

Worship on December 12, 2021 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)

(Welcoming Elder: Adele Samuel)

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Light the Candle (Peace) BOP 119 – Hope is Star (Verse 3)
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 126 – On Jordan's Bank
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Luke 1:26-38
- Sermon: Advent 3 – The Virgin Birth of Jesus
- The Prayer for the People of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 410 – Joyful, Joyful we adore you

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday, December 12th, 2021, the Third Sunday of Advent. May the JOY of our coming King Jesus Christ be with all of us as we bow down and worship him through today's worship.

. There will be Christmas Eve service at church. So, plan to join the special celebration of the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.

. Thank you for your support with your gifts. As we give our offering to the Lord, let us offer up our lives and our hearts.

As we come into the presence of our God, let us calm down our hearts and minds, and focus on our Lord.

Lighting up the Advent Candle Hope Is A Star (BOP#119)

Vs. 3: Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn
Telling the world that the Saviour is born
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

Advent Call to Worship

One: Joy is the celebration given by God.

All: Joy is the celebration at the birth of the Christ Child.

One: Joy is the celebration when the angels sing “Glory to God in the highest.”

All: We celebrate the joy of Christ coming again.

One: Let us pray:

All: Source of light, shine in our lives and in your world with your life-giving joy.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 126 – On Jordan’s Bank

Vs. 1 On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that the Lord is nigh Come then and hearken, for he brings glad tidings for the King of kings	Vs. 2 Then cleansed be every Christian breast And furnished for so great a guest! Yea, let us each our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there	Vs. 3 For thou art our salvation, Lord Our refuge and our great reward Without thy grace our souls must fade and wither like a flower decayed
Vs. 4 Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sore And make us rise to fall no more One more upon thy people shine And fill the world with love divine	Vs. 5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee Whose advent sets thy people free Whom, with the Father, we adore, and spirit blest, for evermore	Amen

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of Joy and Justice, We will always rejoice in you. You are our strength and our song.

You gather those who have strayed from you and welcome them back to your side.

You bring healing to those who are broken in body and spirit, and draw close to those who walk alone. Through your great love and mercy, you transform us all into more than we ever thought we could be. We will trust in you and not be afraid. With joy, we sing of your glory and proclaim your saving power to those near and far. Receive our prayers and praise this day, for you alone are worthy, God most holy.

All knowing God, We know perfect joy only comes through faith in you, yet we seek it out in lesser ways. In search of comfort, we indulge our desires. In search of love, we hide from our faults. In search of approval, we spend beyond our means.

Forgive us, O God, for seeking satisfaction in the wrong places. Help us turn again to you, our true source of joy, and guide us to discover what is honourable, just, and pleasing in your sight.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord’s Prayer:)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers in Christ at St. Andrew's, The scriptures say, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." The forgiveness we seek is ours through the grace of Jesus Christ.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, be with you.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of truth and wisdom, send us your Holy Spirit to teach us through the scriptures, read and interpreted this day. Open our eyes to understand your truth more fully, and our hearts to live out your wisdom in the example of Jesus, your Living Word. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

SERMON: Advent 3 – The Virgin Birth of Jesus

Today's title is "The Virgin Birth of Jesus."

When the Angel came to Mary, what was the emotion of Mary?

Fear. She was afraid of confronting the Angel of God.

Why? At that time, there was no such thing like a guardian angel, but the people thought of the angel as God's messenger of judgment or punishment. Before the crucifixion of Jesus, people highlighted God's righteous character among many different characteristics of God such as loving, merciful, graceful, patient, and generous. In other words, God was thought to be an angry old man in the sky.

One day, to Mary, the Angel of God came. What's the greeting words? **V28 – Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."**

It's a good and peaceful greeting, but to Mary, the presence of the Angel itself was fear.

V29 – **But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.** The greeting words were friendly, but the presence of the angel was not so much. It was fearsome to the people at that time. Mary was very very afraid.

So, the angel said once more, **v30 "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God."**

The angel comforts Mary. “It’s okay. God likes you. God is not going to punish you. I’m here not because of the punishment of God. But, I am here because of a good and peaceful purpose.”

What was the good and peaceful purpose? **“V31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.”**

Is this good news for Mary? Hmm.. that’s questionable. she was planning to marry a man named Joseph, but before the marriage, the angel is talking about being pregnant...

V34 – Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

What? What are you talking about? I do not have any reason to be pregnant. And I am not even married yet. I am a virgin.

V35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”

And also, the angel talked about Mary’s relative Elizabeth, who was too old to have a baby at her age. But, the angel told Mary that she was six months pregnant now. This means that God made a miracle before coming to Mary to ensure her for what God said to her. It is like a proof. So, God is able to do impossible things for us as well.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” V37 – “For no word from God will ever fail.”

There might be some time gap between v37 and 38. Mary might need some time to accept what’s happening to her right now.

V38 Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Mary believed in God and as mentioned above, she was a favoured one of God. God knew that Mary would obey this mission impossible out of her faith in God. Looking at this situation, Mary thought she’s not in control. All she could do was to trust God and to accept this situation. So, she answered, **v38 “I am the Lord’s servant, May your word to me be fulfilled.”**

This is the story of Mary’s Virgin Birth of Jesus.

Can you believe this? – wasn’t Jesus born from the sperm of Joseph??

People cannot easily believe the virgin birth of Jesus. There are many debates.

The virgin birth of Jesus is essential to the Christian faith because of these reasons.

1. To fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, **Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.**
2. To have the divine status of God – The identity of God → God incarnated: Mary was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit without natural father. Otherwise, there’s no difference between Jesus and us.
3. Kinsman redeemer – Jesus is the second Adam – Jesus the Son of God the Father is our relative. **Hebrews 2:11, “For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all**

have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters”

4. To become the perfect sacrifice. Jesus did not have earthly father. No sinful nature was inherited. He was born pure and holy.
5. Salvation – if he was from normal human born, his death would be meaningless, no different from our death. Jesus’ death, as the perfect sacrifice, satisfied the perfect justice of God
6. For eternal Hope – if he was a human born, he couldn’t make peace with God
7. Trust in the Bible is impossible – we cannot trust in the Bible – Only God can make us trust in the Bible

God can do impossible. The impossible mission of God is loving us. It is loving ME.

“God, Do you love me?” This is always in our heart. But God always answers us YES. This is our foundational question. Do I believe in God’s love? Whether we know his love or not, how often we ask his love, God says YES. I Am pouring out my love on you. You, do not worry about anything because I love you. This Bible is all about the love of God for us.

In this Christmas season, let us think about the love of God. Why did God come to this earth? One reason only, to love me. In this season, let’s understand the constant presence of God’s love in our everyday lives. God is walking with us all the time. God is holding our hands when we go through good times and bad. God watches over us every moment with his abundant love.

This is the Third week of Advent, which reminds us the JOY. Like Mary in today’s story, “BE strong, fear not!” This is the promise of God for us. BE strong because I am with you, because I am with you with my love pouring out upon you. I am focusing on you. I am watching over you. I am with you. So, do not worry and be bold and be strong. Be joyful and rejoice in my presence and the presence of my love. Let the love of God fill your hearts as you come to him with gladness and thanksgiving.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, we are joyful because of your great love for us. You are just speechless. You are awesome. You are amazing that you love us. Sinful, selfish, weak. But, your love for us never changes. We might go through good times and bad times, but you are faithful and your love never changes. Thank you. Like Mary said yes to you, fill our hearts with faith, so that we can trust you. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer For the People of God

Loving Jesus, thank you for calling us and inviting us to your presence. Because of your love, we can come to you. Because of your faithfulness, we live. Because of your grace, we are made clean. Thank you.

At this time of prayer, fill our hearts with your Holy Spirit, so our eyes are open and our ears are ready to listen to you. Give us your wisdom, so we can lay down our stubbornness and follow you.

Father God, with development of Corona virus variant, the confirmed cases are rising again. The possible virus contagion is everywhere now. Protect us. Keep us safe. And Lord, give us wisdom what to do to overcome this difficulty and give us courage to stop what not to do.

Help all the leaders and researchers. Help them find the right cure and right directions to keep everyone safe.

We pray for our congregation. Many are going through difficult times right now. Have mercy upon them. Shine your light and fill their hearts with your love and hope. Guide them their next steps. At this time, Lord, with your loving presence, embrace them. Hold them tightly. And speak to them your love. Place your hands upon them. With your loving power, free them from their pains, difficult situations, problems. Remove all the hindrances that blocking them coming to your love. Your love gives us joy. Your love fills our hearts with praise. Any situations cannot stop it. But, many times, because of our weakness, because of our life's hardships, we are stopped. Help us. Let your praise overflow within our inner beings whatever the situations we are in. We believe that you are good. But, we sometimes ask whether it's true because of our difficulties. It is totally natural even though we don't understand this. Give us faith trusting you that you are leading us with your goodness and with your unfailing love. Be with us. Help us. Lord, especially, there are people who are struggling with their sickness. Strengthen them and heal them. Surround them with your love.

In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering.

We make our offering today with joyful hearts, anticipating our celebration of God's gift to us in Christ Jesus. Know that our gifts may touch lives in deep need. Let us share the joy of this season we have received in Jesus' name. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

Just and joyful God, we bring our gifts with hearts that rejoice in your goodness to us, in Christ and in creation. Send your Holy Spirit to bless them and us with the power to shine the light of Christ into lives where Jesus can turn despair into joy. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP#410 Joyful Joyful we adore you

Vs. 1 Joyful joyful we adore you God of glory Lord of love Hearts unfold like flowers before you Opening to the sun above Melt the clouds of sin and sadness Drive the dark of doubt away Giver of immortal gladness Fill us with the light of day	Vs. 2 All your works with joy surround you Earth and heaven reflect your rays Stars and angels sing around. You Centre to the broken praise Field and forest vale and mountain Flowery meadow flashing sea Chanting bird and flowing fountain Join to praise you joyfully
Vs.3 You are giving and forgiving Ever blessing ever blessed Wellspring of the joy of living Ocean depth of happy rest God Creator Christ our Saviour All are yours who live in love Teach us how to love our neighbour Lift us to your joy above	Vs. 4 Morning stars awake the chorus Mortals join with every part For what joy is set before us As Christ's love joins heart to heart Ever singing march we onward Victor in the midst of strife Joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus Christ is our joy. Jesus Christ is our life. Jesus Christ is our power. Jesus Christ gives us his everything. With his love, like Mary, may you overcome all the circumstances in your daily lives.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.