



December 20, 2020



4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

& Winter Solstice theme

**Words of Welcome & Announcements** ~ Jan Richardson

### **Lighting the Christ Candle & Centering...**

*We light this candle as a symbol of the light of Christ, which cannot be held back by distance, which shines in each one of us, no matter where/how we gather for worship.*

### **Advent Call to Worship: December Solstice**

it is solstice night  
it is the death of darkness

for an age  
light has been slipping away  
but now  
no further

it shall return

and in the hearing of the darkness  
the light says:  
arise  
shine  
for your light has come

the promise frees itself from the frost  
and long nights

there is an awakening  
and in the hearing of the darkness  
the light says:  
the people who have walked in darkness  
have seen a great light

the day now  
shrunken yet  
is filled with hope

and begins to stretch  
pushing at the edges of darkness  
scraping it away  
with hope of new life

and in the hearing of the darkness  
the light says:  
for unto you a child is born  
unto you a son is given

this is a darkness greater than any night  
and the light more than the day

right in the heart of the deeper, human  
darkness  
a manger is ready  
as the age of brightness returns

the advent promise  
has found a place  
to chase the darkness  
and make room for the light

~ written by Roddy Hamilton,  
<http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/>

## **Hymn ~ *In the Quiet Curve of Evening* #278 VU**

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## **Advent Candle Lighting ~ Staal-Werbowesky family**

*(light two blue candles, and also the pink candle)*

We have lit three candles - for hope, for peace, and for joy.  
Today we also light the fourth candle - the candle of love.  
*(light another blue candle)*

With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times; and recognize in a special way in the Christmas story.  
There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death.  
We love because God loves.

## **What gift of love have you received from someone else?**

*(Pause to respond, silently or aloud)*

## **Unison Prayer:**

Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.  
As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.  
Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Magnify your love within us.  
Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen. Adapted from the liturgy written by Andrew Schwartz [processandfaith.org](http://processandfaith.org)

**Congregational Theme-Story Time ~ *Best Friends***, written by Lois Miriam Wilsom, based on Luke 1:26-38. Read from page 178 of *Stories Seldom Told: Biblical Stories Retold for Children & Adults*.

## **A paraphrase of the Magnificat ~ *My Soul Cries Out* (Canticle of Turning) #120 MV**

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Words: Rory Cooney, 1990 Music: traditional melody, Ireland; arr. Rory Cooney, 1990  
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Video version from Grantham Church, PA, USA <https://vimeo.com/428116712>

## **Prayer of Confession**

Do not be afraid, said Gabriel,  
surprising Mary

and confronting her with the decision of her life.  
Do not be afraid, God is with you.  
2020 has confronted many of us  
with life-changing circumstances and decisions.  
We know fear from the inside out.

In this moment, ponder that fear. Name it, if you can, at least to yourself.

*(Hold the Silence... ponder, if you can, where you may hear God calling “Do not be afraid”.)*

## **Assurance of Grace**

**Our God, who has been with the people since the beginning, is with us now;  
offering grace that is more than we can ask or imagine.  
God’s love frees us from the past, and helps us move forward into a new future.  
Let us thank God-with-Us, Emmanuel, for faithful love.**  
[https://www.ucc.org/advent\\_4\\_december\\_20](https://www.ucc.org/advent_4_december_20)

## **Minister’s Message/Reflection**

### **Advent Hymn: *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus #2* VU**

Words: Charles Wesley 1744. Music: Psalmodia Sacra 1715 Public Domain.  
Video from Shining Waters Regional Council  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=841524846611541>

### **Minute for Mission Video ~ Pass It On (video)**

Make a gift through Mission & Service this Advent. Bring hope, peace, joy, and love this Christmas.. <https://www.united-church.ca/donate>  
<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedChurchCda/videos/288211312628459>

### **A Prayer Litany for the Shortest Day/Longest Night...**

[https://www.ucc.org/winter\\_solstice\\_liturgy\\_december\\_21](https://www.ucc.org/winter_solstice_liturgy_december_21)

*Offer a time for people to name their own prayers, and then offer this litany.*

From the rising of the midwinter moon,  
may darkness and light dance together, O Shining One.  
In this season, make us short on grumpy thoughts,  
**long on sharing of words of gentleness.**

Make us short on being rushed,  
**long on attentiveness.**

Make us short on seeing what’s right before us,  
**long on peering into the horizon.**

Make us short on out-of-control to-do lists,  
**long on savoring kindness.**



Make us short on overlooking the dark sky,  
**long on gazing at the twinkling stars.**

Make us short on tradition as a habit,  
**long on re-owning and re-creating.**

Make us short on ignoring the hungry,  
**long on making a delicious meal**

Make us short on rushing,  
**long on wondering and pondering.**

Make us short on walking past those sleeping in the cold,  
**long on sharing blankets and hot tea.**

Make us short on longing for what's next,  
**and long on savoring the darkness.**

**The Prayer Jesus Taught, sung version, #959 VU**, sung by Emma Werboweskey, accompanied by Veronica Weber.

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### **Benediction:**

**May the awareness of the shepherds,  
the persistence of the magi,  
the acceptance of Joseph and  
the commitment of Mary to her child  
and to the creating of a better world for all,  
motivate us, now and always.**

**AMEN** <http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/worship-materials-an-inclusive-christmas-celebration/>

