

Sunday, November 30, 2025 - Advent 1 - HOPE

Advent Poem -by L. Schneider

Celestial quilt picked of dazzling light,
Lead us on through this long night
Dazzling star of intense beams
Wake us from our hopeless dreams.

Welcome & Announcements

Land Acknowledgement We are grateful for the land that gives us food, shelters birds and animals, stores water and provides all of us with space to live; we remember the people who lived on and cared for this land before our ancestors came to this land; we commit to taking care of this land – keeping it nourished and cleaning up after ourselves and others, and not spoiling it by taking only what we need. We promise to share the land and its resources by protecting life, nature and each other, as Jesus has called us to. Amen.

We Gather

L: Arise and be bold, good news of hope is here!

P: **The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

Sung Response Hope is a Star, VU # 7

Hope is a star that shines in the night,
Leading us on 'til the morning is bright.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and
the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.

L: Here we are together, not alone. We join with the cloud of witnesses here, there, elsewhere, and everywhere. On this first Sunday in Advent, we will dream and imagine a different future, a rising-up and life-flourishing one. We are witnesses to hope. (The first candle is lit.)

We listen -a story of hope and how it took shape or became real (or is becoming).

P: **Our habit of hope and hoping finds sustenance and meaning in God's promise of fullness of life.**

We Pray God-of-righteous-dreaming, lighten our hearts with an enlarged imagination to dream new possibilities: to imagine a world where transformation will happen, where creation is mended and restored, and where exiles and strangers will find a home. Become in our lives the way to what we need, to what we can become, and to what we can do. Amen.

Hymn Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, VU # 2

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.	Isarel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art, Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.	Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king, Born to reign in us forever; Now thy gracious kingdom bring.	By thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone; By thine all-sufficient merit Raise us to thy glorious throne.
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Ministry of Music Soon and Very Soon

Gathering & Presentation of Share the Warmth & White Gifts -Visioning & Stewardship, Stacia Lett

Children's Ministry Right now we are beginning the season of Advent. At the end of Advent is Christmas. The word "advent" means "coming." It is the season when we remember the coming of Jesus

Christ, God's only son, into the world. Have you ever waited for something for a long time? God's people had been waiting for a very long time for God to send a Saviour to them and keep all of his promises. That Saviour was Jesus who was born long ago in a stable in Bethlehem. The baby Jesus would grow up to save all of God's people. Yet that is not all of the good news. It was God's plan to send Jesus to the world twice. He came long ago and he is coming back again. Like the people of Israel, we are waiting for him to come.

Children's Prayer Jesus, thank you for coming down into our world! As we learn about your coming among us, help us to see what you have done for us. Help us to be ready for you to come again. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Children leave for Sunday School

Prayer of Illumination -by Emily Gordon, Leaside UC, Toronto, ON, a classmate of Rev. Larry's at Emmanuel College

Holy One, Light of Sun and Stars, God of New Stories and New Directions, as we receive the stories of scripture today, remind us that you are with us on our journeys, both expected and unexpected, so that we may share your presence with all that we encounter, and the world may be changed by love. We pray in the name of the holy human child, the one we know as Jesus, Amen

Hymn **Hark the Glad Sound!** VU # 29

Hark, the glad sound! The	He comes, the prisoners	He comes, the broken	Our glad hosannas,
Saviour comes,	to release	heart to bind,	Prince of Peace
The Saviour promised	In Satan's bondage held;	The bleeding soul to cure,	Your welcome shall
long:	The gates of brass before	And with the treasures of	proclaim;
Let every heart prepare a	him burst	his grace	And heaven's eternal
throne,	The iron fetters yield.	To bless the humble	arches ring
And every voice a song.		poor.	With your beloved name.

Scripture Readings

Romans 13: 11-14

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.[

Matthew 24: 36-44

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Hymn **O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?** VU # 31

O Lord, how shall I meet you,	A lamp within my breast,	Love caused your incarnation,
How welcome you aright?	To do in spirit lowly	Love brought you're here to me;
Your people long to greet you,	All that may please you best.	Your thirst for my salvation
My hope, my heart's delight!		Procured my liberty,
O kindle, then, most holy,		O love beyond all telling,

That led you to embrace
In love all loves excelling
Our lost and fallen race.

A glorious crown you give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail nor leave me
As earthly riches fly.
My heart shall bloom forever
For you with praises new,
And from your name shall never
Withhold the honour due.

Message *Wake up! Are we ready?*

Wake up! It's time to get up and get ready! Get ready, get ready for what? For breakfast, for school, for work, to feed the livestock, to take the car in to be serviced, to take me to an appointment??

Or be ready for Jesus to come into our world for the first time? Or to be ready for Jesus to come into the world for the second and final time? That's a lot of very heavy getting ready, for sure!

Wake up! Wake up from what, exactly? To wake up from sleep, as we must needs do every day of our lives? To awaken from the fuzzy warmth of our blankets and bed, to extend our legs into the chill air that meets us when we emerge from our cocoon or comfy, peaceful nest, to awaken from a state of slumber, of blissful unawareness, to leave behind our happy dreams, and to face anew the perhaps harsh reality of the light streaming in through our windows? To emerge from the darkness of our REM and deep sleep to the brightness of the living, breathing, at times quite hectic world?

Is awakening a slow, peaceful and gradual return of awareness and conscious thought, or is it always a shock, perhaps initially unwelcome, to be delayed as long as possible? After all, once you do arise from your nest, your cradle, your bedstead, things usually aren't all that bad, are they? We need to stretch, perhaps painfully, but is part of the process of reawakening our bodies, muscles and mind, while the fog of inaction drifts away, and we prepare to stand, to walk, and then to invigoratingly wash our faces with either hot or cold water, to wake up the face which we will show to the world that day.

Our text from Romans encourages and warns us that, *"The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."* Paul exhorts his Roman church to ensure that their living, breathing, and waking are all focused on being true to Jesus' commandments and his instructions on how to behave and how to treat one another, how to worship God in the manners in which he has taught them, and to follow the sacraments with a deep sense of awe, wonder, faith and hope.

We have all seen the dire warnings on roadside billboards that the end is nigh, and that we ought to prepare ourselves to meet our maker, to make an accounting of our lives and actions to God on the day of final judgement, as the predictions of Revelation come to pass. Well, my friends, my words to you are not quite so harsh and urgent, but they do follow along the same lines. John the Baptist, who we will continue to meet this Advent, warns us to repent, to come clean before God, to purify our minds and hearts so that we may be ready to receive the heart of love of this world, this universe, this reality: the baby soon to be born in Bethlehem, and the HOPE that He brings, every year throughout our journey through life's pathways. We Christians are people of HOPE, as believers in the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus our Christ. Just as we must be awake and aware as we live our lives for the day of judgement, so too must we cleanse our souls and clear our minds as Christmas approaches, so that we are truly prepared to experience the miracle of Jesus' birth, to look at the star and the manger in awe and wonder, to in childlike innocence, to allow ourselves to be uplifted with a HOPE that exceeds astronomically all other hopes in our lives.

In order to be so prepared we indeed must be fully and totally awake, as prepared to welcome Jesus as we are when we step out onto our porch, cup of steaming coffee in hand, to greet the new day, with sunshine streaming down upon us, bursting through and scattering any clouds that might have impaired our sight, our vision, of God's glorious natural world and universe, our senses finely honed, our eyes wide open (Yes, you are ill advised to look directly at the sun, as its brilliance and searing light will damage your eyes and perhaps blind you) to viscerally experience what God and Mother Nature have provided for you to grasp, to appreciate, to perceive and to comprehend. God's world is an astounding array of facets of

awesome beauty. We are at our best when our senses are attuned to the harmonies of this creation, fully sensate and freely moved by God's resplendent, delightful palette.

Thus, prepared and aware, prepared to experience the sacred holiness and grandeur of God's Creation and God's Son, we will be filled with abundant, overflowing HOPE for ourselves, our world, and our eternal future. We must trust unquestioningly in God's grace, for we mere humans are by definition unable to fully grasp the Wisdom and Word of God. God has sent his prophets, his ministers, His art works, and the glorious, uplifting music of the spheres, with countless composers being inspired to create such powerful and beautiful sounds, words, and melodies.

And so, we wait. As Advent begins, we await the coming of the Lord.

Matthew foretells us that, "That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left."

Yes, I may be standing in line at the Daily Press coffee shop here in Dutton, awaiting my cappuccino, while Gwen is digging in order to plant some tulip bulbs, while Tony is washing his car and Rose is driving a granddaughter to a sports practice. Jesus will come again when we are relaxed, or intent on a task, whenever and wherever we are. So, awake, and be ready, for the very best for which we hope is yet to come. Jesus is coming, again. Jesus is risen! We people of hope need to refill our hearts, to reenergize our souls, charge our batteries, and polish up our HOPE, for the One who is coming to save us will soon return. As we will commune together next Sunday as we celebrate together the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we assert with great confidence and hope:

ALL: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Offering Invitation & Prayer Friends: "The days are surely coming," says God, "when I will fulfill the promise of justice and righteousness." I invite you now to be a part of fulfilling God's promise as you give generously. Your gifts to this community of faith, and our wider service through Mission and Service, provide hope as you help to bring justice a little closer.

Gracious God, with these gifts we declare that our hope lies in you. We trust you to provide all that we need, and so we are secure in offering these generous gifts. May our giving be a sign of our faith and hope. Bless our giving, that it might indeed serve your purposes in us and in the world. Amen.

Parting Hymn **God of Still Waiting**, MVU # 20

God of still waiting,
God of deep longing,
God of the heart's true rest:
Hold us in fathomless peace,
Guard us with unwaning love.

Hopeful Benediction Be people of hope. Let hope live in your heart and share the hope of Christ with all you meet. Share hope by noticing someone else's humanity. Share hope by listening to someone's story. Share hope by praying for our world. In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share hope. As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share hope with those you meet. Amen.

Choral Amen