

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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Kevin Geluch

Michelle Millson

◆ Sunday December 5, 2021 ◆

Advent II

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

* indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

◆ GATHERING ◆

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

One: Land is sacred and holy. Our relationship to the land is sacred and holy. Our relationship with each other on this land is sacred and holy. It calls for respect and appreciation. And so we offer our appreciation, our thanksgiving, and our respect that we can gather in this place and on this land as a result of the welcome that comes through the treaty which allows for peaceful and respectful living on this land. Thanks to the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe people who have lived here for thousands of years. We acknowledge that we are connected with the people who have lived here for all these years because of the Upper Canada treaty. Because we are treaty people, we must honour the responsibilities that come with it. May we be people who remember this with gratitude and respect. (Peter Chynoweth)

* OPENING HYMN – *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

VU 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.*

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

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

*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 SECOND ADVENT CANDLE (*candles lit by
the Debora Miscione and Gwyneth Xagoraris*)

One: One Advent candle is lit. Peace doesn't always mean being quiet.

All: We seek to be a people of peace, living from a place of justice, joining our voices with others who want to give birth to a new way of being.

One: Peace calls out to us, so that we may help it become a reality.

All: God is our peace.

One: May we let God reconcile in places of conflict, creating bridges where divisions have grown, sewing all of creation onto a new tapestry.

All: May peace be found in a manger and throughout the world.

....The second Advent candle of Peace is lit.....

INTROIT – I Sing of a Maiden

L. Berkeley

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: John came out of the wilderness to preach repentance; he preaches to us still. Lest we get our backs up concerning the subject of repentance, think of it as re-examining our ways and discarding those habits and actions which do not show our goodness, our worth, and our appreciation for our humanity.

All: Let us try our best to make straight the paths we now walk, as we prepare to further the way of God's reign of justice and love.

PRAYER OF APPROACH – said together (Barbara Johns)

O Gracious God, we come before you this day; waiting. With trepidation and longing: waiting. With joy, anticipating the glorious news: waiting. With expectant delight at the miraculous babe to be born: waiting. With wonder at the promise of salvation: waiting. With hearts open to your message of love: waiting to feel your presence near us.

O Gracious God, we come before you this day to worship as we wait. Amen.

A TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US

Story – Paying Attention: Mary

★ HYMN – *People Look East*

VU 9

***1. People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.***

***Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.***

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the guest, is on the way.

*2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.*

*3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the bird, is on the way.*

*4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.*

*5. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Be assured that Emmanuel, God-with-us, does not just arrive in a newborn babe on Christmas Eve, but comes and comes and comes again: every time we seek forgiveness;

every time we attempt reconciliation; every time we try to change. Emmanuel, God-with-us is transforming us, renewing us, and fiercely loving us. Praise be to our Gracious God!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION – said together (Elise Feltrin)
Holy One, as we prepare ourselves to welcome the Christ child, may we let go of all that does not create hospitable space: the times that we are prickly and short with others; the negativity and gossip that creeps into our conversations; the subtle suffering we habitually ignore or the “isms” in which we heedlessly stumble. Soften our hearts, our tongues, our thoughts, and our actions, that we may gently embrace this tender babe and enfold and reflect the light of Christ in our daily living. Amen.

◆ SERVICE OF THE WORD ◆

Reader: Dianne Coons

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: John had a word for his time, and the people came hopefully to Jordan’s bank. John had a word that called for a decisive response, and the people were ready to respond. John has a word for our time and he encourages us to listen. In today’s scripture, John has a word that calls for a decisive response, and so you ask us, Loving God, if we are ready to actively respond. Amen.

WISDOM OF ISRAEL: Malachi 3: 1-4

One: See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before

me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

One: The Word of the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God!

PSALM: Song of Zechariah

VU 901

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

One: In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

One: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Praise to you, O Christ!

REFLECTION: Seeking the Truth and Clearing Away the Garbage!

CHORAL ANTHEM - Ecce concipies

J. Handl

Behold, thou shalt conceive...

INVITATION TO OFFERING (Beth Johnston)

One: It is the season of Advent, the season of gifts and giving.

With love in our hearts, let us worship God with our offerings as we anticipate the wonder of the birth of the Christ child. Our thanks to you, the people of Melrose for your generous support.

★ OFFERING HYMN -

VU 879, Verses 1 & 2

*1 The race that long in darkness pined
have seen a glorious light;
the people dwell in day, who dwelt
in death's surrounding night.*

*2 To hail you, Sun of righteousness,
the gathering nations come,
rejoicing as when reapers bear
their harvest treasures home.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

One: Holy God, our prayer is for Jesus to initiate God's radical change so that conflicted nations will discover a way to come together; conflicted families will find strength in common

values; and management and workers will realize that they share, and work their differences out.

Patient God, our prayer is for Jesus to initiate God's radical change so that medical professionals will discover how much they can learn from their patients; patients will faithfully follow the instructions of their medical advisors; those without confidence will find advocates to speak up for them; those waiting for diagnosis or treatment will be given swift consideration. We pray for those who are sick at home or in hospital, those who have lost loved ones, those who are lonely, isolated, and afraid.

Listening God, we pray that we will be able to face our fears and our lack of courage and proceed to make changes and take small steps to make a little corner of the world a just and caring place. May we make amends for those that we have hurt, offended, and disheartened; may we discover our hidden talents and confidentially use them to achieve our dreams.

Following the way of Jesus enables us to make radical change, and we thank you God for the opportunity.

We pray for our United Church of Canada for its work in Mission and Service throughout the world.

We pray for the Church of St. Andrew's United from Georgetown in this week's Regional Council Prayer Cycle – for their minister, their lay leaders, and their congregation that they may carry out their mission in the world.

We pray for our community of Melrose, for Vic and all our home-bound and those who are still grieving loss of their loved ones. We pray for Alex and his family as his father is entering into palliative care. We pray also in thanksgiving for the recovery of Jeff's daughter, Caitlin, from a serious

medical emergency. We ask, Oh God your continued watch on her ongoing health.

Lord, we ask that you be with them in the ways that each one needs. Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people and grant what we ask in faith. Amen.

(Quiet reflection)

followed by The Lord's Prayer – *Ecumenical version* (said together)

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread;
Forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
And deliver us from evil;
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN – *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

VU 333

*1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.*

*2 Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,*

*nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.*

*3 Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

COMMISSIONING

One: May the grace and peace of God our Creator, through our
Saviour Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be
with you this day and forevermore.

Go now in peace.

Sung blessing

CHORAL BENEDICTION – Amen

BENEDICTION

One: May God keep us in our going out and our coming in,
In our lying down and our rising up,
In our work and in our leisure,
In our laughter, and in our tears.
Until we meet again. Amen.

POSTLUDE