

The United Church of Canada
Lennoxville United Church

St Francis Manoir & Grace Village & Manoir Stanstead

A service of Advent meditation for at home

December 2021: Week 1 Hope

Grounding Prayer

(Take a deep breath, center yourself within the love of God)

God, You are present, may I/we be transformed by this encounter.

Opening Prayer:

As we begin our Advent journey, O God, we find ourselves waiting in hope. Waiting is nothing new. We seem to always be waiting for something. Yet in this time, you call us to wait with hope, not frustration or despair, trusting that you are with us and will show us the way. Open us up to this hopeful waiting. Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting Liturgy

Today we light a candle of Hope. This is the Hope we search for:

Hope found in times of a new beginning,

Hope found in the time of getting ready,

Hope reflected in the smiles on our faces as we prepare,

Hope in the anticipation of celebration,

Hope found in a time for thinking things over,

Hope woven as we plan our Christmas carefully,

Hope for the coming of the Christ child,

Hope calling us to give generously and share freely.

(The first candle is lit.)

This is the candle of hope, hope for which we search. In its glow, the powerless, the downhearted, and the poor will take courage. And we will take courage, too. Amen.

Hymn: A Candle is Burning (VU6) (tune Away in a Manger)

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,

A candle of hope in December's dark night.

While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,

Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our hearts, O God. Open our eyes. Open our lives. As we hear the scripture today and as we see the message acted out, open us to the message of Christmas. Help us to live that message all year. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Living Word, I listen with my heart, my mind and my spirit.

A Short Reflection:

Think about what is so special about hope...

Think about what hope feels like...

What do you think is the difference between hope and a wish?

In what, do you place your hope?

Prayers of the People:

Compassionate God, I humbly come before you trusting in your deep love for all your children, and your deep love for me. I thank you for your gifts in my life (pause to reflect on your blessings). I am faced with challenges and struggles, and so I ask for your courage and strength (pause and reflect on your concerns). I know that you hear me when I call, and I ask that you remind me that you are with me in the challenges and joys of living. Inspire me with your love and empower me with your hope. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing & Commissioning

Thanks be to God, for the Word-Made-Flesh. Go now, celebrating the Light of the World in this season of Advent.

Expand the Light. Announce the hope. Spread the peace. Join the joy. Offer the love! May the word of God continue to be alive through you and me. Amen.

Prayers by:

OP: Catherine Tovell, Gathering A/C/E 2017-2018 (Year B), 27.

AWL: David Sparks, Gathering A/C/E 2014-2015 (Year B), 62-62.

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