

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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

Box 93, Dresden, Ontario NOP 1M0

519-683-2442 standrewspcdresden@gmail.com Rev. Andy Cornell

Worship This Week Dec. 17, 2023

Advent 3 – Joy

Piano – Dorothy O'Neill.

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME –

PRAYER

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Psalm 100 (NLT) –

Minister – Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

All – The LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Minister – Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

All – For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

SONGS –

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Rita

Kid's PRAYER –

SONG –

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Read edict of ordination.

Bob Vriesema, a member of this congregation, has been nominated and duly elected to the eldership by this congregation, and has been approved by the session. Unless some valid objection has been given to the moderator, we will be ordaining him as ruling elder during our regular time of worship on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS –

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Luke 1:39-56

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. 41 At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. 43 Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? 44 When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. 45 You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said." 46 Mary responded, "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." 56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

MESSAGE – Joy

I love Advent for many reasons. God chose to live among us. Not as a powerful earthly king but as a helpless infant. It's the Greatest Story ever told and it never wears out. We can tell it over and over. The amazing part is that there are seemingly endless ways of telling it. The reason is because we're talking about Christ, the Son of God, who is God. As such, it's a story that's deeper, higher, wider and longer than our human brains can imagine. That's why it never runs out.

The four themes of Advent – hope, peace, joy and love – are hardly adequate and don't even come close to summing up the person of Christ. But we only have four weeks and we do the best we can. The good news is that we have an opportunity to go deeper into the story every year. We could live 1,000 years and still not hear it told the same way twice.

Let's recap what we heard so far in this year's version.

On the first Sunday of Advent, we talked about hope which Christ brought into the world. If we have Christ we have hope and if we have hope, we can dream. **Hope gives** us a reason to dream. We can look to God with great expectations. We can boldly ask that His hands provide the wisdom and the way to do something new and exciting, bold and life changing – not from our power but from the Almighty hands of God, who can work through us.

On the second Sunday of Advent, we talked about peace. Peace gives us the power to dream. Power comes from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit touches us with gifts. This is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's an ongoing empowerment as God works within us as we go deeper in our faith and upon us as we use our faith to do the work of the church. This is the Peace of Christ at work.

Now on this third Sunday of Advent, it's about joy. When we know Christ – truly know Him and invite Him into every part of our lives and submit to His Spirit – we have the opportunity to be filled with joy. What does joy provide? Let's take a look at what joy is all about.

Many people believe joy and happiness are the same thing. We use the words interchangeably. But in fact, they mean different things. Happiness comes and goes. You can be happy one moment then five minutes later, you can be sad. Happiness is superficial and is prompted by things we experience in the moment. Happiness is physical or emotional. Happiness is puppy dogs and kittens, a new car, an amazing doughnut, a new tablet or computer. Happiness is centred on yourself.

Joy is constant – it does not come and go like the weather. It is deeper. Joy is spiritual. Joy: friendship, fulfillment, wonder, peace, hope. Joy may not always be about oneself but be about others' contentment also.

While happiness comes from outside things, joy is about inner self. Here's a good example. If you win \$100,000 in a lottery, you'd be happy. But if that \$100,000 came as a result of annual profit from the hard work you put into a business you established, you would feel joy. The benefit is the same – \$100,000 is \$100,000 no matter what the source. But the knowledge of where it came from makes the feeling much different. The odds of winning the lottery every year are slim to none. But chances are, that business you established may provide years of income.

Joy is lasting. Happiness requires another fix. Joy is steady. Happiness is volatile. Both are good. We need both. They're just different. You can be joyful without being happy, because joy is about being at peace, knowing that things are going to be fine even in difficult situations.

This is what the Apostle James talked about when he wrote: "when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your

faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. **4** So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. – James 1:2-4

People who have Christ in their hearts can be joyful without being particularly happy. It's the joy of the Lord which is our strength. It's the joy of the Lord which provides the strength to endure unimaginable situations.

Scripture is filled with references to joy amidst hardship. Odds are, when you run across the word joy – whether it's in the old or new testaments – trouble is not far away.

Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. **2** They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. – 2 Cor 8:1-2

Joy is among the fruits of the Spirit. Joy often results only after we endure pain. Joy of the Lord then gets us through future challenges.

Joy points to the Kingdom. Joy is the **destination**. There we have it. Hope gives us a reason to dream, peace gives us the power to dream and joy provides the destination. When we have the joy of Christ, we know which direction we are headed, we know our destination, we know our destiny. Joy is the feeling we get when we are in the presence of The Holy Spirit of Christ. Joy is what Elizabeth's baby experienced in her womb when they were in the presence of the unborn Christ. Elizabeth was filled with The Holy Spirit. She would also have experienced the hope and peace of Christ in that moment.

HYMN – 153 Joy to the world

BENEDICTION – May the joy of the Lord be your strength.

NEW PRAYER

1. Prayers have been answered – plans for surgery are proceeding for Bruce Stephens after five weeks of radiation early in the new year. Pray for the surgical team and for his new pain med.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Ellen Robinson
2. For this year's flu, cold and COVID season to be mild.
3. Park Street Place: residents, staff and owner
4. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.
5. Pat McKinnon's friend Linda, Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
6. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
7. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression

Seniors and shut ins – Betty Bradley at Albany Retirement Home Petrolia, Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas and Ross Fuchs at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Aubrey Butler at home.

Elders on session – Mark Labadie 519-359-4842, Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113, Sheila Eves 519-683-4148, Andrew Neely 519-359-8903, Mark Richards 519-809-9175 and Julie Shaw 226-627-1953.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Will Brewer, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WE'RE HIRING:

[A new administrative assistant](#). To start anytime.

WHAT'S UP:

Edict of Ordination – Bob Vriesema, a member of this congregation, has been nominated and duly elected to the eldership by this congregation, and has been approved by the session. Unless some valid objection has been given to the moderator, we will be ordaining him as ruling elder during our regular time of worship on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

Chair Funding – Have you ever considered giving a Christmas gift to the church? This is the year. Session and the Board of Managers have purchased 40 chairs for Rutherford Hall. You are invited to contribute any amount of money towards the Chair Fund.

Weekly email – Send announcements and new info to standrewspcdresden@gmail.com

Presbytery consultant– Grant Fairley met with session and the board on Nov. 25 and will prepare a report prior to a followup meeting early in the new year.

Alzheimer's Info – The Dresden and District Christian Ministerial Association invites you to hear Tara Seney, Public Education Manager for the Alzheimer's Society in C-K. Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at 9 a.m. at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Tara's informative presentation about Alzheimer's and related Dementias will be 1/2 hour in length. She has brochures of the many services offered in Chatham-Kent for families who need it. The Alzheimer's Society is a

non-profit charitable organization dedicated to helping people with dementia and their families and caregivers.

DATES

Dec. 24 – Advent 4

Dec. 24 – 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Carols & Message

Jan. 3 – St. Andrew's hosts the Dresden Ministerial at 9 a.m. in Rutherford Hall. Help preparing coffee/snacks is invited. See Pastor Andy

Jan. 7 – Ordination of new ruling elder Bob Vriesema during regular worship

Jan. 9 – Session

Feb. 11 – Congregation annual meeting

MINISTRY LINKS

[Renewal Fellowship](#) – Pastor Andy is employed at 40% time as RF's Executive Director. St. Andrew's is the other 60%.

[Dunamis Fellowship Canada](#) – Pastor Andy serves on the Board of Directors.

[Community Counselling Centre](#) of London – Pastor Andy is a Therapist Intern as he works towards a degree in Psycho-Spiritual Counselling and registration as a psychotherapist.

WAYS OF GIVING:

E-transfer st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. If required by your bank, our treasurer's name is Linda Moore. Her number is 226-627-2727. If you are asked for a security question, please contact your local bank branch.

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. N0P 1M0.

Gift Cards – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Next deadline Jan. 29. Cards will be available for pickup at the church on Feb. 2nd or will be distributed in church on Feb. 4th. Gift card orders are on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the "giving" tab

Send e-transfer AND order forms to st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. Normal deadline (the last Monday of the month) returns in January.