

Home Church Package – Sunday Dec 20, 2020 – Advent 4

By Rev. Julie Lebrun - Inlet United Church, Port Moody BC

Welcome to a time of worship

Greetings to you on this 4th Sunday of Advent. It certainly is a different Christmas this year. We are experiencing connection in very different ways. Talking on the phone, email, or zoom have become the main ways to connect with each other. Not able to travel or see our family and friends in person is something we never could have imaged at Christmas...but here we are.

And yet, I believe in connection, even when we can't get together in person. This thought is inspired by a poem written by an anonymous Jewish person during the Holocaust. These words were found scrawled on a wall and have now been shared with the world.

*I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it's not shining.
I believe in love, I believe in love,
even when, even when I don't feel it.
I believe in God, I believe in God,
even when, even when God is silent.*

Of course we cannot compare our current living situation to the Holocaust, but the idea of believing in something even though we can't experience it, in the manner we normally expect, is very helpful.

This week we add the words:

I believe in the light, I believe in the light
That has come, that has come, and is coming

Opening Prayer

Holy One,
we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of peace on earth.
Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when we aren't sure that
goodwill among us can be found,
ignite the flame of peace within us,
**People: ... that we might glow with its brilliance
from the inside out.
I believe in the light,
I believe in the light,
that has come... that has come...
and is coming.**

Help us face the pain of life
and embrace the assurance that light is already here, and always coming. Amen.

Scripture: John 1: 1-9, 14 (NRSV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reflection

The author of the Gospel of John does not tell a birth story of Jesus as Luke and Matthew do. In fact all 4 Gospels tell a different story of the birth of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, there is no manger, no angels, and no shepherds, not even Mary or Joseph!

Instead we have "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." This use of "Word" with a capital "W" is not the same use of "word" as we normally think of it. In the beginning, the "Word" refers to God's word of life coming into being. We have this in our creation stories and it continue now in the birth of Jesus.

The author of John uses images of Light and Darkness to explain his understanding of Jesus being born into our earthly world. "The true light, which enlightens everyone..."

This week we add the words:

I believe in the light, I believe in the light
That has come, that has come, and is coming

Advent is a strange season. We can say Jesus has been born and has come again to us in the Holy Spirit. And yet Advent is a season of waiting...of waiting and anticipating this birth of new life again in each of our own hearts and in the world.

It has happened already, and it is happening again, somehow for the first time!

Closing Prayer

The gentle pull of God
is often lost amidst the rush
of all the obligations which lay a claim on us.
Yet just beyond the frantic pace
our restless feet have trod
lie deep still pools of quietness—
the dwelling place of God.
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive
O take me to that secret place
where lost in wonder and in awe,
the moment comes and I rejoice
to be and be with God.
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive. Amen.

Go into this week with love,
met by God in the stillness
trusting in connection even when we can't be together.
Amen

Note: These prayers and poems are from Worship Design Studio. They can be heard in the form of music during our Advent worship services. They service can be viewed on www.inletunited.ca under "Online Services and News".