



LAKE OF BAYS PASTORAL CHARGE

Joint Service

Stewart Memorial, Dwight – 10:30 a.m.

**Worship, December 11th, 2022
Third Sunday of Advent**

Minister: Rev Meg Jordan (705-789-6600) jordanm@vianet.ca
lakeofbayspastoralcharge196@gmail.com
Bookkeeper/Administrator: Linda Pinkerton
Leadership Chair: Jennifer Parker
Musician, Knox: Cynthia MacLean

Advent 3: Sunday, December 11, 2022

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WE GATHER

Welcome, Life and Work of the Church

Acknowledgement of the Land

Advent Wreath: Lighting of the Candle of Joy

(as the first purple/blue candle is lit strike the singing bowl)

Reader: On the first Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle for Hope.

(as a second purple/blue candle is lit strike the singing bowl)

Reader: On the second Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle for Peace

(as the third candle (pink) is lit strike the singing bowl)

Reader: Today we light a candle for Joy. As the flame begins to burn, let the Joy and the Wonder of the Christ Child fill our hearts.

Advent Hymn: "T'was in the Moon of Wintertime" (SEE INSERT)

Prayer of Approach (unison)

**Holy God, You come as light,
grace-filled yet baby frail.
May our hearts cradle you,
our voices sing to you,
our spirits leap to you,
and our hearts dance with you. Amen**

Opening Hymn: Let Us Build a House MV#1 verses 1&2 (SEE INSERT)

WE LISTEN

Scripture reading: Isaiah 35: 1-10 and Luke 1: 46-55

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church

Response: Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: O Ancient Love VU#17

**O ancient love, processing through the ages;
O hidden love, revealed in human form;
O promised love, the dream of seers and sages:
 O living Love, within our hearts be born,
 O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**

**O homeless love, that dwells among the stranger;
O lowly love, that knows the mighty's scorn;
O hungry love, that lay within a manger: R
O gentle love, caressing those in sorrow;
O tender love, that comforts those forlorn;
O hopeful love, that promises tomorrow: R**

**O suffering love, that bears our human weakness;
O boundless love, that rises with the morn;
O mighty love, concealed in infant meekness: R**

Story: The Rabbi's Gift

The Rabbi's Gift:

There was once a monastery that had fallen on hard times. As the years passed there were fewer and fewer novices and some of the younger monks began leaving in dissatisfaction. Few people from the surrounding villages would even visit any more. Eventually only a handful of elderly monks remained and they argued amongst themselves, each blaming the monastery's decline on the faults and failings of the others. Their leader, the abbot, didn't know what to do.

Now an old friend of the abbot's was a rabbi who had recently retired to live in a small cottage near the monastery. After years of only seeing one another when the abbot had cause to travel into town, they were able to renew their friendship with more regular visits. The rabbi and the abbot would sit together, drinking tea and remembering the good old days back when they were both students.

On one of his visits to see the rabbi, the abbot brought up the problems at the monastery. This was

not the first time the rabbi had heard about the situation that so troubled his friend, but this time the abbot specifically asked for advice, particularly something that he could share with the other monks that might encourage them and perhaps even stop them from fighting with each other.

Hearing the abbot's question, the rabbi was quiet for some time, sipping his tea as he thought. As the silence stretched on, the abbot couldn't contain himself. "Don't you have some advice that might save my monastery?" he begged his friend.

"Your monks will not listen to my advice," the rabbi replied, somewhat sadly, "but perhaps they would benefit from an observation."

"Yes?" said the abbot hopefully. "Have you noticed something about the monastery that we ourselves have not?"

"I think so," answered the rabbi, "and it is this: the Messiah is among you."

That abbot was initially lost for words. It seemed an outrageous claim, but he trusted his friend, so when he regained his composure he asked, as respectfully as he could, "The Messiah is among us? But who is it?"

"As to that," the rabbi replied, "I cannot say. But I know that it is true beyond all doubt. The Messiah is among you. Share this with your monks and in time the truth will be revealed."

Taking one last gulp of tea, the abbot thanked his friend profusely, jumped up out of his chair, grabbed his coat and, without even taking the time to put it on, ran out of the cottage and across the meadow. Arriving breathlessly back at the monastery, he managed to convey to the first monk he saw that he wanted everyone to meet in the chapel. By the time they arrived, he had recovered enough to address them.

"My brothers," the abbot said, "I have incredible news. I have just been told, without any room for doubt or question, the following. The Messiah is among you."

The monks immediately started talking. "One of us? Here? But who? How can that be?" Raising his hands to quiet them, the abbot explained what the rabbi had told him, and then instructed them to be about their work while they reflected on the amazing news. And as the monks did their chores, each wondered to himself.

"It couldn't be Brother Samuel, could it? He always forgets when it's his turn to do the washing up after meals. But then, he brings such lovely flowers to decorate the tables."

"Surely it's not Brother Albert! He's always muttering to himself, and when he's not muttering it's because he's being rude. But then, he's always the first there to look after us if we get sick."

"What about Brother Leo? He's always dirty, and he smells bad, too. But then, that's because he works so hard in the field, growing the most delicious vegetables."

"And I can't believe it's Brother Thomas! He always spills ink all over the desk where we write out the scriptures. But then, his drawings and decorations of the scripts are so vivid and beautiful."

The monks continued to try to figure out who amongst them might be the Messiah, but none of them came to any conclusions. Still, they realized that they could sometimes see the Messiah in one an-

other's faces; they could sometimes hear the Messiah in one another's voices. And they began to treat one another more kindly and more fairly, just in case.

And as time passed, the villagers noticed that something was different about the monastery, and they began visiting more often. And more of the young men who came to inquire about training as novices decided to stay. And the elderly monks and their abbot found themselves at peace, content to enjoy their golden years doing what they loved while all about them the monastery thrived.

WE RESPOND

OFFERING INVITATION and DEDICATION :VU#541

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Give thanks to God in love made known;
Creator, Word and Spirit One.**

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

The brokenness of our world is lifted up in the bread broken. The bloodshed of our world is remembered in the cup shared. In the gathered grain we are brought together and grounded in God's good earth. In the fruit of the vine we are united with the groaning of all creation. (From Celebrate God's Presence, United Church of Canada)

Hymn: Let Us Build a House MV#1 verse 3 (SEE INSERT)

The Great Thanksgiving and Prayer for Transformation

Sharing of the Bread and Wine

Closing Hymn: Let Us Build a House MV#1 verses 4&5 (SEE INSERT)

COMMISSIONING and BLESSING

As we end our worship service
may the Spirit of Christ
and the love of God be with you;
Behind you, to encourage you,
Beside you, to befriend you,
above you, to watch over you,
before you, to lead you
and within you, to give you peace,
now and always. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS For your calendars:

- TODAY** 3rd Sunday of Advent. Candle of JOY
10:30 a.m. at **Stewart Communion** followed by budget meeting & finger food potluck.
- Dec 18** 4th Sunday of Advent Candle of LOVE Services as usual in the morning. **White Gift Sunday at Knox.**
- Dec 18** **Community Carol Singing 2 p.m. at Pioneer Hall** led by Noah's Larks
- Dec 21** **Winter Solstice**
Dec 24: **Christmas Eve services**
5 p.m in Dorset, Knox United Church

7 p.m in Dwight Stewart Memorial Church

Dec 25 **Merry Christmas!** No worship services

Jan 1 **Happy New Year!** No worship services.

Jan 8 Winter church schedule begins with joint services to be held at **10:30 a.m. at Pioneer.**

Ongoing Stewardship:

There are several different options for you to gift your offering to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge.

1. In person and on the plate. (Each congregation has a different practice around this but you can't miss it!)
2. Via PAR (preauthorized remittance). Then you don't have to think about it again. Money is withdrawn monthly
3. By e-transfer. The email address for donations via e-transfer is lobunitedchurches@gmail.com In the subject line/comment please identify to which of the Churches you wish to donate, Pioneer in Hillside, Stewart in Dwight or Knox in Dorset.
4. By cheque: If you send a cheque, please make it out to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge and mail it to: LOB United Churches, P.O. Box 196, Dwight, ON P0A 1H0