

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Minister: Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam

Music Director: Victoria Warwick

Readers: Don and Sharon Penrose

Tech Team: Glenn Erwin, Gabriela and Rick Dell, Bruce Wilcox

WELCOME AND CALL TO THE GATHERED

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE LAND

HYMN: "All God's Children Have a Place in the Choir"

OPENING PRAYER: read by Don Penrose

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE:

One: As we light this Christ candle may it remind us that Christ is in us and in our world.

SUNG RESPONSE: VU#82 "A Light is Gleaming" Refrain

Refrain: A light is gleaming, spreading its arms throughout the night, living in the light. Come share its gladness, God's radiant love is burning bright, living in the light.

THEME CONVERSATION:

SUNG LORD'S PRAYER: VU #959

(Children leave for Discovery Kids)

SCRIPTURE AND SONG OF FAITH READINGS: Luke 2: 16-21 and Reading on Christ read by Don and Sharon Penrose

SERMON:

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS

SUNG RESPONSE: MV#182 followed by OFFERTORY PRAYER

Grateful for the life you give us, thankful for your Holy Son,
Joyful in your Spirit flowing over all, O God of love.
Grateful for the Bread of Heaven, thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing, we will praise you.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE read by Sharon Penrose

CLOSING HYMN: "Be Thou My Vision" with Christians from different denominations in Ireland.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION



"Song of Faith" - A United Church of Canada Statement of Faith

Christ, Redeemer and Reconciler - Presence of God among Us

We know the Holy One through Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew born in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, far from the centers of wealth and earthly power.
He knew the love of friends and family, the pleasure of food shared, the satisfaction of work,
the joy of companionship.
He also knew the hard face of oppression, the pain of hunger, the sting of poverty.
Filled with the Holy Spirit,
Jesus announced the coming of God's reign of justice and peace.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, forgave sins, and freed those held captive to demonic powers.
He called people to turn away from fear, hatred, greed, and violence, and to turn to the way of God.
He taught us to love our enemies,
for we cannot love God without loving our neighbour,
and he commanded his friends and followers to love one another as he loved them.
He was the friend of those labelled "outcasts" and "sinners" and often shared meals with them,
breaking down the barriers of class and religion put in place by a culture of status and privilege.
So filled by the Spirit was he that in him people experienced the presence of God among them,
the nearness and immediacy of God's reign.

Rejected by Humanity, Raised by God

As it does today, such an ethic of love lived out
threatened those ensnared by hate, isolation, and alienation.
Those exercising power unjustly opposed Jesus until,
as they have done so often before and since, they sought to silence him.
Jesus suffered abandonment and betrayal by friends, and torture and execution by government.
He was crucified - a form of death intended to blot his name from all memory.
His remaining friends and followers fled and scattered.
But death was not the last word. God raised Jesus from death, turning sorrow into joy, despair into hope.

The Risen Christ - Lives, Reconciles and Makes New

By becoming flesh in Jesus, God enters creation
to transform its wasting away and thus to restore its integrity.
In Jesus' life, teaching, and self-offering, God's forgiveness empowers us to live in love.
In Jesus' crucifixion, God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world.
In Jesus' resurrection, God overcomes death, reconciles and makes all creation new,
faithful to what God in love has created.
Nothing separates us from the love of God.
The Risen Christ lives today, present to us and the source of our hope that nothing can hinder the
Compassionate Love that is the origin and end of all.
In Christ, the Holy Mystery opens the unimaginable reaches of eternity
and the surprising riches of this one deep moment.
In response to who Jesus was and to all he did and taught, to his life, death, and resurrection,
and to his continuing presence with us through the Spirit,
We celebrate him as the Word made flesh;
the One in whom God and humanity are perfectly joined; the Messiah promised of old, the Christ.
In the scriptures that we call the New or Second Testament,
we see a faithful witness to the Holy One.