

Bolton United Church – Sunday Worship
January 10, 2021
Epiphany 1, Baptism of Jesus

Prelude

Introit: VU 55 In the Bleak Midwinter VERSE 1 and 4

Words: Christina Georgina Rossetti *ca. 1872*

Music: Gustav Theodore Holst *1906*

1

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

4

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him -- give my heart.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Welcome

Announcements: Please note: Worship services are currently virtual. As offering plates are also now virtual, you are invited to sign up for PAR, or to donate online (details are the website, follow the link).

Acknowledging the Land

We acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe peoples, on whose land and by whose waters we gather. We acknowledge their stewardship as we worship, listen, learn, share, and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

Hymn: VU 82 A Light Is Gleaming

Words: Linnea Good *1992*

Music: Linnea Good *1992*

Refrain

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms throughout the night,
living in the light.
Come share its gladness,
God's radiant love is burning bright,
living in the light.

1

When light comes pouring into the darkest place,

it hurts our eyes to see the glow.
Sometimes a word of hope reminds us of our fears,
to say: our memories and tears.

2
When night is round us and every shadow grows
a star is there to light our way.
It tells a story of Jesus who came near
to say: "God's light will ever stay."

3
And Jesus showed us a brighter path to walk.
He showed us things we hadn't seen.
Now we, like Jesus, can help creation shine,
to say: and this will be a sign:

4
So let us live in the brightness God has given,
And let us rise to see the dawn.
We trust that God is here a sparkle and ablaze,
to say: - warming all our days.

The Call to Worship:

Christ you are Light of the world
may your light shine our way,
guide us as you did with those who went before us:
that we too, may be led into the presence of your light.
Come let us worship!

Hymn: VU 99 Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized

Words: F Bland Tucker *1977 alt.*

Music: melody from Tochter Sion *Colgne 1741*

1
Christ, when for us you were baptized
God's Spirit on you came,
as peaceful as a dove, and yet
as urgent as a flame.

2
God called you "My beloved Son,"
Called you "My Servant true,"
sent you God's kingdom to proclaim,
His holy will to do.

3

Straightway and steadfast until death
you then obeyed his call,
freely as Son of Man to serve,
and give your life for all.

4

Baptize us with your Spirit, now,
your cross on us be signed,
that likewise in God's service we
may perfect freedom find.

Opening Prayer & Prayer of Confession: (unison)

O God, who guided the wise men by a star to the worship of Your Child. Lead us we pray to experience the mystery of Your gift to the world, Your Beloved born in lowly beginnings. Touch our hearts, open our eyes and our minds, and transform us into the people you have created us to be. Out of the waters of baptism you call us, O God, with the same words you spoke to your Son: This is my Beloved. As for us, this call is meant to send us into the world to serve You as well as the least among us. Too often we see this as a private, feel-good experience instead of the call to service. Forgive us, God. Remind us again that we are Your beloved, remind us also of our responsibilities as your present-day disciples. We pray in your name, Amen!

Assurance of Hope:

People of God hear the good news! Through the gift of grace, we remember God's promise, never to abandon us but to journey with us through times of tribulations and times of joy. The story of Jesus baptism reflects some of our struggles, yet moments of hopefulness. God is present with us; God's love never changes. As we relive the season of Epiphany may we do so boldly knowing that the Light of God's Love is present with us in all places and at all times. Amen!

Anthem: Praise Be To the Lord // by A. Dunn

We Listen to God's Word

Scripture: Mark 1 : 4-11 New Revised Standard Version

⁴John the baptizer appeared^[a] in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with^[b] water; but he will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved;^[d] with you I am well pleased.”

One : A Reading from the Gospel of Mark.

Let us together Remember our Baptism:

(Please have a bowl of water ready to be used for the renewal of Baptism)

We believe that God loves us all, just as parents love their children. God loves us from the moment of our birth and never stops loving us. There is that wonderful, mysterious moment we are called to follow you, that moment when we say “yes” to Your love. That moment is enacted and celebrated in baptism and confirmation/reaffirmation of our faith. It is a moment of transformation that moves us from a place of complacency to embrace a new life, a new birth, a new freedom, and a new calling as we become part of a new family, the church family. We are bathed with water in the name of our triune God, and we become part of God’s beloved.

Let us now remember our Baptism.

One: Remember your baptism, be thankful! I ask you now to put your hands in the bowl of water, as you do, reflect, and remember that you are God’s beloved. Enjoy the blessings that comes from the gift of water! May God bless you today and always. Thanks be to God. Amen!

Reflection: Rev. Eleanor Scarlett

The Response

Our Offering & Gifts are received even though we are not together in this space. We acknowledge our gifts through PAR, cheques, cash, online donations, time, talents, and selves.

Offering Prayer: (unison)

Compassionate God, you lavish us with limitless blessings. You offer us peace at a time when our world is in chaos. We praise you that these gifts will be transformed into seeds of caring and outreach. Receive these gifts we offer as a symbol of our faith. We pray, in the name of the giving Christ. Amen.

Pastoral prayer & Prayers of the People.

The Sending Forth

Hymn VU 232 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

Words: Henry van Dyke 1907, *alt.*

Music: Ludwig von Beethoven 1824, *adapt*, Edmund Hodges 1864, *desc* Hal Hopson 1979

1
Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;

hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive our fear and doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

2

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

3

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music lifts us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

Commissioning & Benediction

Go with God.

Go with long memories of the songs and stories of our faith.

Go remembering your baptism, be the hands and feet of Christ.

Go with courage, be safe, stay healthy, love neighbours and friends.

Go with the peace and love of God, know that God goes with you.

Choral Closing: VU 242 Let All Things Now Living v2

Words: Katherine K Davis 1939, *alt.*

Music: Welch folk melody, *dec Katherine K Davis 1938*

2
By law God enforces, the stars in their courses and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise:
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

Postlude

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