



December 3rd, 2023 9:30 a.m.

First Advent ~ How Will We Know?

Prelude Annie Schulz

Gathering Thoughts Doug Schulz

Advent Candle Lighting

Song *Wait for the Lord* Grace Singers

Call to Worship & Prayer

Leader: O God, tear open the heavens and come down
so that the mountains would quake at your presence!

No one has heard, no ear has perceived,

**People: no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for you.**

Leader: No one knows when the time will come.

People: How long must we wait?

(pause)

All: Together we wait.

Hymn *Come, thou long-expected Jesus* HWB #178

Passing of the Peace

Offertory Prayer

Musical Reflection

Prayers of the People Doug Schulz

Women's Chorus *Gravity of Love*

Scripture Reading Isaiah 64:1-9 (OT p.694) Anita Stephen

Hymn *I know not why God's wondrous grace* HWB #338

Scripture Reading Mark 13:24-37 (NT p.50)

Meditation "Convicted and Persuaded" Laur Steven

Hymn of Response *Longing for light* Back of Bulletin

Service of Communion Darrell Winger

Sending Hymn *They that wait upon the Lord* HWB #584

Postlude

It is good to be together in worship this morning!
The ushers are pleased to help any who need assistance.

[Offering plate is available on table at back of sanctuary]

Adult Sunday School ~ We will reflect on Laur's sermon and talk about what happens in Communion (Is Jesus really present?). Then we will discuss three more chapters of our book (copies available). We will meet after the service in the Fellowship Room (down the stairs in the front foyer and to the left). Join us!

GRACE NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday November 26th, 2023 ~ Attendance – 52

♪ **Women's Chorus** ~ December 7 and 21 at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 10th ~ Second Advent

Speaker: Darrell Winger

Scripture Texts (Focus texts highlighted): **Isaiah 40:1-11**;

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 10th Semi Annual Meeting with Coffee Time ~ Everyone is welcome to bring a plate of Christmas cookies to share.

December 24th ~ Fourth Advent Service at 9:30 a.m.
Christmas Eve Service at 4:00 p.m.

December 31st ~ Coffee Time after the service

Grace Congregation ~ If you would like to read scripture during Sunday morning worship services in the new year, please contact the office.

Chaplain's Corner ~ Let us continue to keep in touch with church friends who are not able to attend our Sunday services and who welcome prayers, phone calls, cards, and visits. Their contact information is in the Church Directory. These friends include (but are not limited to): Tom B, John B, Erna & Jake B (Ester's parents), Reg F, Agnes G, Abe H, Francine & Theo I, Erika I, Hertha J, Mary L, Helene M, and Marlene W. Have I missed anyone? Let me know. Would you like a friendly visit? Let me know.

Laur's and my annual Christmas card is available in the foyer – along with a sweet treat. With love from your community chaplain, Jan Steven

How Will We Know?

We are in the season of Advent from December 3rd to December 24th. Advent means “arrival”, and during this season we look forward for the arrival of God on earth, God-with-us, in the birth of Jesus Christ, as well as looking forward with hopeful anticipation toward Christ’s second coming.

During Advent our theme is: ***How Will We Know?*** Unfortunately, in the past the church has often not welcomed doubts or questions and those who voiced them were ignored. But God welcomes us with our uncertainties and questions! Advent is a time for our questions and our wonderings as we wait together for the Messiah, the Christ Child, the Light. Over these next four Sundays we will consider some common questions, not to look for easy answers, but to be reminded that our faith allows us to wrestle with doubting and questioning. God is with us and at work. As we wait together in this Advent season may we see clues of what God is doing among us and grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus, our Saviour.

Let’s be praying for each other in this time.

As an additional resource to use during Advent, a few copies of “How Will We Know”, (At Home Worship Guide) are available in the foyer. This is produced by Mennonite Education Agency. You can also find this resource online www.commonword.ca/Home.

ACROSS THE STREET AND AROUND THE WORLD

As you know, a growing chorus of voices from all walks of life is calling for a ceasefire in Palestine, including Mennonite institutions such as Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, and Mennonite Church USA. Building upon these calls, **Mennonite Action** is organizing and mobilizing Mennonites across Canada and the United States to take public action to support a ceasefire.

Mennonite Action is a movement of Mennonites bonded by a common belief that we must be public about our peace values. We believe that Mennonites have a responsibility to use our voices as powerfully as possible for the cause of peace and justice.

Now is the time to get involved. To learn more visit mennoniteaction.org.

From Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)

*Please pray for the **MCEC community of congregations.**

This week we pray for **East Zorra Mennonite Church**. Ray Martin and Mike Williamson provide pastoral leadership for the congregation. Heidi Wagler, parish nurse, leads the Health Ministry Team. Pray for this congregation who are rooted in Christ, growing together in faith and extending God’s love.



Longing for light

*Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.*

Refrain: *Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

*Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.*

Refrain

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father who art in heaven.
Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come.
Thy 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 that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.
For ever and ever. Amen.*

Tel: 905-935-6112 Email: gracemennonite@bellnet.ca

Office Hours: 8:30-2:30 ~ Wednesday, Thursday

www.gracemennonitechurch.com

www.facebook.com/gracemennonitechurchstcatharines

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Pastor | Darrell Winger 905-483-2335 | Darrell.winger@gmail.com |
| Worship & Music Associate | Annie Schulz 905-941-5511 | annieschulz@yahoo.ca |
| Office Administrator | Ester Funk | gracemennonite@bellnet.ca |
| Community Chaplain | Jan Steven | janscats@gmail.com |

Advent Communion Service Litany

In this Advent season of wondering, questioning, and expectant waiting, we are invited to Christ's table here and now. Coming to Christ's table is a way to experience the grace of God and is open to all who seek after Christ Jesus with a sincere heart. We are welcome to bring our uncertainties and our questions and know that God is with us.

Out of the wilderness a voice calls out. Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of love. Prepare the way of forgiveness. Prepare the way of peace. The Christ child was born in the midst of darkness and a time of uncertainty. As those who would worship him were welcomed to that humble manger scene, today we are welcomed by the Saviour.

We Confess Our Faith and Need of God's Forgiveness

Leader: Let us confess our faith together.

All: We believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again
to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Leader: Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our need of God's forgiveness.

All: Have mercy on me, O God,
According to your steadfast love.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

Leader: Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation,
The old life has gone; a new life has begun.
In the name of Jesus,
we are forgiven, loved, and free.

Prayer

Loving God, you sent your Son in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.
You scatter the proud and have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.
You fill the hungry with good things.
Your own Son came among us as a servant to be Emmanuel, your presence with us.
He humbled himself and freely accepted death on a cross.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and reconciled us with you and with each other.
We give you thanks for hope that we begin to see,
and for comfort from the Prince of Peace.
Encourage us in these shortened days.
Through the long nights of this season,
may your hope carry us until dawn arrives again.
Amen.

Words of Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

The Bread

Servers come forward to serve the bread.

Prayer for the Bread

Distribution of the Bread

(Please hold the piece of bread until all are served and we are able to partake together.)

Leader: The body of Christ, broken for you.
(We eat the bread together.)

The Cup

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Please take a cup from the pew holder near to you.

(Please wait to partake until we are able to do so together.)

Prayer for the Cup

Leader: The blood of Christ shed for you.
(We drink the cup together.)

Prayer After Communion

Leader: In hope and peace let us pray:

All: God of Advent promise,
God of child-like hope,
we have come to your table.
May the eating and drinking renew our sense of joy.
May we be persons of hope in a broken world,
even as we wait for the day when the world will be changed.
Grant that this fresh experience of your grace,
enables us to see you at work,
and strengthens us as we pursue your peace, reconciliation,
and justice in our community and around the world.
Amen.

Benediction & Blessing

Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage to love,
and serve you with gladness,
with eyes to see your presence,
even in this season of waiting,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

