

**BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH**  
**DECEMBER 4, 2022 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

\*Indicates stand as able

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

**9:45 am Gathering Music / Carol Sing / Announcement Slides**

**\*Advent Hymn: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus VU 2**

(Words: Charles Wesley, 1744; Music: Psalmody Sacra, 1715)

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.

**Acknowledgement of Territory:**

**Rev. Lorrie Lowes**

(Jamie Miller, Gathering ACE 2022-2023 Year A. Used with permission.)

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin and Anishinaabe peoples. For thousands of years, the First Peoples of this place have cared for the land even as the land cared for them. Guided by the wisdom of their traditions and their ancestors, they have been taught that the circle of life is embraced and embracing. Let us carry on this wisdom. Let us live into right relations with love and respect. Meegwetch.

**Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Advent of Peace Acolytes: Berard Family**

(Wanda Winfield, Gathering ACE 2022-2023 Year A. Used with permission.)

*(The first Advent candle of hope is lit.)*

Reader 1: Today is the Advent of peace.

As we light this candle, we remember all who live in the midst of conflict, in their homes, in their communities, in their countries, anywhere in the world.

Reader 2: We live in a fractured world of racial tensions and economic disparity.

Reader 3: We light this candle as our commitment to embracing diversity.

Reader 4: We are the peacemakers in this world. We light this candle to herald the coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

**Sung Response: A Candle is Burning (Verse 2) VU 6**

(Words: Sandra Dean, 1986; Music: James R. Murray, 1887)

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:  
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;  
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

**Welcome: Rev. Kim Vidal**

Good morning! I welcome and greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, on this Second Sunday of Advent - the Sunday of Peace, as we prepare ourselves to welcome the birth of Jesus. After the service, you are welcome to join us for coffee and fellowship in the main hall. (*Highlight some announcements.*)

**Bill McGee – Financial Management Update & Appeal**

We have been asked to give our financial position now and a year-end estimate. This is based on information to the end of October in our Operating Fund.

| Year-to-date October 2022 | Estimated Year-end 2022 | Budget 2022 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Expenses \$365,700        | \$432,700               | \$471,541   |
| Revenues \$338,600        | \$418,600               | \$442,700   |

We estimate a deficit of about 4 percent. Expenses are slightly below budget because committee spending has been kept in check. Oil cost is much higher, but electricity expense is lower than expected. And the Envelope Givings are only about 75 percent of that predicted in the budget, but are increasing as Church attendance increases. Room rentals have had a banner year, and are double to triple that budgeted during the pandemic. Securities donations are expected to be lower because of market conditions. But, if you are able to increase your givings by 10 percent for the rest of the year, we expect to enter 2023 in reasonable financial shape. This will enable Bells Corners United Church to continue to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ here and elsewhere.

***Centering for Worship:***

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 birth of Jesus. Let us now gather in worship.

***Call to Gather: (Responsively) Rev. Lorrie Lowes***

(Bill Steadman, Gathering ACE, 2018-2019, Used with permission.)

We are a people open to anticipation and ready for a celebration.

**Behold the birth of the Christ Child is expected.**

We are a congregation that remembers the message of peace.

**Behold, the birth of the Christ Child is near.**

We are a community inspired to live lives of service and of wholeness.

**Behold, the birth of the Christ Child will transform our hearts.**

As we gather today and beyond.

***Opening Prayer: (Unison)***

(Larry Doyle, Bob Root & Darrow Woods, Gathering, ACE 2013-2014, Used with permission.)

**We live in a world where peace seems like a distant dream, O God.**

**And so, we pray – not just for the absence of violence and conflict,**

but for the deep peace of knowing and trusting your will and your way.  
As the darkness and coldness of December set in,  
we trust that the light and the warmth of your Holy Spirit will enfold us and remind  
us of the shalom that is to come and the shalom that is already within us. Amen.

*Special Music: We Will Bring Your Peace*

Bell Canto / CGS director Erin Berard

*Time for the Young at Heart*

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

*Prayer of Jesus / The 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: (Tune - Kumbayah My Lord)**

We're preparing, God, come by here (x3)  
Oh, God, come by here.

***Prayer for Illumination: (Unison)***

**Reader: Mary Wright**

**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.**

***The Gospel Reading: Matthew 3: 1-12 (NRSV) The Proclamation of John the Baptist***

**3** In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,

**2** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

**3** This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.' "

**4** Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

**5** Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him,

**6** and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

**7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

**8** Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance,

**9** and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

**10** Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.  
<sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

**Ministry of Music: Bethlehemtown – Clatterbuck**

**BCUC Choir**

**Sermon: “So You Think John Can Preach?”**

**Rev. Kim**

**Prayers of the People:**

**Rev. Kim**

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

In the Advent year of 2022,  
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 John the Baptist to speak your good news, for this time.  
We urgently plea for a proclamation of hope and peace  
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 grace.  
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 as we hear the cries of John and Isaiah and in the name of Jesus, the coming  
One. Amen.

**Musical Offering: (Advent Memorial Flowers) Abe TeGrotenhuis**

***Invitation to Offer:***

**Rev. Kim**

In this busy season, our most important preparations will happen here in our hearts when we make a way for God to come into our lives, when we "prepare the way of the Lord." In the midst of our preparations, we bring gifts to share so that God's love will shine brightly through the ministry of this church and in our own lives as well.

We are not passing the offering plates this morning as we continue to follow health protocols, but you will find those plates on the table in the narthex. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or using the mail slot by the kitchen door, or by e-transfer. Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

***\*Offertory Hymn: Verse 4 - In the Bleak Midwinter VU 55***

**What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him, give him my heart.**

***\*Offertory Prayer: (Unison) (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: There's A Voice in the Wilderness VU 18***

1 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,  
a call from the ways untrod:  
prepare in the desert a highway,  
a highway for our God!  
The valleys shall be exalted,  
the lofty hills brought low;  
make straight all the crooked places,  
where the God, our God, may go!

2 O Zion, that bringest good tidings,  
get thee up to the heights and sing!  
Proclaim to a desolate people  
the coming of their King.  
Like the flowers of the field they perish,  
like grass our works decay,  
the power and pomp of nations  
shall pass like a dream away.

3 But the word of our God endureth,  
the arm of the Lord is strong;  
God stands in the midst of nations,  
and soon will right the wrong.  
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
the lambs so gently hold;  
to pastures of peace will lead them,  
and bring them safe to fold.

4 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,  
a call from the ways untrod:  
prepare in the desert a highway,  
a highway for our God!  
The valleys shall be exalted,  
the lofty hills brought low;  
make straight all the crooked places,  
where the God, our, God may go!

**\*Sending Forth: (Responsively) Rev. Kim**

(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.

**We will be signs of peace in the world  
as we 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 Shines as the Solitary Star MV 220**

(Words: Catherine Faith Maclean; Music: Janet Bauman Tissandier)

Peace shines as the solitary star.

Faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,  
and illumine the pathway home.