

Bethel Presbyterian Church
Corner of George & Brookland St., Sydney, NS
Third Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 13th, 2020



⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great **joy** to all people.

Mission Statement

To share the gospel of Jesus Christ with our community in our worship and our living.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a local community of believers where:

Jesus Christ is the head.

The Bible has the ultimate authority as the true, infallible and complete word of God.

Salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and belief in His finished work on the cross is preached.

The Gospel of Christ is spread in our community, our nation, and around the world in both word and action.

Believers encourage each other and hold others in higher regard than themselves so that each may use the gifts God has given him/her to the glory of God.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

Prelude

Announcements

Call to Worship

Prayer of Adoration and Approach & Confession (The Lord's Prayer)

Moment of Reflection

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8-11 NIV

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for 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 and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁴They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Responsive Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.

²**Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

³The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, LORD, like streams in the Negev.**

⁵Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.**

Third Sunday in Advent: JOY

Reader: In this season of Advent, we celebrate God's joy.

All: Knowing that Christ is coming to bring healing and wholeness to the world is a source of delight!

Reader: When we gather for worship it is a celebration, an opportunity to rejoice in all that God is doing among us and beyond us.

All: We welcome our neighbours and celebrate God's goodness.

Reader: Even when we face difficulty and trouble, we sing a song of faith, confident that Jesus is able to redeem our suffering world.

All: Together, we are a sign of God's joy for the world.

The candle of joy is lit.

Unison Prayer: God of transformation, we rejoice that you lift up the lowly and bind up the broken hearted. We marvel at your power to change hearts and lives. Fill us with your Spirit this season so that our voices declare your goodness and our lives proclaim your mercy in Jesus Christ. Amen.

New Testament Epistle Lesson 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²²reject every kind of evil. ²³May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

New Testament Gospel Lesson: John 1:6–8, 19–28

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ¹⁹Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders^l in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”²¹They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” ²⁴Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶“I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Moment of Reflection

Sermon

Joy

Solo

Walter Letcher

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Prayer of Dedication, Thanksgiving & Intercession

WE GO OUT IN SERVICE

Benediction & Postlude

Announcements

We welcome everyone to the Service of worship
(both in the sanctuary and online)

To the Benevolent Fund

- In memory of Jean Townsend from Keith & Carol Ferguson
- In memory of Percy Shepard & Jean Townsend from Roy & Nancy MacDonald
- In memory of Percy Shepard from Eileen MacLean
- In memory of Percy Shepard & Jean Townsend from Harold & Lynn Gillespie
- In memory of Newton & Anne Webber from Judi Webber

We would like to have the Coins for Camp MacLeod jars returned before the end of December.

Any memorial gifts that would be given for the light up service at this time are to be into the office before Wednesday, December 16th so that they can be included in the bulletin for Sunday December 20th. The bulletin will be sent out with the e-mail on Friday as usual but also mailed to those who do not have email.

Please do not gather at the entry into the sanctuary and engage in conversation. This keeps people from entering the sanctuary (especially now that we will be dealing with the cold weather). Be ready to follow the usher to your seat.

We are going to try a different approach to exiting the sanctuary this week. We will once again ask that you respect social distancing and remain in your pew till the people in the pew in front of you have reached the front of the church. We will do this by section to try to slow it down. Please remain seated till it is your row's turn to exit. The minister is being asked to remind everyone each week and guide the procedure. You will notice that the sanitizer on the outside aisles has been placed at the front of that aisle to avoid the congestion that happens when people get to the front.

We are encouraged by people who are using electronic means and printing their own bulletins for Service and would encourage those who cannot do this, and would like to, who have a Bible at home, to bring the Bible so that you can follow the readings. If you do not have an NIV Bible, please speak to the minister.

Offerings to the Benevolent Fund have been good as always and we thank people for giving but especially as we come into the Christmas time of need.

Church Offering envelopes for 2021 are in the vestibule for those who would like to get theirs.

There was an attempt to break into the mailbox last Friday night and the mailbox was damaged. The Board of Managers is having a mail slot cut in the door to the hall to replace the mailbox.

Sunday, December 13

MISSION MOMENT

Halidu's Shop Equips Others

In Ghana, Halidu manages a prosperous and bustling training centre where he teaches kente weaving and dressmaking. When Halidu was young, he developed a sore that led to his leg being amputated. During his recovery, Halidu enrolled in a Presbyterian World Service & Development-supported program that equips people with disabilities with skills to obtain a livelihood. During workshops, he learned vocational skills that included weaving, tailoring and dressmaking. Today, Halidu is using what he learned during his recovery to lead a healthy, productive life and run a successful business.

Prayer List

Sunday, December 13 We give thanks for the Garu Community Based Rehabilitation program in Ghana, which provides training to people with disabilities, helping ensure they have the necessary resources to lead healthy and productive lives.

Monday, December 14 We pray for the wisdom to understand and be thankful for what it means to have enough during the consumer-driven Christmas rush.

Tuesday, December 15 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Essex-Kent in Ont.

Wednesday, December 16 We pray that God fills us with the wisdom of the scriptures, the grace of Christ and the understanding of the Holy Spirit so that we may be a church of people with vision who are at work in the world.

Thursday, December 17 We thank God for financial and prayer support received from congregations for Presbyterians Sharing in 2020 to support the ministry of the General Assembly and its committees.

Friday, December 18 (International Migrants Day) We pray for the safe and just treatment of foreign temporary workers in Canada, as well as for organizations and individuals working for the humane treatment of migrant workers and members of their families.

Saturday, December 19 We pray for people who are cold and hungry, that they not only find local meal and shelter programs, but also compassion during this winter season.