

**Worship on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (Second Sunday of Advent)**

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Dr. Robert Revington)

**Sunday Order of worship**

**We Gather**

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship (See the insert) (Light the candle of hope)
- Lighting the PEACE candle – BOP 119 Hope of a star (vs. 2)
- Praise song BOP 129 Prepare the way, O Zion
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 109 All the earth is waiting
- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Malachi 3:1-4
- Second reading: Psalm 85:8-13 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 1:68-79
- Sermon: **Peace as a journey**
- Hymn BOP 124 People in darkness
- Prayer for the people

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 118 Hark the glad sound

**We Serve**

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

---

**Welcome and Announcement:**

**Responsive call to worship:** (Please see the insert) (Light the candle of peace)

**BOP 119 Hope of a star (vs. 2)**

**Praise song – BOP 129 Prepare the way, O Zion**

**Prayer of Adoration**

God of peace and promise, you are the giver of life, living in us through the power of your Holy Spirit. You are the voice that calls us from our wandering, setting us on a new path. You are the living water that purifies us, baptising us for service in the world that so badly needs your love. You are the Way that we are called to walk and you are the one who supplies all things for the journey. Refresh us in this time of worship, and reignite our desire to serve you each and every day. Glory, honour and praise be yours now and always, one God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

Merciful God, in your gracious presence we confess our sins and the sins of this world.

**Prayer of confession (Unison)** *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*

**Merciful God, baptism promises the washing away of our sin and the start of our new life in Christ. But we confess that we are still in love with our old ways. We sin against you and one another, in what we do and in what we fail to do. We excuse ourselves, and take comfort in what is familiar and pleases us rather than what serves you. Forgive us when we mistake such comfort for the peace you offer us in Christ Jesus and prepare our hearts to embrace new ways of following him.**

**Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us:** (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**

Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, proclaimed this hope: Luke 1:78, **"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, giving light to those in darkness, guiding our feet in the way of peace."** Receive God's tender mercy today. Trust that God's peace will prevail for all those who seek forgiveness in Jesus' name.

**May the Peace of the Lord be with you.** *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

### **Praise song – BOP 109 All earth is waiting**

### **Prayer for children**

### **Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)**

- First reading: Malachi 3:1-4
- Second reading: Psalm 85:8-13 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 1:68-79

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

### **SERMON: Peace as a journey**

There was a priest named Zechariah. His wife was Elizabeth. They lived good life before God's eyes. They kept all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. However, they had no children. Elizabeth was barren. Both were getting on in years. When Zechariah was serving as priest before God, there appeared an angel of the Lord in front of him. Zechariah was terrified in fear. The angel said to him, v13, **"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John."** However, Zechariah was well aware of their biological age. It seemed impossible to him that they would have a son. **V18, "Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."**

This is the birth story of John the Baptist. Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, was pregnant after few days of the visit of the angel. Miraculous birth story.

Six months later, the angel, Gabriel, came to Mary, Jesus' mother, and told her she will conceive in her womb and bear a son. And the angel told Mary that her relative Elizabeth was miraculously pregnant in her old age. Mary visited Elizabeth and they praised God.

Meanwhile, Zechariah was not able to speak until his son, John, was born. When they were going to name the baby Zechariah after his father, Elizabeth said, **"No, he's supposed to be called John."** Other relatives opposed because John was not used in their family before. They named their children after their father's or grandfather's names. Yet, Zechariah remembering the prophecy of the angel, he wrote this on tablet, **"His name is John."** Immediately his mouth was opened and was able to speak.

Today's Luke reading is Zechariah's prophecy when his mouth was opened again.

**V68, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. (NRSV)**

**NIV, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them."**

This verse contains the key ministry of Jesus Christ.  
Jesus came to his people. Jesus redeemed them.

First, coming of Jesus. **Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."**

Isaiah prophesied the birth of Jesus. And Jesus is called **IMMANUEL**. Immanuel is the original Hebrew spelling. **EMMANUEL** is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word. So basically, same word. **Immanuel means God is us**. The name is Jesus is God with us.

Jesus came to us and lived with us on earth. **Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). Hebrews 1:3, [Jesus] is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being.** Jesus is the representation of God. God is with us through Jesus.

**What is your image of Jesus? Who is Jesus for you?**

Shepherd? Teacher? Gate to life? Door to God? The Way, and the Truth, and the Life? Bread of Life? Light of the world? The Vine? I am the vine and you are the branches. Lamb of God? Who sacrificed his life to save us. King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Who reigns in power and authority. Cornerstone? That becomes the foundation of our life. Living Water? Bridegroom? Alpha and Omega? The Rock? The Refuge? These are the names of Jesus. In different times of our lives, we meet Jesus in different images. This tells us that Jesus is with us in any and all circumstances. He comforts us. He cares for us. He protects us. He provides our needs. He guides us. **Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another."** This is one of the teachings of Paul. Jesus lived in this way. When we cry, where is Jesus? He cries with us. When we rejoice, he laughs with us. This is Immanuel. Remember that Jesus is with you in your ups and in your downs.

**"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them." (Luke 1:68)**

The second ministry of Jesus is redeeming us. To redeem is to buy back or to recover.

**Redemption is the act of buying back something that was lost or Redemption is the act of paying a ransom to release someone or something from bondage.**

Economically, redemption means paying off a debt or reclaiming property or recovering possession.

In legal point of view, redemption is freeing someone from slavery. Redemption is freeing someone from captivity by paying a ransom.

The vocabulary used were reclaim, recover, free, and ransom.

This implies that something was originally mine in the first place. But, it was taken away. So, we need to bring it back by paying the price or by paying the ransom.

When Jesus redeemed us, what was the price? His own life.

What did he redeem? Us. He bought us with his life.

So, we can say that we were originally the possession of Jesus. But, we were taken away as a hostage. Therefore, Jesus paid his life to free us and restore us.

**Colossians 1:20, “and through [Jesus] God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”**

**The ministry of Jesus has a direction.** The first good news of God Jesus proclaimed is this.

**Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”** First he came to us and held our hand. He asks us to walk together. Repent! Turn away from your old ways. Change your path. Believe and receive life. Come out from darkness and receive God’s light. Jesus is reconciling the broken relationship with human being and God because of sin. **John 1:29, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

**Romans 5:1, “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Jesus made peace with God for us. It is already given to us. We are allowed to enjoy peace with God. God’s peace begins with his promise of salvation – deliverance from darkness.

Immanuel, God with us, may hold your hands and lead you to walk toward life.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

**Praise song – BOP 124 People in darkness**

**Prayer for the people:**

God with us, Immanuel. God redeems, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for coming to us and thank you for leading us to the peace with God. As we worship you, help us come closer to you. Give us understanding of ministry to us. And thank you for making peaceful relationship with God through your blood. In this season of Advent, we want to praise you and glorify you for what you have done for us.

We pray for humility. We pray that we value others above ourselves. Help us build peace in you. There are our members and adherents experiencing physical pain and illness. Loving Father, embrace them. Comfort their hearts and heal their bodies. Use medical supports and medicines in the most suitable ways. There are people who long for peace in relationships. We are meant to live together, in harmony. Grant us love and patience. Help us focus on what we have received from you and help us be filled with you and let the blessings we have overflow to our surroundings making your light shine from us.

Come, Christ Jesus, come among us. Let your presence be with us always and help us remember your sacrifice and love in redeeming us, giving us new life.  
Be praised and be worshipped through our lives. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:**

We make our offering today as a sign of our commitment. Through our gifts, we acknowledge the reign of Jesus Christ among us. We trust that our gifts will accomplish more than we might ever imagine, because God will bless them and God will bless us. As we praise and worship God with our gifts, let us glorify him with all our hearts. Let the offering be received. *BOP #79, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*

**Offering prayer:**

Mighty and merciful God, we bring our gifts to you, trusting that your blessing will multiply their transformative power and use in the world. Use them and us to prepare the way for Christ to enter lives with his compassion and courage, so that the world will know his peace and trust his name. Shine Jesus shine and pour out your peace and grace upon us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 118 Hark the glad sound**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Jesus came to us to be with us and to give us life. This sums up the ministry of Jesus. May the Prince of Peace, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may hold your hands and walk with you all the days of your life.

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