

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 10, 2023

* *The live service will be broadcasted and recorded on YouTube, check your email for the link.*

9:50am Carol Sing Leaders: Brian Lipsett & Sandra Dean

**Indicates stand as able*

***Advent Hymn: Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness - Voices United #28**

1 Herald! Sound the note of gladness!
Tell the news that Christ is here;
make a pathway through the desert
for the one who brings God near.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

3 Herald! Sound the note of pardon!
Those repenting are forgiven;
God receives these wayward children,
and to all new life is given.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

2 Herald! Sound the note of judgement,
Warning us of right and wrong.
Turning us from sin and sadness,
Till once more we sing the song.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

4 Herald! Sound the note of triumph!
Christ has come to share our life,
bringing God's own love and power,
granting victory in our strife.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Advent of Peace Acolytes: Piccoli-McGugan Family
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Peace Voice 1: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11:6)

Voice 2: What does peace look like in the new world?

Congregation:

Peace looks like a flowing river where every living thing has what they need to flourish.

Peace looks like a place where those who are weak are not afraid of those who are strong.

Peace looks like good conversations around big tables.

Voice 3: Advent is the beginning of this new world, a better world,
where we can boldly build a good life together.

Voice 1: May it be so. **Amen**

(First & Second Advent candles are lit.)

Sung Response: Peace is a Ribbon – Voices United #7 (Verse 2)

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Welcome & Centering for Worship:

Rev. Kim Vidal

Good morning! I welcome and greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, on this second Sunday of Advent when we embrace the meaning of peace or shalom as we wait for the birth of Jesus. Today is also Human Rights Sunday when we observe the 72nd year of the universal declaration of human rights by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

After the service, you are welcome to join us for coffee and fellowship in the main hall.

... announcements... Financial Update – Ross Mutton

Friends, In the hustle and bustle of the Advent season, it is easy to get swept up with the business of preparing our homes and finding the perfect gift for our loved ones. Let us take a moment to slow down and remember what Advent is meant to be: a time of waiting for the coming of the prince of Peace.

Let us now gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) Jordan Berard

(Gord Dunbar, Gathering Advent/Christmas /Epiphany, 2019-2020. Used with Permission)

Come people, gather around the manger on this second Sunday of Advent.

**We come to hear the stories of our faith, to celebrate God's gift of peace,
and to imagine what is possible in this world because of God's love.**

Come to trust, listen, believe, and imagine what is possible
because God has come into our lives and into our world.

We come with open hearts!

Opening Prayer (Together): Jordan

(Catherine Tovell, Gathering, Advent 2017-2018. Used with permission.)

**Peace-loving God, we are not always comfortable with the messages you send us
through your prophets. The world is still a place of pain and turmoil because we have
not fully embraced the changes your prophets have called us to.**

Help us to prepare your path of peace in our lives and for the world. Amen.

Special Music: Comfort Me – O'Brien/Ogilvie

Bell Canto director: Erin Berard

Time for the Young at Heart: Jordan

The Prayer of Jesus / Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

*Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory, Forever and ever, Amen.

***Song: This Joy (Peace) – traditional arr. Whitmore** (sing twice)

This PEACE that I have, the world didn't give it to me; (3x)

The world didn't give it, the world can't take it away!

Prayer for Illumination: (Unison) Reader: Dan Lanoue

Open us, O God to your unfolding vision of peace.

Through your Word, shape us for shalom by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 (Voices United pg802)

Sung Response: God show us your love, show us your love and mercy.

Once you were gracious to your land. O God, you restored the fortunes of Jacob;

you forgave the offence of your people, and pardoned all their sin.

You drew back all your displeasure, And turned your fiery wrath.

Restore us again, God our Saviour, and put away your just anger toward us.

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your wrath to all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? R

Let me hear what you will say, O God, for you will speak peace to your people,
to the faithful who turn their hearts to you.

Surely salvation is near those who fear you, and your glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness will meet, Justice and peace will embrace.

Faithfulness will spring up from the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.

You O God, will give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

Righteousness will go before you, and the paths of your feet will be peace. R

The OT Reading: Comfort My People - Isaiah 40: 1-11 (NRSVUE)

1 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries out: "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 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." 6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. 9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10 See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

May the God of peace dwell where the word is spoken. **Thanks be to God!**

Ministry of Music: The Snow Lay on the Ground – arr. Wetzler

BCUC Choir

Sermon: "The Comforting God"

Rev. Kim

Memorial Flowers:

Prayers of the People: *Prayer for a World Where Hope and Peace Seem Dim* Rev. Kim

(Adapted - Larry Kehler, Mennonite Central Committee, Canada, 2009)

Dear God, the world seems so dark and foreboding.

Where are the signs of peace? What are you calling us to do?

Wars, uprisings, displacements, hunger, poverty, and disease continue to claim victims by the millions around the world each year. Our ears do not want to hear their stories and our eyes do not want to see their plight because the suffering and destruction is so massive and cruel.

In our hearts and minds there is a desire to help somehow, but the crisis seem so overwhelming that we shake our heads in dismay and we wonder what the point is for us even to attempt to be witnesses for healing and hope in this world?

We beg with the prophet Isaiah to open our eyes that we may see glimpses of truth you have for us.

Help us to follow the path of Jesus. Give us the courage to be willing to walk the path of depression and pain with the victims of injustice here at home as well as abroad.

Help us to seek ways to light candles of hope and peace, however small, through our words, our deeds, and our prayers, to encourage our sisters and brothers to hold onto the faith in spite of the pain and suffering they are facing.

And help those of us who are among the fortunate ones, who have enough bread to eat, good health, and who live in relative peace, to open our heart to learn from our sisters and brothers who are living lives of grace and forgiveness in the horrid circumstances which surround them.

O God, help us to light one candle rather than to curse the darkness.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who knows what being a light in this dark world is all about. Amen.

Invitation to Offer: I now invite you to offer your gifts of time, talents and resources as expressions of your gratitude to God's blessings. You will find the offering plates on the table as you enter the sanctuary. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or by e-transfer.
Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

***Offertory Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter** – Voices United #55, 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 one, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him, give him my heart.

***Offertory Prayer:** *(spaciousfaith.com)*
**Holy One, this Advent season we wait in peace, And we give in peace.
A peace deeper than our anxiety and fear.
A peace growing from our trust in your loving power.
Receive these generous offerings,
And use them to bring your peace to our world. Amen.**

***Advent Hymn: Comfort, Comfort Now My People** - Voices United #883

1 Comfort, comfort now my people, speak of peace, so says our God; comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning under sorrow's load. Cry out to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them; tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.	O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way! Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.
2 For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near, bidding all to true repentance, God's judgement now is here.	3 Then make straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain; Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign. For the glory of our God now on earth is shed abroad; and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

Sending Forth: (Responsively) *(Bob Root, Gathering, ACE 2018-2019, Used with permission.)*
As you go from this worship, may the light of peace burn brightly in your hearts.
Go and be signs of peace in the world as you prepare the journey towards Bethlehem.
And may you always know that you are not alone.
May God's peace sustain you now and always. **Amen.**

Sung Blessing: Peace Upon Earth – Medical Mission Sisters *(sing twice)*
Peace upon earth is the prayer we offer, Peace was the promise when Jesus was born.
Peace to all, Peace once again to this war-weary, war-worried world this morn.