

**Lighting Our Way To Bethlehem**

**First Sunday of Advent**

***We acknowledge these lands upon which we worship as the ancestral, cultural, traditional and unceded lands***

***of the Səl̓ílwətaʔ,  Xʷməθkwəy̓əm, & Sḵwx̱wú7meshsi,***

***Musqueam***, *Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.*

***Lakeview Multicultural United Church is a safe place***

***for all people to worship***

***regardless of race, creed, age, cultural background or sexual orientation***

**Lakeview Multicultural United Church**

**Vancouver, BC**

***♦*** *Please stand where indicated, as you are able & comfortable*

***Congregational responses are in bold***

**A Celebration of Worship**

**First Sunday in Advent - C**

**December 2nd, 2018**

*Mary, Nazareth girl,*

 *What did you know of ethereal beings with messages from God?*

 *What did you know of men when you found yourself with child?*

 *What did you know of babies,*

 *you – barely out of childhood yourself?*

 *God chosen girl:*

 *What did you know of God*

 *that brought you to the stable blessed among women?*

 *Could it be that you had been ready*

 *waiting, listening for the footsteps of an angel?*

 *Could it be there are messages for us*

 *if we are waiting, if we have the faith to listen?*

 *(From 'Kneeling In Bethlehem' / Weems)*

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 **Congregational Singing with the Praise Band**

 **Acknowledgement of the Territory**

*We recognize the lands upon which we worship as the ancestral, traditional and unceded lands of the Coast Salish people, and commit ourselves to the ongoing work of reconciliation with all our First Nations sisters and brothers.*

 **Announcements**

**Lighting Our Way To Bethlehem**

**Advent One: HOPE**

♪**♦** **Advent Introit:**  ***Tune: VU 38*** “Angels We Have Heard”

 *Sing with joy, you Advent people!*

 *Hopeful hearts inspire your song.*

 *Fill the earth with alleluias,*

 *for the wait will not be long.*

 *Joy ……ful hearts, sing with exultation!*

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 **♦ Invitation to Worship**

The theme for Advent this year is “Lighting Our Way To Bethlehem”. On our journey to Christmas, as the days grow shorter and darker, the Light from the manger beckons us on - offering glimpses of possibility – and shining a path forward.

 **Light our way, O God, with the promise of HOPE!**

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♪**♦ Hymn: ‘A Light For Our Way’ *Tune: VU 6 or 69*** *‘Away In A Manger’*

 1. A starlight is shining, a light for our way;

 a path for our journey, toward Christmas day.

 Like Mary, we ponder about this new thing;

 and open our hearts, as so gladly we sing.

 2. A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright;

 a candle of hope in December’s dark night.

 While angels sing blessings from heaven’s starry sky;

 our hearts we prepare now, for Jesus is nigh.

 **Advent Candlelighting:**  ‘**Hope**’

In the midst of the darkness of our world, Advent comes –

 lighting our way to Bethlehem once again with the promise

 that God is with us – Emmanuel.

 And so, we light our first candle. And, like Mary, set out on this

 Advent journey with HOPE in our hearts.

*(candle of HOPE is lit)*

♪ Candlelighting Hymn*:* ***Tune: VU 67*** *Silent Night*

*Candle light, sacred light, light our way to Bethlehem,*

*As we wait for Jesus’ new birth, shine his hope o’er all the earth.*

*Light our way with hope. Light our way with hope.*

**♦ Sharing The Peace of Christ:**

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

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**Listening For The Word of God**

 **Introduction**:

Our Advent theme this year is **‘Lighting Our Way To Bethlehem’**.

 Each week we will take a look through the eyes of those who were present that first Christmas and explore how their stories might speak to us today, and light our own path to Bethlehem and the

 heart of our faith.

 This morning, we will reflect on Mary, the mother of Jesus: willing, courageous, revolutionary – open to being used by God to birth Promise and Hope into the world. As we listen to God’s Word, may

 we ponder in our hearts, as Mary did, what it means for each of us to open our hearts for God to use us to bear compassion and love in a

 broken world.

 **Scripture**: Luke 1: 26 – 38 ‘*The angel Gabriel appears to Mary’*

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.*

***Thanks be to God!***

 **Reflection:** ‘Lighting Our Way To Bethlehem: Mary’

**Our Grateful Response**

♪ **Offertory:** “Mary, Did You Know” *Hazel Ayangwa*

♪**♦** **Offertory Hymn:** *Tune:* ***VU 44*** *“It came upon*

*My Advent gift I bring, dear Lord, my life for You to use;*

*My total self in ev’ry part – to bless, to share good news.*

 *My ev’ry talent You may have, to do with as You choose;*

 *This is my gift this Advent time – I give myself to You.*

 **♦ Prayer of Dedication:  *(together)***

 **As we begin the Advent journey, O God, help us to say yes,**

 **as Mary did, and offer all that we have and all that we are in love**

 **to You. Accept our gifts this day, we pray. Amen**

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**Celebrating The Gift of Emmanuel: God With Us**

**Holy Communion**

*(Are are welcome at this Table of Love and Grace.)*

 **Invitation to Advent Communion**:

 The world of Advent 2018 is filled with many areas of conflict,

 threat, injustice and war. Our hearts are saddened by the suffering

 of creation in all forms. Christmas offers us a glimpse of what is

 possible when we seek to share love rather than hate, overcome differences with understanding, and be peacemakers in the midst of violence and conflict. As we gather round this Table, we are gathered into God’s embrace with our sisters and brothers around the world – strengthened and nourished once again to light God’s way with the promise of peace in the shadowed corners of the world.

**♦**♪ **Communion Hymn:** ***Tune: VU 48*** *Hark the Herald*

***Lord, we gather at Your Table,***

***spirits open for Your sign,***

***promising that You are with us,***

***come once more in bread and wine.***

***Joyful now, we seek Your presence,***

***come to us, in peace to dwell;***

***Strengthen us to share Your love,***

***bless us now, Emmanuel.***

***At this Table, feed our hearts,***

***bread and wine, Your love impart.***

God be with you in this time of Advent.

**And also with you.**

 Lift up your hearts.

**We lift our hearts in hope.**

 Let us give thanks to God.

**Who lights our way to Bethlehem, to the heart of Love.**

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 Blessed are you, Breath of Life and Promise,

 Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began;

 And throughout the ages, Your song of Love has birthed in us

 the hope for a world where those considered last and least are first

 and most; violence and despair is overcome by the power of your

 ancient love; and all people work together for peace.

**You bring our longings to birth, and send prophets to**

**awaken us to your Advent among us.**

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage

to give birth to your love in the world;

**for those who, like Joseph, are courageous in standing**

**alongside the vulnerable**

for those like the shepherds, who dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem;

 **for those, like the wise ones, who challenge the status quo,**

 **and resist violence and oppressive powers.**

We join in the ancient Advent prayer of all Your people,

**“O come, O come, Emmanuel.”**

 At this time, we also remember all with whom You would have us

 share Your feast. We pray for:

 all who are in sorrow or pain ….

 all who are ill or alone …

 all who live with fear, injustice or hunger …

 all whose lives have been blighted by conflict, racism, addiction

 or poverty ….

 and especially on this day, we pray for women who are victims

 of violence in any form.

 **We thank You for people of all faiths and others of good**

**will, who pray and work for a world of justice, peace and**

 **wholeness for all creation.**

 **N**ow, as we gather at this Table of Your love and welcome, we

 remember Jesus, who, on the night before he died, took a loaf

 of bread, broke it, and said, “Take and eat; whenever you do

 this, remember me.” And likewise, after supper, he took the

 cup, saying, “Drink this, all of you. And remember me.”

 **God of Hope, may this bread be the sign of our journey**

 **together with You and one another; this cup be a sign**

 **of our re-commitment to Your vision for all creation;**

**and this community be the place where justice and**

**peace are born anew.**

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Gracious God, Breath of Hope, Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.

 **Make us, who are many, one in Your Spirit of peace.**

 **Make us, who are broken, whole through Your love.**

 And birth Your promise in us once again as on that first Christmas.

 **Amen**

The Bread of Hope … The Cup of Promise

The Gifts of Love

♪**♦ Hymn**: ‘Mary, Woman of the Promise’ Tune: ***VU 374***

Mary, woman of the promise, bearer of your people’s dreams,

 through your open, willing spirit, waters of God’s goodness streamed.

 Mary, song of holy wisdom, sung before the world began;

 faithful to the Word within, you carried out God’s wondrous plan.

 Mary, morning star of justice, mirror of the Radiant Light,

 in the shadows of life’s journey, be a beacon for our sight.

 Mary, woman of the Gospel, precious home for treasured seed,

 help us to be true disciples, bearing fruit in word and deed.

**♦ Blessing As We Go Forth**

**♦ Choral Blessing** ‘Emmanuel’ (x2)

 *Emmanuel, Emmanuel,*

 *his name is called Emmanuel*

 *God with us, revealed in us;*

 *his name is called Emmanuel.*

**Welcome to Lakeview Multicultural United Church.**

**May you find here a strengthening word, caring friends,**

**and the embracing spirit of Christ.**

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