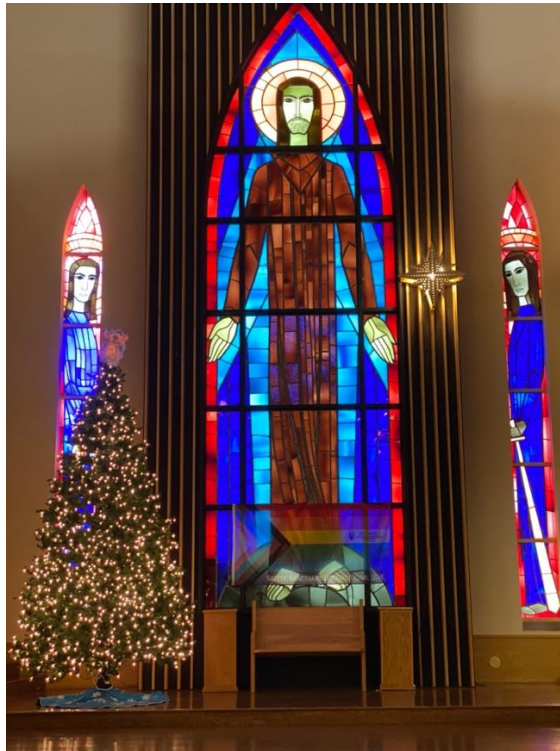


First United Church

December 3, 2023

10:30 a.m.

First Sunday in Advent Hanging of the Greens and Communion



Purpose: Building Relationships,
Living God's Transforming Love.

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Bulletin Art: "Advent Decoration at First" © Hoehn Lee

- Is a request to stand in body or in spirit

Prelude An Advent Suite: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
& O Come, O Come Emmanuel

arr. David Cherwien

Listening as we Gather

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

ONE: Let us pause for a moment and consider our role in reconciliation.

ALL: First United Church resides on treaty lands known as the Haldimand Tract, which straddle either side of the Grand River, from Lake Erie all the way to north of Shelburne, and upon the traditional territory of *Chonnonton, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee people. We recognize this gathering place where we worship and serve is home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. May our honouring of the land and worship of Creator this day plant a seed that will grow into relationships of justice and healing between settlers and Indigenous peoples in our midst.

**The Neutrals' name for themselves was Chonnonton, or 'people of the deer.' They were called Attawandaron by the Huron, meaning 'people whose speech is awry or a little different'.*

ONE: We aspire to create a safer space for everyone. We welcome you and the gifts you bring as part of your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, cultural background or abilities.

Opportunities for Ministry and Fellowship

- **Introit/Candle Liturgy:**

ONE: In a world filled with tragedy and chaos, we arrive weary, wary, and wrung out.

ALL: We come to find shelter from our fears, to discover hope as we practise our faith in worship.

ONE: We're tired of this marathon of difficulty, longing for relief through a return to what we once thought normal.

ALL: We come because the vulnerable Christ child enlightens us with possibility.

ONE: On this first Sunday of Advent, we light this first candle symbolizing hope—the assurance that the risen Christ transforms all things in love.

(The first blue candle is lit.)

ALL Sing: Hope Is a Star, (vs. 1)

VU 7

ONE: Flickering and fragile, this tiny flame opens us to wonder, to the heart of God, which transforms us as we join together in prayer:

ALL: We come to be sustained in life, O God, even as we wrestle. Inspire us to perceive the Way of Jesus as the path of wholeness. Unite us to become a community of faith woven as one by the Spirit. Teach us how to live by loving-kindness, becoming catalysts for hope in the hearts of those we encounter. Amen.

- **CALL to Worship**

ONE: Hear ye, hear ye, good people!

ALL: What news?

ONE: Good news, which shall be for all people!

ALL: Good? How?

ONE: See the Anointed one comes! In the breath of wind, she whispers. In the feel of grass and leaves, he reaches out. In the transformation of ice to water to ice, they sing. In starlight and candle flame, the way is lit.

ALL: We reach for the presence of God.

ONE: We are thirsty for the water of peace, the light of hope, the wind of joy, the ground of love. Good News! The Anointed one comes! The Anointed One comes from God, whose love for us is everlasting!

Anna Atkinson, Cedar U.C., Nanaimo, B.C.

- **Opening Hymn** O Come, O come Emmanuel, (vs 1, 6, 7)

VU 1

Prayer of Approach

ONE: With what shall we come to God's house?

ALL: We come bringing branches of pine and fir, evergreens for wreaths of welcome, and garlands of joy.

ONE: What is this lovely fragrance that follows us here?

ALL: It is the smell of cedar—bough of wisdom, wood of honour — the holy breath and presence of God in our midst.

ONE: What will these things become in this place?

ALL: The promises of God, the words of prophets, and the blessings of disciples — signs of the temple not made with human hands — all brought to life in the one called Jesus, and reborn in us this season.

Andy O'Neil, St. Paul's U.C., Riverview, N.B.

Listening For God's Word

Hanging of the Greens Liturgy with Songs

1. The Garland / Luke 1:46-55 by Yoonjoo and Jaye
Hymn: My Soul Cries Out, (vs 1 & 2) MV 120
2. The Poinsettia / Isaiah 35:1-4 by Suzanne and Bethany
Hymn: Joy is Now in Every Place, (vs 1 & 2) VU 45
3. The Wreath / Luke 1:5-25 by John, Joanne and Sophia
Hymn: Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope MV 33
4. The Lights / Isaiah 60:1-6 by Don and Miriam
Hymn: Arise, Your Light is Come, (vs 1 & 4) VU 79
5. The Christmas Tree / Isaiah 60:13-15 by Debora and Flora
Hymn: O Christmas Tree

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 64:1-9 (Reader: Nola Mott)
ONE: Herein Lies Wisdom.
ALL: Thanks Be To God.

Mark 13:24-37
ONE: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
ALL: Thanks Be To God.

Ministry of Music - Gallery Choir: The Yearning Craig Courtney

Reflection: Hoping against hope Rev. Hoeun Lee

- **Hymn** All Earth Is Waiting VU 5

Responding to God's Word

Time of Offering

Offertory Good Christians All Rejoice

arr. Joyce Jones

- **Dedication of Offering** In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 4)

VU 55

- **Prayer of Dedication**

Celebration of Communion

Communion Hymn: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, (vs 1-3)

VU 473

Invitation

ONE: May God be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to God.

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

ONE: In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise ... We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight, that valley's peace be lifted up and mountain's might brought low so that all God's people might rejoice together, saying:

ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

ONE: We give thanks for the mystery and wonder ... With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

ALL: Bless us, O God, and these your gifts. Encourage us to share your life and love, which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.

ONE: Transform us, God, ... God made known in Jesus Christ,

ALL: hear our prayer.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Sharing the Bread & Cup

ONE: Jesus Christ, the Bread of life.

ALL: Amen.

ONE: Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

ALL: Amen.

Music during communion: (congregation to join in as able)

Wait for the Lord

VU 22

Come, Come, Emmanuel

MV 11

Prayer after Communion

ONE: At this table, Christ is the host, ... Lead us to the mangers of our time, where hope and renewal are born again.

ALL: Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.

- **Sending Hymn** Live Into Hope

VU 699

Sending Forth and Benediction

- **Benediction Response** Hope Shines as a Solitary Star

MV 220

Recession of the Light and Word

Postlude An Advent Suite: Lift Up Your Heads

David Cherwien

