

Pastor: Arise, take courage, and catch a glimpse of peace!

People: **The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

Pastor: We are together, not alone. In spirit and in community we gather on this second Sunday in Advent in solidarity and with courage to partner for a world full of peace where all of creation will flourish. Our witness is to and for peace.

People: **Peace is real and possible. In solidarity we pray, work, and wait for its blossoming.**

Advent Reflection on Peace (Advent Candle Reader)

Only as we learn and re-learn to grow into the ways of peace can we become available to life as a maker, sustainer, encourager, and initiator of peace. In all seasons of life may we learn and grow. As we light this second Advent candle of peace, regenerate within each of us the sustaining grace of a deep abiding desire to take risks and encounter surprises on Christ's empowering journey. Through your peace grant onto each of us the eyes of wisdom necessary to be the ones upholding this light of yours. In your birth Jesus our Messiah may we see the promise, signals, and presence of peace among us.

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

Let Us Pray (Advent Calendar Reader):

God-of-peace-and-possibility, kindle in the hearts of all compassion and love so that goodness, just deeds, the common good, and trust may flourish. Bless and gift all with hope for a future of peace built on justice for all. In the name of the Child, the peaceful one. Amen

Hymn #43: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Jim Tilton

- 1) Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,
Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart.
Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.
- 2) Breathe, O breathe your loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
Let us all in you inherit, let us find your promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
- 3) Come, almighty to deliver, let us all your life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing, love you as your angels love,
Pray and praise for your unfailing, wounded arms outstretched above.
- 4) Finish, then, your new creation; pure and spotless may we prove;
Let us see your great salvation perfectly restored in you;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Prayer of Confession Unison

**O God,
Peace can seem like such an elusive ideal, so far off, so difficult to imagine
that we are capable of marginalizing its possibilities. May we entrust
ourselves to you so deeply that you can awaken within us the capacity to
embrace your hope, dream, and faith in us. As we fail in this endeavor of
being your children of light at times we know we can all too easily fall back
into habits of behaving in impatient ways conceived within the narrowing
reactions serving our immediate needs of limiting vision.**

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

Hear this gracious promise:
I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among us
will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.
Thanks be to God, who sees our flaws and loves us into doing better. **Amen.**

Passing of the Peace

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Marsha Voigt

Malachi 3:1-4 (NIV)

3:1 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

3:2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;

3:3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

3:4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Special Music

Jim Tilton

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:1-6 (NIV)

3:1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene,

3:2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

3:3 He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,

3:4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

3:5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth;

3:6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Make Ready

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People

Hymn #119 My Soul Gives Glory to My God (verses 1, 3 and 5)

**1) My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.**

**3) From age to age, to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,
dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.**

**5) Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
remembering past promises with present faithfulness.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer **Unison**

Offering Invitation

Make way! Emmanuel is coming!
Make clearings of charity!
Make paths of justice!
Forge roads of equity!
May each one offer what they can
For our imminent, Sovereign God!

Offering and Dedication **Unison**

**Covenantal God, we live into your promise to make our rough ways smooth
With each gift we grind.
With each talent we sand.
With each act we polish.
We have not smoothed our ways yet,
Hopeful One, but with your unending guidance,
we will yet, O God. We will yet be yours and live in your ways.**

Service of Holy Communion

Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Communion Prayer **Unison**

As we eat this meal together and as we drink this juice of life in each other's presence grant unto us an emerging, fulfilling, and redeeming sense of life calling. In this holy meal of communion, we feel the allure and enticement of fellowship enriching us and making us more able to serve you and your ends in life. With eternal gratitude we give you thanks. Amen.

Benediction **Unison**

Righteous one! Equitable one!

Refining one! Delightful one!

Send us forth with tools we need

to make your path straight with Peace being our vision and intent

So that all may find a home on your glorious Way.