

Canon Davis Memorial Church
Anglican Church of Canada
Sunday, December 17, 2023 – Third Sunday of Advent

Worship Service: Sunday 9:30 a.m.
Officiant—Rev'd Jon Forbes — Assisted By — Ginny Schleihauf
Organist—Dorothy Miller
380 Russell St. North (at Maxwell St.), Sarnia, Ontario, N7T 6S6
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Prelude
Announcements

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - CANDLE OF JOY

Lighting of the Advent Wreath: the Candle of Joy —

Advent 3 - Today is the third Sunday of Advent - the Sunday of Joy.

Our joy is in God and in his son Jesus Christ. Like peace, joy is a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we remember what God has done and what he has promised to do. We light this candle today to remind us that Christ came, and is coming, so that all people might have a rich and abundant life. We thank God for the hope he gives us, for the peace he bestows, and for the joy he pours into our hearts.

Lighting of the third Candle (Joy)

Let us pray: O God of Joy, Emmanuel, send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the time of Christ's appearing. Fix our hearts and our minds upon those things you have done and those you have promised to do that we may have the joy you have promised. As we worship you, strengthen us so that we may always do your will and so bless you and the world you have made. Amen.

All sing:

“A Candle is Burning”

Words by Sandra Dean, 1986. tune by James Murray 1887 (public domain)

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

Sentence

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted. Isaiah 61:1

Processional Hymn #106
There's a Voice in the Wilderness

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Collect God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

1st Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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 brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126(to be read responsively)

**When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."
The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negev.**

**Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

2nd Reading| Thessalonians 5: 16-24

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn # 458

Seek Ye First

Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO JOHN

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

Advent 3

John the Baptist is given the once over with questions that could be quite skeptical or they could be just curious. It depends on what we think of the folks asking the questions. This is the hard part of knowing what the bible is saying. How well do we know the characters in the story? Have we contemplated these stories over a lifetime, or are you just hearing them for the first time? Do you pour over the text like a scholar reading the Greek and Hebrew or is it just a cute story for kids? Maybe somewhere in between.

Last week the crowds came to see John down by the riverside, mostly because they were curious—it was the latest thing to do. And yes it's hard to be open-minded about the leaders of the religion, they are a skeptical bunch, always seeing threats to their power in any new thing that is happening. We tend to feel that way about the culture around us too. They certainly feel entitled to offer up their opinion of who John is. There is more than one agenda here.

The Pharisees reveal their thinking in their line of questioning. These are questions of identity. Who is he? Messiah, Elijah, prophet? Has he come to turn the world around? That is what his preaching was getting at: inviting us to live in God's way not necessarily the Pharisees' way. And this is the problem, the two should be synonymous, but they are not. John does something that the Pharisees should be doing, but they do not, calling the people towards God's righteousness. Malachi and Deuteronomy say repeatedly that the Messiah, Elijah and the prophets all do this. So why do they stay away from these prophetic voices which they have inherited? It is scary, isn't it? If people don't like the message they might not like the messenger.

This is why I like John so much, besides being my namesake, he is also humble. I mean he is like Elijah who speaks words of warning to the people. He is like the prophets who prepare the way of

the Lord. Even Jesus will say that John is *his* Elijah in Matthew 11, but these are not titles he cares to take for himself. None of this is about John, it is about God working in the world.

This is why I love Baptism so much, as a rite it helps us connect to God in a way that we see ourselves in God's story. It helps us see the light of the world, shining on us. It helps others see the light shining on them. The water, the oil, the candle, all come together with your family and the people of God for one tiny moment, to rekindle the flame, of the light of the world in each of us.

This is a journey for each of us to undertake each year at Christmas. If you're not feeling too Christmas-y yet then maybe it's important to remember that while John leapt for joy at meeting Jesus in utero, later on when he was locked up by Herod, he sent his disciples to question Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come or do we wait for another?" this is the depth of fear that can overcome us, even when we are called to be the one who proclaims the way of the Lord. The way of Jesus is never easy.

John's story reminds me that Advent is crucial to our understanding of Christmas. It is not just a feeling that we conjure up with too many Hallmark movies. We must go on this journey, from joy to repentance, from work to being called, from testifying to questioning, and from seeking His presence in the darkness to the revelation of the prince of peace. And like John the Baptist, we do it all, so that all people, including ourselves, might believe. There is a fuzzy feeling, at the end.

Even as John confesses some doubt about who Jesus might be, Jesus never stops believing in John, he praises his witness that John offers and reminds us all that our witness is the most important part of the whole story. So, how have you witnessed to others the importance of Jesus at Christmas? Is it all about the parties and presents, the fruitcake and turkey, or is the salvation of the whole world set in motion at this time of year? And in case you thought it was too late to change your mind, Christmas Eve is yet to come, join us on the 24th at 5 pm. Where we will invite the whole world to change yet again, at Christmas time.

And all God's people say,

Amen!

The Apostles' Creed:

**Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,
I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

(In peace let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy.")

**For peace from on high and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For our bishops, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For Charles our King, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For this city (town, village, etc.), for every city and community, and for those who live in them in faith, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For good weather, and for abundant harvests for all to share, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For those who travel by land, water, or air, for the sick and the suffering (especially . . .), for prisoners and captives, and for their safety, health, and salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For the absolution and remission of our sins and offences, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**For all who have died (especially . . .), let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.**

**Remembering (. . . and) all the saints, we commit ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.
To you, O Lord.**

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications to you, and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together you will hear their requests. Fulfil now our desires and petitions, as may be best for us, granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come eternal life; for you, Father, are good and loving, and we glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, in the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

In our parish cycle of prayer, we pray for...

Prayer for a Renewed Church

Almighty God, give us a new vision of you, of your love, of your grace and power, and then, give us a new vision of what you would have us do as your Church in this nation and at this time, and an awareness that in the strength of your Spirit, we can do it to your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Confession and Absolution: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

The Confession: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Absolution:

Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

**The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.**

Offertory Hymn # 349

All People That on Earth Do Dwell

THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Prayer over the Gifts

God of hope, renew in us the joy of your salvation and make us a living sacrifice to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eucharist Prayer

**The Lord be with you.
And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right that we should praise you, gracious God, for you created all things. You formed us in your own image: male and female you created us. When we turned away from you in sin, you did not cease to care for us, but opened a path of salvation for all people. You made a covenant with Israel, and through your servants Abraham and Sarah gave the promise of a blessing to all nations. Through Moses you led your people from bondage into freedom; through the prophets you renewed your promise of salvation. Therefore, with them, and with all your saints who have served you in every age, we give thanks and raise our voices to proclaim the glory of your name.

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Holy God, source of life and goodness, all creation rightly gives you praise.
In the fullness of time, you sent your Son Jesus Christ, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He healed the sick and ate and drank with outcasts and sinners; he opened the eyes of the blind and proclaimed the good news of your kingdom to the poor and to those in need. In all things he fulfilled your gracious will.

On the night he freely gave himself to death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Gracious God,
his perfect sacrifice destroys the power of sin and death; by raising him to life you give us life for evermore.

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Recalling his death, proclaiming his resurrection, and looking for his coming again in glory, we offer you, Father, this bread and this cup. Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that all who eat and drink at this table may be one body and one holy people, a living sacrifice in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom 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 kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

"I am the bread of life," says the Lord. "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry; whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who trust in him!" Give us this bread for ever.

The Communion

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God, may this eucharist free us from our sins, fill us with unending joy, and prepare us for the birthday of our Saviour. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord now and for ever.

Doxology

Glory to God, Whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Recessional Hymn # 307

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his son Jesus Christ and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and those you love for ever more. Amen.

Benediction Song Go Now in Peace**Dismissal**

The flowers on the Altar today are given to the Glory of God and in memory of Mary Switzer, a gift from Gordon Simmons, Pam, Joel, Anna and Molly Eagleson, and Brad, Mary-Elizabeth, McKenna and Camryn Carroll.

Please enter names in the Intercessions Book each week to be read in the service.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Please send all announcements for the bulletin to Karen by 11:00 a.m. Tuesday of each week email canondavis@gmail.com or call 519-344-9531.

If you would like to contact Rev'd Jon Forbes or would like a home visit with Communion or know of someone who would, Rev'd Jon may be reached at 1-905-818-9488 or email jonforbes@outlook.com

Please join us for Coffee Hour after service for a time of fellowship in the parish hall.

"The Festival of Lights shone brightly for those who attended on Saturday December 9th. The children's choir from London Road school brought their parents, grandparents and friends who toured our church and rectory and enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies. Some from other churches attended as well. A big Thank you to those who helped make this event happen!"

The winner of the Throw Blanket is Diane Spencer. Thank you to Carol Turner for the donation of the throw. We raised \$177.

Thank you, Ginny Schleihauf for organizing the Festival of Lights and getting Canon Davis' name out there in the public.

Thank you to Astrid and Mike for joining us in the Festival of Lights by having the outside so beautiful. Also, for allowing the public to tour their magically decorated home, our Rectory. The visitors were in total amazement at the Christmas Wonderland.

A warm and appreciative thank you to Seonaid Laidlaw and the members of the Chancel Guild for decorating the inside of the church. It is so beautiful. We all just love the change from all poinsettias to the flower arrangements. Difficult to put into words just how magnificent everything looks.

Thank you to the London Road School Choir for their "vocal contribution" to the Festival of Lights. We enjoyed their singing and we welcome them back next Christmas.

Good News...

The Church calendars for 2024 are now available at the back of the church. Cost: \$6.00. And, there are cookbooks and cards still available for purchase. If you would like any please contact the church or myself and I will deliver to your home.

Upcoming Events

Reminders: December

Dec 20. Parish Council Meeting 10:00 a.m. - Boardroom

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Day 9:30. a.m.– Advent 4 - Service of the Word Ginny Schleihauf

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:00 pm. HE – Rev'd Jon Forbes