

ORDER OF SERVICE
Advent 2: December 6, 2020

Gathering

Welcome/ Land Acknowledgement

Celebrations

Advent Candle Lighting

Hymn: “Hope is a Star” **VU7** verse 2

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

Refrain:

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.

Call to Worship: (based on Isaiah 40: 1-11)

Opening Prayer:

Our first hymn is one that has been sung in over 300 languages around the globe. The song's lyrics were originally written in German just after the end of the Napoleonic Wars by a young Austrian priest named Joseph Mohr.

In the fall of 1816, Mohr's congregation in the town of was reeling. Twelve years of war had decimated the country's political and social infrastructure. Meanwhile, the previous year – one historians would later dub “The Year Without a Summer” – had been catastrophically cold.

The eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora in 1815 had caused widespread climate change throughout Europe. Volcanic ash in the atmosphere caused almost continuous storms – even snow – in the midst of summer. Crops failed and there was widespread famine.

Mohr's congregation was poverty-stricken, hungry and traumatized. So he crafted a set of six poetic verses to convey hope that there was still a God who cared.

"Silent night," the German version states, "today all the power of fatherly love is poured out, and Jesus as brother embraces the peoples of the world."

Hymn: "Silent Night" VU67

1. Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!

2. Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!³
Glories stream from Heaven afar,
Heavenly Hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Saviour, is born!
Christ, the Saviour, is born!

3. Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy Holy Face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy Birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy Birth!

4. Silent Night, Holy Night
Here at last, healing light
From the heavenly kingdom sent,
Abundant grace for our intent.
Jesus, salvation for all.
Jesus, salvation for all.

5. Silent Night! Holy Night"
Sleeps the world in peace tonight.
God sends his Son to earth below

A Child from whom all blessings flow
Jesus, embraces mankind.
Jesus, embraces mankind.

6. Silent Night, Holy Night
Mindful of mankind's plight
The Lord in Heav'n on high decreed
From earthly woes we would be freed
Jesus, God's promise for peace.
Jesus, God's promise for peace.

Theme Conversation: Laura

Hymn: "God of All Places" **VU4**

1. God of all places, present, unseen;
voice in our silence, song in our midst,
we are your people, knowing, unsure:
come, Lord Jesus, come!
2. God of all dreaming, near and yet far;
vision unheard of, wake us to rest.
We are your presence sent forth, afraid:
come, Lord Jesus, come!
3. God of all people, dust and the clay;
breath of a new wind, fire in our hearts;
light born of heaven, peace on the earth:
come, Lord Jesus, come!

Hearing the Word

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11/ Mark 1:1-8

Isaiah 40:1-11

1-2 "Comfort, oh comfort my people,"
says your God.
"Speak softly and tenderly to Jerusalem,
but also make it very clear

That she has served her sentence,
that her sin is taken care of—forgiven!
She's been punished enough and more than enough,
and now it's over and done with."

³⁻⁵ Thunder in the desert!

"Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road straight and smooth,
a highway fit for our God.
Fill in the valleys,
level off the hills,
Smooth out the ruts,
clear out the rocks.

Then God's bright glory will shine
and everyone will see it.

Yes. Just as God has said."

⁶⁻⁸ A voice says, "Shout!"

I said, "What shall I shout?"

"These people are nothing but grass,
their love fragile as wildflowers.

The grass withers, the wildflowers fade,
if God so much as puffs on them.

Aren't these people just so much grass?

True, the grass withers and the wildflowers fade,
but our God's Word stands firm and forever."

⁹⁻¹¹ Climb a high mountain, Zion.

You're the preacher of good news.

Raise your voice. Make it good and loud, Jerusalem.

You're the preacher of good news.

Speak loud and clear. Don't be timid!

Tell the cities of Judah,

"Look! Your God!"

Look at him! God, the Master, comes in power,
ready to go into action.

He is going to pay back his enemies
and reward those who have loved him.

Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock,
gathering the lambs in his arms,

Hugging them as he carries them,
leading the nursing ewes to good pasture.

Mark 1:1-8

1 ¹⁻³ The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you;
He'll make the road smooth for you.
Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!

⁴⁻⁶ John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

⁷⁻⁸ As he preached he said, "The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out."

Solo: Allanah Coles and Doug Dewell

Reflection: "The Clean-up crew"

Hymn: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" **VU44**

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'To all the earth goodwill and peace,
from heaven's allgracious King!
The world in solenm stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

3. But with the woes of sin and strife,
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong,
but we, through din of war, hear not
the love song which they bring.
Oh hush the noise, Oh still the strife
and hear the angels sing.

4. And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
Oh rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing.

5. For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
God's promised splendours fling,
and all the world take up the song,
which now the angels sing.

Our Response

Gratitude for our Offering

Offering Prayer

Prayers of the People

Solo: Allannah Coles and Doug Dewell

Going Forth

Benediction

Shalom

Shalom to you my friend
Shalom until we meet again
The word “shalom” means peace, hello and good-bye
so sing shalom, shalom

Shalom to you my friend
Shalom until we meet again
The word “shalom” means peace, hello and good-bye
so sing shalom, shalom

When we join our hands across the land
we'll hear neighbours and brothers, old friends and other
singing shalom to you my friend,
shalom until we meet again.

Shalom to you my friend
Shalom until we meet again
The word “shalom” means peace, hello and good-bye
so sing shalom, shalom
so sing shalom, shalom