

Centennial United Church - Stayner

December 25, 2011 – Christmas Day

Minister: All who see and are amazed that the Holy is found within the everyday!

Thought for the Week:

Tell a devout Christian that his wife is cheating on him, or that frozen yogurt can make a man invisible, and he is likely to require as much evidence as anyone else, and to be persuaded only to the extent that you give it. Tell him that the book he keeps by his bed was written by an invisible deity who will punish him with fire for eternity if he fails to accept its every incredible claim about the universe, and he seems to require no evidence whatsoever.

Sam Harris, from [Thank God for Evolution](#), p. 349

Path of Celebration

Welcome and Announcements

“For a child is born to us, upon whose shoulders dominion will rest. This One shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Strength of God, Eternal Protector, Champion of Peace. This dominion, and this peace, will grow without end, with David’s throne and realm sustained with justice and fairness, now and forever.”

Isaiah 9:6-7

Hymn: 48 "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" vs. 1

Lighting Christ Candle

This morning we light the Christ candle. We celebrate Jesus, who risked living fully to show God’s abundant life for all. For Jesus and for all he inspires in us, we light this candle.

Call to Worship

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come in the music to stir our thoughts. Come in the words to broaden our minds. Come in action to challenge our living. Come in our prayers to meet our longing. Come in our bread and juice to satisfy our deepest hunger. Come, Lord Jesus, come this holy day.

Written by Douglas Flint.

Worship for All Seasons II, Year B, p. 61. Used with permission.

Hymn: 79 “Arise, Your Light is Come”

Path of Letting Go

Prayer of Confession: VU 63

God of stable, stars and surprises, of light and hope and new life: open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world, forgive our obsession with property and possessions; forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision. Open us to your grace, that we might hear again the song of the angels, and respond with a song in our hearts, and in our lives. Amen.

Affirmation of God’s Love: The promise of Christmas is that the Holy One is ever-present in our world. The promise to us is that we are surrounded by the Holy, whether we like it or not, God is with us. Thanks be to God!

Path of Centering

Story Time

Hymn: 74 “What Child is This”

Scriptures: Matthew 2:1-12
Luke 2:1-7, 15-18

Reflection/Sermon: “Truth in Divergent Gospels”

Path of Transformation

Presentation of our Gifts and Offerings

Doxology: 544

*In gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best today
to serve your cause and share your love
with all along life’s way
O God, who gave yourself to us,
in Jesus Christ, your Son,
teach us to give ourselves each day
until life’s work is done..*

Dedication: **Radiant God, we present these gifts of light. May they pierce the world’s shadows and increase joy. May they break oppression and bring release to those in**

captivity. Through them may your light shine into the deep recesses of our lives and of your world. Amen.

Written by David Lander.
Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2011-2012, p. 38. Used with permission

Hymn: 467 "One Bread, One Body"

Communion Celebration:

Glory to God in the highest! **And on earth, peace to all!**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
Let us give thanks to God. **It is good to give thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, gracious God, Creator of light, Giver of all life, Source of love. We bless you for all your gifts. You bring creation to birth and send prophets to awaken us to your Advent among us. We praise you for that holy night of hope and the wonder of this time of joy. We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem. We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross, in tenderness and compassion. For Jesus Christ, in whom you gather the hopes and fears of all the years, we bless your Holy Name, joining with all your people of every time and place, and with angels and archangels who proclaim the holy birth:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of your glory!
Heaven and earth praise you, O God most high!

On the eve of his betrayal, Jesus renewed God's covenant promise. He took bread, offered the blessing, broke it, and gave it to those who sat at table with him. Then, at the close of the meal, he poured the cup of blessing, raised it in thanks to God, and passed it among them.

Sharing the gifts of grace:

Post-communion Prayer:

Life-giving God, may we, who share Christ's body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep

us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation will live to praise your name. Amen.

Hymn: 468 "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

Commissioning: **As we go from our worship this day: may the joy of the angels sing in our voices; may the hope of the shepherds enliven our minds; may the strong faith of Mary strengthen our spirits; and may the love of the Baby shine in our hearts. God's blessing be upon us all, this holy night and forever. Amen.**

Celebrate God's Presence, p. 119

Benediction:

Hymn: 425 "God, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing"