

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 17, 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:** Come Thou Long Expected Jesus – Voices United #2

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

3 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

4 By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Advent of Joy Acolytes: Berard Family

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Joy **Voice 1:** “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting.” (Isaiah 35:1–2)

Voice 2: What does joy feel like in the new world?

Congregation: Joy feels like everlasting love.

Joy feels like the freedom to be who God created me to be.

Joy feels like sharing love and kindness.

Joy feels like pride.

Voice 3: Advent is the beginning of this new world, a better world,
where joy boldly bubbles up in unexpected places.

Voice 4: May it be so. Amen.

(First 2 Blue Candles and the Pink candle is lit.)

Sung Response: Joy is a Song – Voices United #7 (Verse 3)

(Words: Brian Wren, 1985; Music: Joan Collier Fogg, 1987)

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born.

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! Welcome to this third Sunday of Advent – the Sunday of Joy, as we prepare ourselves to welcome the birth of Jesus. This Sunday is also known as Gaudete Sunday—a day of rejoicing, a time of respite from the penitential blues in Advent. Today, we embrace the meaning of joy symbolized by the colour, pink. Please join us for coffee and conversations after the service in the main hall. announcements...Remind SS & Youth– One-Time Pageant Rehearsal in the Gym

Tamara Glanville – M&S supports Camp Awesome, Naomi Bula from Chipembi Friends, let us take a moment to quieten our spirit as we remember God's faithfulness with joy. Let us gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively)

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

(Laura Turnbull, Gathering ACE, 2018-2019, Used with permission.)

The sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of Advent are around us.

**The awe and mystery of this blessed season
remind us of the coming of the Holy One.**

Wonder fills our hearts as we tell the timeless story.

With joy, we herald the good news!

Opening Prayer: (Unison) Rev. Lorrie (Phyllis Fleming, Gathering, ACE 2022-2023, Used with permission.)

O God, we come to you this day with joy and singing.

We praise you, for you strengthen us in our weakness and

water the desert places of our lives so that we blossom like spring flowers.

You open our spirits and unstop our senses.

We never cease praising you.

In your presence, sorrow and sighing fly away,

and we discover joy and gladness.

Draw near to us in this hour of worship, we pray. Amen.

Special Music: Let's Tell Everyone - Gibson

CGS director: Erin Berard

Time for the Young at Heart: Nicole Beaudry

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 – traditional arr. Whitmore (sing twice)*

This JOY 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: Jan Pound

Show us the way, O God, to reshape our lives

with words of wisdom from the prophet Isaiah.

Open our hearts to rejoice in renewed relationships

so we can look forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 126 (Voices United pg850)

Response: We praise the One who gave the growth, with voices full and strong. (Ref 2)

When God brought Zion's captives home, it seemed to us like a dream.

But then our mouths were full of laughter, And out tongues uttered shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations; "God had done great things for them"

Truly God has done great things for us, And therefore we rejoice. Ref

Restore our fortunes, O God, as streams refresh the Negev.

Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping, carrying seed for sowing,

shall come home with songs of joy, bringing in their sheaves. Ref

The OT Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11 (NRSVUE) **The Good News of Deliverance**

61 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸ For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

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

Ministry of Music: Christmas Lullaby of Joy - Gallina

BCUC Choir

Sermon: "The Challenging God"

Rev. Kim

Memorial Flowers

Prayers of the People:

Rev. Kim

(With some revisions - Written by Ted Dodd for DOTAC and the Diakonia World Federation. Used with permission)

In the Advent year of 2023, when climate change governs over the planet,
when racism and injustice rules in so much of the world,
when violence and war, preside in so many regions,
and the high priests of inequity and imbalance dominate our earth,
please, dear God, we pray for your Word to come to this wilderness.
We long for a prophet like Isaiah to speak your good news, for this time.
We urgently plea for a proclamation of hope, peace and joy for the particular places
where we live and interact with others and Creation.
In this Advent time, as we make ready for Christmas,
may the tender, strong voice of the divine reach us.
May we prepare in your way of compassion.
May we walk paths of reconciliation and respect.
May the valleys of poverty and hunger, grief and loss,
loneliness and desperation, be filled with comfort and kindness.
May the mountains and hills of the powerful and the privileged, be brought low with sharing and equity.
May the roughness of addiction and homelessness be made smooth.
Transform us, individually and corporately.
Change us, personally and collectively.
Turn us around, God of joy.
And may we all feel your presence, alive in our lives.
Reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary.
Disclose the divine in our human encounters.
Expose the miraculous in the everyday.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the coming One. 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 joy, and we give with joy.
Joy for all you have given us;
joy because of your sacred promises.
Receive these generous offerings, and use them to spread your joy in our world. *Amen.*

***Advent Hymn: Joy Shall Come – Voices United #23**
Joy shall come even to the wilderness,
And the parched land shall then know great gladness;
As the rose, as the rose shall deserts blossom,
Deserts like a garden blossom.
For living springs shall give cool water, in the desert streams shall flow.
For living springs shall give cool water, in the desert streams shall flow.

Sending Forth: (Responsively)
Go into the world with joy.
We are not alone. God is with us.
Joy is promised in these Advent days.
God bless us as we wait.
God bless you as you work for joy.
Our rejoicing is blessed.
Go in joy! **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.