

Worship on December 4, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Trevor Preston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- BOP 119 Hope of a star (vs. 2) – lighting the PEACE candle
- Call to worship (Advent hand-out)
- Praise song – BOP 149 Away in a manger
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 114 Emmanuel, Emmanuel

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Romans 15:3-13 (MSG)
- Sermon: Rejoice together
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory

We Serve

- Benediction

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

Responsive Call to Worship

Reader 1: We are people of peace.

Reader 2: God seeks justice and compassion. God listens to the cries of the vulnerable and longs
for wars to cease.

**People: We pray God's peace is at work in our hearts, our homes, our neighbourhoods and
the world.**

Reader 1: The second candle of Advent reminds us that we are called to live as people of peace.

Reader 2: We light this candle as an invitation to work for justice and peace. (light the candle of
peace)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

**People: Holy One, help us to fan the flame of peace. May our lives reflect the warmth and
wonder of this candle. Make your church a place of peace and sanctuary in our
community. Amen.**

Lighting up the Advent Candle Hope is a star (BOP 119)

Vs. 2: Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth.

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.

Praise song – BOP 149 Away in a manger

<u>Vs. 1</u> Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.	<u>Vs. 2</u> The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.	<u>Vs. 3</u> Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in your tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with you there.
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Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of wisdom and understanding, of peace and promise, you are the giver of life and you live in us. You have welcomed us as your children, and called us to live out your image with hospitality toward each other. In Jesus Christ, you offer us living water to wash away our sin and sorrow, and call us back to paths of justice and righteousness. With the Holy Spirit, you baptize us for service and life in community, refreshing us each day with your presence and purpose. Glory and honour and praise be yours, Creator, Christ and Spirit, this day and every day, now and evermore.

God of peace and promise, we confess that we have taken your commitment to us for granted. We assume what we do is acceptable to you, yet we judge others more harshly. We have been slow to welcome others, especially if their cultures or convictions differ from ours. You call us to repentance, but we resist seeing anything needing change in our hearts or our habits. Forgive our self-satisfied attitudes, and challenge us with your vision of a peaceable kingdom where all can be made new.

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, Receive the Good News in peace. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Receive the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

Prayer for children and youth

God of love and grace. Thank you for this time of prayer for our precious children and youth. With your wisdom, come into their hearts. Teach your truth. Let them accept themselves as they

are. Let them love themselves as they are. As they form their inner being and their inner strength, be in the centre of their hearts. Let them have you in the centre of their hearts, so they know that you are God and you are the Lord. Guide their steps and be the lamp onto their feet. Teach them faith and walk with them and help them live the best life possible with their life. Be worshiped through their lives and let them display your greatness to their surroundings. Build personal and intimate relationship with them, so they experience you through their lives. We offer them up to your loving arms. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 114 Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel. God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of peace and possibility, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Prince of Peace.

Scripture: Romans 15:3-13

3-6 That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out. "I took on the troubles of the troubled," is the way Scripture puts it. Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it's written for us. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize us, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next. May our dependably steady and warmly personal God develop maturity in you so that you get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us all. Then we'll be a choir—not our voices only, but our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to the God and Father of our Master Jesus! 7-13 So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you do it! Jesus, staying true to God's purposes, reached out in a special way to the Jewish insiders so that the old ancestral promises would come true for them. As a result, the non-Jewish outsiders have been able to experience mercy and to show appreciation to God. Just think of all the Scriptures that will come true in what we do! For instance: Then I'll join outsiders in a hymn-sing; I'll sing to your name! And this one: Outsiders and insiders, rejoice together! And again: People of all nations, celebrate God! All colors and races, give hearty praise! And Isaiah's word: There's the root of our ancestor Jesse, breaking through the earth and growing tree tall, Tall enough for everyone everywhere to see and take hope! Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope! **"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."**

SERMON: Rejoice together.

Today's sermon title is **"Rejoice together."**

This is the second Sunday of Advent and the theme of this week is Peace. When we greet each other during our worship, we say "Peace of the Lord be with you." When the angel of the Lord came to God's people, their greeting was "Peace be with you." When Jesus came to his disciples after his resurrection, his greeting was "Peace be with you."

Why they put peace in the centre of their greetings?

That's because they want to emphasize the Good news they brought from God to them.

For example, the angel of the Lord came to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

When God appears to you, what would be your first emotion? It might be joy, love, comfort, or gladness. But, at that time, the first feeling was fear. God usually came to the people with the message of judgment. Usually bad news. Also, they were aware of their sinful nature as well as God's holy nature. They were aware that the holy God cannot be with sinful human.

For example, **Luke 1:28-31, "28 The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" 29 Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. 30 The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. 31 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus."**

Therefore, revealing the purpose of the visit was crucial.

Peace be with you.

Then, what is peace? The absence of conflict, the state of an agreement, a state of mutual harmony between people or groups. These are the general understanding of peace.

Romans is the letter of Apostle Paul explaining the grace of God and sinful nature of human being. By the grace of God, we are saved. That is the message of Romans. Romans chapter 1-11 is Paul's explanation of how God's grace works theologically. Chapter 12-14 is about how the theological truth to be actualized in our daily lives. How we should live out this truth we have received from God.

The core message of the Romans chapter 12-14 is summarized in today's passage, v7. **"So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you do it!" (MSG)**
"Welcome one another, therefore just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
(NRSV)

Welcome one another and make peace within.

One theologian paraphrased v7, **"Accept one another, therefore, as Christ has accepted you."**

One of the **deepest needs of the human heart** is to **be accepted and valued**. Every human being wants to be loved, but there is an even deeper love, **a love of acceptance**. Every human being craves to be accepted, accepted for who they are, not for what they have done or achieved.

Are you accepted by others just as you are? Who accepts you? Some might say spouse, parents, children, family, or friends, their pastor – maybe.. **WHO truly accept you??**
And, to whom can you tell everything you have in your hearts? Do you have the faith that they would accept you after knowing what you have in your hearts? Your most selfish desires? We have fear of rejection. And we have too many experiences of not being accepted. When we are not accepted, a deep unnamed emptiness pervades our beings.

Depending on whether we have the experience of being accepted or not, our lives are formed in different ways. A feeling of self-esteem. A feeling of being worthwhile.

The feeling of acceptance. They are happy that I am simply as I am.

Acceptance means that I can grow at my own pace. I am encouraged and supported, but not forced.

Have you been accepted as much as you would like to be accepted?

Have you been accepting others as much as they would like to be accepted?

Maybe yes, maybe no. Whichever our experiences are, we still have the cravings to be welcomed and to be accepted just the way we are.

Who accepts you 100%? Of course, it's God.

My point is this. **Faith is the courage to accept acceptance. I am accepted by God as I am, not as I should be.**

However, this requires an act of faith. **It requires the courage to embrace Acceptance, that is, God's very self.** God absolutely, fully accepts each of us and intimately known each of our names. **Isaiah 49:16, "See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands."**

Knowing the fact that I am accepted and **embracing** it are two different things. It takes a long time to embrace the acceptance of God. We need to accept ourselves because God accepted us already. Self-acceptance is never based on our own selves, our own qualities, or our own efforts. These are collapsible foundation. We don't want to build our house on sand, we want to have the solid rock as our foundation. That is God. **Because God accepted us, we can accept ourselves.** I am saying, "God accepted you already." What more are you demanding from yourself? Can you be more demanding than God?

V7-9, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."

Our passage proclaims that Christ accepted us for the glorification of God. The glorification of God will be possible only if the acceptance enacted by Christ flows through to mutual acceptance of one another. **Whatever we have received from God, we are bound to spread to others.**

Deuteronomy 7:6-8, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the Lord loved you."

Simple. He loved us. God satisfies our desire to be accepted and to be loved. And with the love we have received from God, God wants us to spread out the love of God we have received.

For the glory of God, Christ has accepted us and we are to accept one another.

Because Christ first accepted us and showed the example, God is saying to us that we are capable of accepting others. But, again, we need to remember this: **1 Corinthians 10:12, "Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence."** (MSG) **"So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."** (NRSV)

We can accept and welcome one another for God's glory, not by our own power, but with the faith in God. We welcome one another to God's glory. Why? To rejoice God together! In this second Sunday of Advent, let us rejoice the love and grace and intimate fellowship with God and one another in Peace. **Let us accept each other and glorify God.**

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

God of glory and power, thank you for your love for us. Thank you for loving us first. We did not do anything to be loved by you. We are not even able to come to your presence without your acceptance. Thank you for welcoming us. Thank you for all you did for us.

Lord, Jesus, help us our unbelief. You are telling us numerous times that you love us. But, we have hard time accepting your love. Help us stop judging ourselves. Help us accept ourselves because you already accepted us just the way we are.

Gracious and loving Father, we pray for the peace, in this special and celebrating season. Jesus Christ came to us and gave us peace. However, there are too many conflicts, too many fights, too many violence, too much selfishness breaking peace you brought. Oh Lord, you are the Prince of peace. You called us to accept each other and made us peacemakers. Help us carry out the purpose you called us to. We want to make peace within and around our lives. Give us faith. Give us strength. Give us wisdom and courage.

We pray for the war in Ukraine and oppression in Iran. Protect the weak. Provide safety and resources they need. And guide the hearts of the leaders, so with your grace and love, let them stop this hatred and chaos.

We also remember our congregation. Let your presence be experienced. Help us open our eyes and ears, so we may see and hear you, God. Open all our senses, so we may feel you're working in our midst. We are praying and preparing for the revival. We want people to join in our worship and share your greatness together as we worship. We want to connect with more people. We want to have wider fellowship. We want to work with more people to build up your church. We want to serve this community of Aurora. We want to become your hands and feet. Lord, strengthen us. We are hopeful because you are holding us and you are leading and guiding us. Precious God, help us show your greatness to our surroundings.

Also, we remember each individual going through their life's course. They might be in their ups or downs. God with us, Emmanuel. You are always present and helping us. Help us cast down our concerns and issues to you. You showed us the way. We will follow your steps. Guide us.

Through our worship, be glorified. Help us remember to embrace your love for us. We want to know you deeply. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Peace, born for us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that peace which we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

God, our Peace and our Promise, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that peace will take root in people who face conflict and danger, and places seeking to establish peace in the face of violence. Be their peace and their promise, through Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory

<u>Vs. 1</u> God of glory and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power; crown thine ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, For the facing of this hour, (x 2)	<u>Vs. 2</u> Lo! The hosts of evil round us, scorn thy Christ, assail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us; free our hearts to love and praise Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, For the living of these days, (x 2)
<u>Vs. 3</u> Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control; shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, Lest we miss they kingdom's goal. (x 2)	<u>Vs. 4</u> Set out feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be armoured with all Christ-like graces, rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, That we fail not them nor thee (x 2)
<u>Vs. 5</u> Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore; let the search for thy salvation be our glory evermore. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, Serving thee whom we adore (x 2)	

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. We are called to accept one another. We are here to love and welcome one another. God loves you and God already accepted you just the way you are. Accept the fact that you are accepted. Embrace the love of God and embrace one another.

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.