



*The United Church of Canada*  
Prairie Spirit Pastoral Charge  
Coaldale United and St. Andrew's UC  
Trinity and First United  
**Worship leader** Rev. Ruth Preston Schilk  
Reader: Barb Goertzen  
Music: Barb Goertzen

December 14, 2025

Advent 3

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**Musical Prelude**

**Announcements**

**Remembering the Land**

**Call to Worship**

Leave your exile behind; **God is calling us home.**  
Follow the Way through the desert without fear,  
**for God's water will quench our thirst.**  
We'll walk the Highway of God's people travelling with joy;  
**Together, we'll strengthen weak hands, and support feeble knees;**  
We'll encourage the fearful and calm the anxious:  
Rejoice! Be strong! **God is with us!**  
**Come, let us worship!**

(inspired by Isaiah 35)

**Opening Prayer**

**Advent Candle-Lighting: *When God is a Child***

*(The first two candles are lit).*

On this third Sunday of Advent, we light this candle symbolizing joy—  
acknowledging the reality that joy often bursts out of pain, hardship, and  
failure.

*(The third (pink) candle is lit).*

**Joy often comes to us unexpected, especially when we have given up on life.  
Joy reminds us that nothing is impossible—even in weakness.**

**In our joy, we are powerfully reminded that God is always near.**

Therefore, let us rejoice! Let us sing as we celebrate the good news in this divinely newborn baby.

**All sing:**

**We light this candle for joy.**

**Await the new life within.**

**May our hearts now live each day,**

**So joy can find a way, so joy can find a way**

Rejoice! And again, I say, rejoice!

**Our joy erupts from the assurance that God is with us in our here and now.**

Let us join prayerfully in thanksgiving and through divine conversation to discover peace and strength for our living and our loving:

**Open our understanding, O God, rooted in coming home to your loving. Free our perceptions from the chains of judgment and of polarization. Equip us to perceive the good in one another while sharing right relations. Inspire us for new life and new vision in all we think and do, that we might dance joyfully in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn: MV # 120**

***My Soul Cries Out***

**Time for the Young and Young at Heart**

**Prayer of Confession (inspired by Luke 1:47-55)**

**When our spirits despair and we deny our blessedness,**

**When we ignore the mighty things you have done,**

**When we doubt your mercy,**

**When we are proud in the thoughts of our hearts,**

**When our power rests on the oppression of others,**

**When our wealth causes others to go hungry,**

**forgive us, O God. [silence]**

**Help us, your servants,**

**according to the promises you have made. AMEN.**

**Words of assurance: Psalm 68:19**

**Blessed be the Lord who daily bears us up.**

**God is our salvation.**

**Scripture Readings:**

James 5:7-10 James encourages patience in suffering while waiting for the Lord.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11:2-11 John the Baptist's disciples come with a question for Jesus. When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

**Minute for Mission**

Resident Desmond gives back through his gift of music.

During the 2025 federal budget announcement, Prime Minister Mark Carney delighted many by highlighting a Mission and Service partner: Bissell Centre in Edmonton.

Introducing the new Build Communities Strong Fund, he said, “We’ll build Canada strong with projects that build our communities strong,” naming Bissell Centre’s work to reduce homelessness as an example of the kind of impact this new investment hopes to strengthen.

Bissell Centre is a trusted community anchor in Edmonton’s inner city. Their programs meet people where they are—with supports that help people stay safely housed, employment programs that open doors to long-term stability, community meals that offer dignity and connection, and family supports that ensure children and parents have the care they need. At every step, Bissell walks with people through some of the hardest moments of their lives and helps them build a path toward thriving.

While Bissell Centre’s roots go back more than a century, their mission today is urgent and forward-looking: reducing poverty, preventing homelessness, and creating a community where everyone belongs. Their approach is practical, compassionate, and deeply responsive to local needs.

Being included in the early list of projects for the federal Build Communities Strong Fund highlights how trusted and effective Bissell Centre’s work has become. National leaders are taking notice, but the real transformation happens one person, one story, one act of support at a time.

Mission and Service gifts help make this partnership possible. Thank you for supporting ministries that meet people with compassion and help build stronger communities every day.

Congratulations to the Bissell Centre for their important work and community connections!

***Mission Prayer: from Song of Faith***

**God is creative and self-giving, generously moving in all the near and distant corners of the universe. Nothing exists that does not find its source in God. Our first response to God’s providence is gratitude. We sing thanksgiving**

**Offering Doxology: Take My Gifts Vs 3**

Take whatever I can offer--  
gifts that I have yet to find,

skills that I am slow to sharpen,  
talents of the hand and mind,  
things made beautiful for others  
in the place where I must be:  
take my gifts and let me love you,  
God who first of all loved me.

**Offering Prayer**

**Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer**

**Sending Hymn: MV 40**

**Never Ending Joy**

**Commissioning and Benediction**

**Sung Blessing #221 (MV) I am Walking a Path of Joy**

I am walking a path of Joy  
I am walking a path of Joy  
I am walking a path of Joy  
    Lead me home...  
    lead me home.