

Greetings members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Shelburne,

This Sunday is the Second Sunday in Advent. The attached worship resource follows the Advent Service video. The link to this YouTube video is pasted below and can also be found on the church web page, shelburnechurch.org. This Sunday we light the candle of Hope.

Annual Meeting! The Annual Meeting of the church is this Sunday, December 6 at 1: PM through Zoom. Fellowship Zoom also happens at 10:30 AM. Look for the link to these gatherings on Saturday.

Mission Project 2020. Your Mission Committee is supporting Sophia Goodnow with her Project 351 community service, a food drive to benefit the Hilltown Food Pantry. To support this vital project and to help our neighbors in need, please send checks this week to Lewis Goodnow, with a note that the donation is for the Hilltown Food Pantry. Donations made by December 8th will be included in Sophia's project. Donations after that date will still be sent to the Hilltown Food Pantry from our Church.

May this Advent bring us a new hope as we wait and prepare for Christmas Day.

Pastor Rob

Welcome to the Second Sunday of Advent
Communion
December 6, 2020

Good Morning to our members and friends at home,

This Sunday is our Second Sunday of Advent. This season of Advent will include YouTube videos recorded in our sanctuary, the lighting of the Advent Wreath every Sunday and a preaching series titled, "*The Questions of Advent.*" We hope that you utilize the Sunday videos recorded in our sanctuary and the Worship Resource and light an Advent candle every Sunday. The links to all our videos may be found on the church web page, shelburnechurch.org.

This Sunday is a communion Sunday. If you wish to participate in communion please have two elements ready. First, a drink in a cup or glass. This could be juice of any kind or water. Second, a piece of bread of any kind.

If you are unable to access the Sunday video, you are welcome and encouraged to follow this resource on your own and celebrate Communion by reading the Communion prayers and serving yourself keeping in mind that even when alone, we are all a part of the body of Christ.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath: The Candle of Hope

Call to Worship (Responsive, L=Leader, P=People) Psalm 71

L For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.

P From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.

L I will ever praise you. As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.

Hymn: *Watchman Tell Us of the Night*

Unison Morning Prayer and Lord's Prayer

In you, O God, do I place my hope. In my hope, O God, do I place my trust. In my trust, O God, do I place my love. In you, O God, I place all that I am; my hope, my trust, my love. For the sake of Christ, who taught us to pray saying...*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Prayers of the People

Gracious and infinite God, we, your children, come before you. From all the places that we wander, often far from home and far from you, we have returned. From the superficiality of life where so much that we see is cheap and so much that we touch is tinsel, we return once again in the hope of discovering your healing touch for our brokenness, in the hope of experiencing your peace for our conflicted souls, in the hope of feeling your love for our lonely hearts, and in the hope of exploring the gifts of your Holy Spirit that we may be a blessing to those around us. We hear the words of your prophets; they are both comforting and afflicting. We hear about your peaceable Kingdom that we yearn for. Grant that we may be wise enough to hear these words and apply them to our own lives that we may catch a glimpse of your design when it appears before us. It is tempting, O God of eternity, to draw conclusions based only on our piece of time, to look around and take note of all that we don't agree with or understand. To look around and see the carnage of our age, and dwell upon the disappointments of our generation. It is tempting, O God, to look around and conclude that your grand design may be somewhere, but it is not here. It is tempting to conclude that peace is as far away today as it was when your prophets spoke of its coming and it is tempting to conclude that all is hopeless. It is tempting, O God, but we, your people, the disciples of your Christ, know better than this. Each year we watch and wait. Each year we celebrate the light that has come into the world. Each year we light our candles, sing the carols, pray the prayers, in the hope of our faith, that your peace, your joy and your love will once again be born in us. And that what we do in the name of Jesus and what say in the name of Christ, will make a difference in our world, in our brief span of time, in our age and in our generation. And so, God of all hopefulness, be with us now, as we come to you in prayers both spoken and unspoken...

Gracious God of all time and all place, and all of creation, may these prayers bring us hope for our journey. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38
The Questions of Advent: How Can This Be?

Of the four Gospels in the New Testament, only Matthew and Luke record the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Matthew's story includes the three Kings, while Luke's account includes the shepherds. Further, Luke is the only Gospel that tells the story of the angel Gabriel and Mary that we have come to know as the Annunciation.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,

“Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you.”

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

“I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Here ends the reading from the Gospel of Luke

After the reading, you may reflect on this passage.
The Communion Meditation is included on our video.

Communion Meditation: *The Questions of Advent: How Can This Be?*

Communion Hymn: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

The Sacrament of Communion

The Invitation

Just as a seed must be planted in order to bring forth the stalks of wheat and the vines for grapes, so was Christ born in Bethlehem to bring light into our world.

Just as a grain of wheat must die in the earth and the grapes of the vine plucked in order to bring forth a rich harvest, so has Christ died on the cross to bring a rich harvest of love.

Just as the harvest of wheat must be ground into flour to make bread, and the grapes pressed to make wine, so the suffering of Christ brings us the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

Just as bread and drink gives our bodies strength for our daily work, so the risen body of Christ gives us strength to follow the way of our faith. Let us come to the table.

The Prayer of Consecration

Show us, O God, the brightness of your spirit as we gather about the table of Christ. Show us, O God, the radiance of your grace in the breaking of this bread. Show us, O God, the brilliance of your presence in the pouring of this cup. Reveal to us the depth of your love, reveal to us the ever-flowing streams of your forgiveness, reveal to us the wideness of your mercy. As we come to this table of grace, may we catch a glimpse of your glory, your mystery and your peace. Amen.

Blessing of the Bread

On the night that Jesus was to be betrayed, he sat at table with all of his disciples. During the course of the meal, he took bread off the table. When he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
(You break your bread and eat)

Blessing of the Cup

Again, on that same night, Jesus took a cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. (You may drink from your cup)

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, tear open the heavens and come down to fill us with your peace, your hope, your joy, and your love. In the bleak mid- winters of our lives may this bread and this cup bring refreshment for the soul and glad tidings for our weary hearts. May our communion here bring us closer to you, to your Christ, your Holy Spirit, and to each other. In gratitude and in the name of Jesus, this we pray. Amen.

Hymn: *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Benediction: Handley C.G. Moule, 1841-1920

The blessing of the Lord rest and remain upon all his people,
in every land and of every tongue.
The Lord meet in mercy all who seek him;
The Lord comfort all who suffer and mourn;
The Lord hasten his coming, and give us,
His people, Hope, by all means. Amen.