

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week Dec. 11, 2022

WELCOME & Prayer –

PRAISE SONGS –

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART -- Rita

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Joy, led by Rita

SONG – Down in my heart

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

GOD IS MY WITNESS –

PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Luke 1:46b-55

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. 47 How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
48 For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations
will call me blessed. 49 For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things
for me. 50 He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.
51 His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and
haughty ones. 52 He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the
humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with
empty hands. 54 He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful.
55 For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children
forever.”

MESSAGE –

These are the joyful words from a woman who in normal circumstances should not be feeling joy. Mary had many reasons. As far the world was concerned, this was an illegitimate pregnancy. No one was going to believe that God was behind it. No one was going to believe her story about the angel Gabriel and his amazing news. “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

As to how this would happen, the angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.”

It's a pretty wild story. No one would believe it. There’s no evidence that she shared this with anyone, except maybe Elizabeth. So she probably kept it to herself. If word got out, she’d be cast out of the church and maybe her family. For a good Jewish girl, that would have been the end. But she was filled with joy.

Elizabeth was also pretty happy. Most women her age would have been stressing out over being pregnant when others their age were becoming grandmothers. Life expectancy wasn’t what it is today.

Elizabeth was pregnant with John. He’d grow to become The Baptizer, the prophet who prepared the way for the Messiah. She was six months into her pregnancy when her young relative Mary appeared on her doorstep. Mary was pregnant with no less than the Son of God.

This brings us to Mary’s hurried visit to Elizabeth, who greets Mary: “God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.” Elizabeth’s baby, entering the third trimester, was alive and kicking. The baby was filled with joy. Elizabeth was filled with joy. The entire room would have been filled with joy.

Mary responded with her song of praise.

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. 47 How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! 48 For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. 49 For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.

She will be called blessed throughout history. Not because of anything SHE HAS DONE, but because of what GOD HAS DONE. She continues and turns her attention away from her to all who live with faith.

50 He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. 51 His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. 52 He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.

Mary testifies to a God who works through the least of these, the humble, those who do not call attention to themselves, those who know that our bodies are just on loan to us, that everything we have is a gift from God. The high and mighty on this planet may enjoy fame and fortune, but they can't take it with them. Those who sincerely seek God will find Him. They will be filled.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. 54 He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. 55 For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.”

Hungry might mean physically, but more likely it was a spiritual hunger. Those who think they know how to attain spiritual rest without Christ might feel a short-term peace. But they can't take that with them.

Let's be clear about joy. It's not about happiness or good times or fun – all of which can be here today and gone in an instant. Joy is about hope, peace and strength. But not our strength. It's about allowing God's spirit to enter into us. The Bible tells us that joy comes when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a huge lack of joy in today's world. There's a growing movement of people who feel powerless against the system. All they see is a system – and a

very expensive one. The price of gas and the insane rise in the cost of real estate is driving many to despair. Not everyone has a community around them.

That's where the church can step in. Can we show them what true joy is? We can start by providing community. True believers – who accept God as their Father, the Holy Spirit as their powerful guide and the son of God as their Saviour from this world – can call ourselves sisters and brothers. The church, in its purest and most powerful form, is family. It's where the love of Christ lives. It's where we open the Word of God together and are amazed by what it says. It's where we pray in the Spirit together and see God's healing at work. It's where we experience hope, peace, joy and love – things that this world tries to promise but cannot deliver.

There are a thousand different things that can happen that we don't want or expect. Fear not. When something happens that wasn't part of the plan, it's happening for a reason. God will get you through it.

We are invited to experience the joy of the Lord. It's not about happiness. It's about finding peace and hope even in the most difficult circumstances. It's about strength when we should be weak. It's about resting our hope on the One who gives life, who sustains life and is preparing a place for us in the Kingdom, where joy is the word.

HYMN --

ORDINATION of new ruling elder Andrew Neely

HYMN –

BENEDICTION –

NEW PRAYER

Shut ins – Aubrey Butler and his dog Ronnie.

Thanks – to all the folks who dutifully set up the Christmas tree and seasonal decorations, assemble the outdoor nativity scene (and put it back together after the windstorm) and water the poinsettias on a daily basis. Are we missing anything? Huge appreciation for your leadership and work ethic. This is an example of a community at its best.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Dianne Richards – MRI in January
2. Jeff Strain – healing from knee surgery
3. Bill & Bonnie Lozon – for a bed to open for Bill in a nursing home in Wallaceburg or Chatham
4. Barnes-Vantomme family – house fire on Croton Line.
5. Jennie Atherton, Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Mark Labadie, Bette Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Whitson
6. Awaiting surgery: Dan Shaw
7. Waiting test results: Caleb
8. Mary Templer – relief from dizziness, more able to walk normally, and for my vision to continue to improve.
9. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
10. Those who are addicted but not seeking treatment
11. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression
12. Karen Northcott – thanks for good biopsy results but continue to pray.
13. Phil Williams – transferred to hospital in Chatham, slowly improving

There are many whose names are not listed here – God know who they are and what they need.

Seniors – Norma Latimer at Riverview Gardens and Jim Lusk and Ross Fuchs at Oaks Wallaceburg, Joyce MacTavish at Barrie Manor.

Session – Next meeting Dec. 6. Mark Labadie (clerk and representative elder), Cindy Brewer, Sheila Eves, Mark Richards and Julie Shaw.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Paul Vandenberg (treasurer), Will Brewer, Ross Fuchs, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw and Mike Wicks.

WHAT'S UP:

Right to Life Kent -- Advent is the perfect season to give a gift to this timely cause. Help support those who are committed to the sanctity of life – from **conception** to a **natural death**.

<https://lifeinmotionchatham.ca/>

Re:Find Charity Thrift store – All profits from the Wallaceburg thrift store go to Wallaceburg Christian School.

Pop can fundraiser – Bring your pop cans to church! Leave them in the bin behind Rutherford Hall. They're worth money!

DATES

Dec. 10 – Church doors open for Santa Claus Parade

Dec. 11 – 3rd Sunday of Advent. Ordination of Andrew Neely.

Dec. 13 -- Heather Club will meet at the church at 2 p.m. All ladies of St. Andrew's are welcome to attend.

Dec. 18 – 4th Sunday of Advent.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve carols 7 p.m.

Dec. 25 – Sunday worship as usual

GIVING:

E-transfer to pcvan1313@gmail.com. Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer's mailbox. Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0. Put it in the mailbox at the home of treasurer Paul Vandenbogaerde. 1313 North Street, Dresden.

Telephone number 519-683-6194

GIFT CARDS – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. **Next deadline January 29.**