

**4<sup>th</sup> Advent Service**  
**Joy (traditional theme)**  
4th Sunday - Blessing and restoration

*On this Sunday of Joy, we delight with Mary in the blessing bestowed on all God's people through the gift of Christ. As we prepare for the magic of Christmas Day we rejoice that Jesus came into the world to be our light, our peace, and our example. This is a traditional service of seven tiny lessons of scripture read by various members of the congregation and seven carols sung by the whole. We take our inspiration from the first service of lessons and carols composed in a tiny garden shed in Truro, Cornwall by Edward White Benson, the bishop of Truro.*



**Processional Hymn**

**HWB 104** Of the Father's Love Begotten

**Bidding Prayer**

Congregational reading

Leader: Mary is with child! God's long-awaited promise is being fulfilled!

**People: Rejoice in his name! Emmanuel, God be with us!**

Leader: The little baby in his mother's womb, he will be the Savior of this hurting world.

**People: Bringing us new life, filled with joy and peace, calling us to faith and action.**

Leader: We read and mark in scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days  
of our separation to the promise of our redemption

**People We dedicate our worship to the child of Christ, the Word made flesh.**

*All: Praise be to God. Alleluia!*

**Blessing**

*Spoken by the worship leader*

May the child and the mother together give you the peace that passes understanding,  
secure in the knowledge that your faith has saved you from payment for all your sins, and  
made you perfect to join the saints together with all your fellows in the choir of praise that  
sings to God: Glory! Hallelujah!

## **Candlelighting**

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Joy to the honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus. When trouble and terror storm into our lives, we may be comforted by the story of Mary. Though not fearless from the first, her faith was always stronger than her fear. From the appearance of the angel Gabriel to the foot of the cross, her love was immediate and unconditional. Mary bears the calming, nurturing, protecting presence in our lives best captured in the Spanish proverb: “An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy”. Faith does not banish fear, but instead gives us the grace to accept our fears and to give them to God for his keeping.

- 1:** In a world where so many are sorrowful,  
God lights a candle of joy in our hearts.  
We wait together for a Saviour,  
who will be Immanuel, Christ the Lord.  
Hear the word of the Lord:
- 2:** "The Root of Jesse will spring up,  
one who will arise to rule over the nations;  
the Gentiles will hope in him."  
  
- Carol Penner: *Leading in Joy* (November 24, 2015)

### **The First Lesson**

#### **Genesis 1:1–5, 14–18**

*God said, “Let there be light”*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

[ ... ]

<sup>14</sup> And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

♪ **HWB 371** Let There Be Light, Lord God



## **Time of Response**

### **Prayers for the Blessings and Needs of the People**

### **Announcements**

- ★ **Last Sunday** Laura Eriksson explored the paradox of God’s holiness and humility in Christ. Leviticus 21 tells the story of a people set apart by strict standards for holiness. In Alan Kreider’s *Journey Towards Holiness* (1987), the character of the Inexpressible One is described as holy in four ways: a Living Force, Separateness, God-Likeness, and Dynamism. The angels’ announcement to the shepherds was an outpouring of radiance as Jesus became God With Us (Emmanuel). May we in the church heed John the Baptist’s call to generosity, honesty, and gratitude in anticipation of Jesus’ arrival. [KH]  
The message can be heard in your favourite browser at <https://pgimf.org/service/holy-humble-radiance/>
- ★ **Next Sunday** No service December 30<sup>th</sup>. Please be invited to join Chinatown Peace Church (Mennonite) at 375 East Pender, beginning at 11 am for a DTES service. More information at <https://www.chinatownpeace.ca/>
- ★ **Refugee Food Bank** The refugee food bank is running low on clothing. Any that you have to donate can be given to Janice or Hannelore.

### **Benediction**

For unto us a child is born.  
Unto us a child is given, and the glory  
of his grace has been revealed.  
Go out into the world, shouting the good news and  
spreading the love of Jesus wherever you go.  
Go in peace. Amen.

### The Seventh Lesson

#### **John 1:1-14**

*John unfold the great mystery of the incarnation*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

♪ **HWB 318** Joy to the World



### The Second Lesson

#### **Genesis 22:7-8, 15-18**

*The promise to Abraham and Sarah*

<sup>7</sup>Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' <sup>8</sup>Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.'  
So the two of them walked on together.

<sup>15</sup> The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'



The promise to Abraham and Sarah was God's gift to humanity after the catastrophe of our separation from God. For millenia, our human race has yearned for a closeness to God to help us bear the burden of the knowledge of good and evil as discovered by Adam and Eve. This poem from the 15<sup>th</sup> C. contrasts Adam's bondage to sin with the blessing that Mary brought in the form of Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

#### Recitation:

#### **Adam lay y-bounden**

Adam lay ybounden,  
Bounden in a bond;  
Four thousand winter,  
Thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple,  
An apple that he took.  
As clerkes finden,  
Written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,  
The apple taken been  
Ne had never our ladie,  
Abeen heav'ne queen.

Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was,  
Therefore we moun singen.

**All: *Deo gratias!***

♪ **HWB 184** Hark, the glad sound!

**The Third Lesson**

**Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7**

*“The people who have walked in darkness”*

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup> His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

♪ **HWB 185** Hail to the Lord’s anointed

**The Fourth Lesson**

**Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet Micah foretells the glory of Bethlehem*

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

♪ **HWB 191** O Little Town of Bethlehem



**The Fifth Lesson**

**Luke 1:46b-55**

*Mary accepts her fate in faith*

“My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

♪ **HWB 181** My Soul Proclaims with Wonder

**The Sixth Lesson**

**Matthew 1:18-23**

*Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus*

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel’,  
which means, ‘God is with us.’

♪ **HWB 206** Infant Lowly, infant lowly

