



Richmond Hill United Church
An Affirming Ministry



November 15, 2020: First Sunday of Advent

The following resource is offered to help you worship at home, either on your own or online. Worship is livestreamed on Zoom. Log-in details are sent weekly by email to those on RHUC's contact list. For a recording of the service, click the following link: www.facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/. This will take you to our Facebook page. We may be apart physically but we are still a community of faith spiritually, and digitally.

Centred in Christ

Welcome and Acknowledgement of the Land: *We give thanks for the land and the Indigenous peoples who steward it. We affirm our call to inclusion and extend greetings in Cree, Portuguese and Korean.*

Opening Hymn: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (*Voices United* #1)

- 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 2. O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 3. O come, O come, great God of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 4. O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem, from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save, and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 5. O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 6. O come, O Dayspring, from on high and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 7. O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
O Bid our sad divisions cease and be for us the Prince of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Lighting the Advent Candle

One: Hear this word from the Bible: "Wisdom calls out! She stands at the crossroads, cries aloud by the city gates: 'Happy are they who seek me; blessed are they who keep my ways. They will find me on the path of righteousness, who follow me on the way of justice.'" (*adapted from Proverbs 8*)

(Light first candle)

Two: Let us pray: O Wisdom, O holy Word, you who govern creation with compassion:
Be with us in this Advent time. Come and show us the way to salvation and peace. **Amen.**

Centring Refrain: “Come Now, O God of Peace” (*Voices United* #34)

**Come now, O God of peace, we are your people; pour out your spirit, that we be one body.
O-so-so o-so-so, pyong-hwa-ui-im-gum, u-ri-ga han-mom i-ru-ge ha-so-so.**

Centring Words: “O Sapientia” by Malcolm Guite in *Sounding the Seasons*

I cannot think unless I have been thought,
Nor can I speak unless I have been spoken.
I cannot teach except as I am taught,
Or break the bread except as I am broken.
O Mind behind the mind through which I seek,
O Light within the light by which I see,
O Word beneath the words with which I speak,
O founding, unfound Wisdom, finding me,
O sounding Song whose depth is sounding me,
O Memory of time, reminding me,
My Ground of Being, always grounding me,
My Maker’s Bounding Line, defining me,
Come, hidden Wisdom, come with all you bring,
Come to me now, disguised as everything.

Hymn: “O Ancient Love”

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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:
O living Love, within our hearts be born, O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**
- 3. O gentle love, caressing those in sorrow; O tender love, that comforts those forlorn;
O hopeful love, that promises tomorrow:
O living Love, within our hearts be born, O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**
- 4. O suffering love, that bears our human weakness; O boundless love, that rises with the
morn; O mighty love, concealed in infant meekness:
O living Love, within our hearts be born, O living Love, within our hearts be borne.**

Reflecting Together as a Community

Reading: Ruth 14:13-17 (*read by Adam DeVita*)

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. He was intimate with her, and she became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi, “May the Lord be blessed, who today hasn’t left you without a redeemer. May his name be proclaimed in Israel. He will restore your life and sustain you in your old age. Your daughter-in-law who loves you has given birth to him. She’s better for you than seven sons.” Naomi took the child, held him to her breast, and she became his guardian. The neighborhood women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They called him Obed. He became Jesse’s father and David’s grandfather.

Anthem: "Rorate Caeli" (sung by the Chancel Choir)

Pour out dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One.

Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation. Come, Lord, and do not delay, Alleluia.

Reading: Mark 12:38-44 (*read by Adam DeVita*)

As Jesus was teaching, he said, "Watch out for the legal experts. They like to walk around in long robes. They want to be greeted with honour in the markets. They long for places of honour in the synagogues and at banquets. They are the ones who cheat widows out of their homes, and to show off they say long prayers. They will be judged most harshly."

Jesus sat across from the collection box for the temple treasury and observed how the crowd gave their money. Many rich people were throwing in lots of money. One poor widow came forward and put in two small copper coins worth a penny. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than everyone who's been putting money in the treasury. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on."

Message: "Generosity or Foolishness?" (Rev. James Ravenscroft)

Minute for Meditation: "Meditation on 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel'" (Charles Callahan)

Sharing in a Spirit of Gratitude

Invitation to the Table

One: Welcome to this table from tables spread across our community. Wherever you are, you are at Christ's table, a table where everyone belongs, where everyone is part of one family in God's love.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: God is here.

All: God is within and around us.

One: Open your hearts.

All: We gladly open them to God.

One: Let us give thanks.

All: It is good to give thanks and praise.

One: It is good to be here, Creating God. In the beginning you spoke light and life into being and continue to enliven the universe in love. This word echoes through the ages, bringing hope and joy. And even when we closed our ears, you never stopped speaking, but sent prophets and messengers to remind us of your coming time of peace, and finally through Mary, sent the One named Jesus, your word in human form. As we celebrate the many ways you speak to us, we lift our voices in song,

All sing: Sing holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise! And blessed is the One who comes and bears your name always! (*More Voices #203*)

One: Redeeming God, in Jesus you powerfully spoke a word of saving grace. Heralded by John the Baptist, he announced your reign as much by what he did as said. Breaking the bonds of tradition, he welcomed the lost and least to the table, revealing to everyone the fullness of your love. In honour of the way he made known your mercy, we recall one special meal, a foretaste of your banquet to come.

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered with his closest friends to share a final meal. He took bread, blessed and broke it, saying: Take and eat. This bread is the body of life, broken by the world. At the end of the meal, he took the cup, blessed and passed it to them saying: This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you eat and drink, do so in memory of me.

Remembering Jesus' birth and life, his death and resurrection, we echo in song the mystery of faith:

All sing: Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen. Christ will come again! (*More Voices #204*)

One: Enlivening God, as you spoke to the prophets, invited Mary to bear Jesus to the world, made him known through John the Baptist, speak once again to us. Open our hearts to the gifting of your Spirit, that as we eat and drink bread and wine, may we know your presence, and so be strengthened in hope, trusting in the ongoing companionship of Christ, even as we await his future coming.

Revealing God, we praise you, through your Redeeming Word, in the life-giving power of your Spirit, now and forever. **All sing: Amen, Amen, O Holy One, Hosanna and Amen.**

Amen, Amen, O Holy One, Hosanna and Amen. (*More Voices #205*)

The Prayer of Jesus:

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Sharing in Communion:

I invite you to pick up the bread before you. We share the bread of life, a gift of hope for all.

(Everyone eats their piece of bread.)

I invite you to pick up your cup. We share the fruit of the vine, a promise of love for all.

(Everyone drinks their wine or juice.)

Prayer after Communion (*in unison*):

God of pregnant hope, may the gifts we have shared fill us with love. May this taste of your banquet bring hunger to our hearts for the peace you have promised for our world. Amen.

Called beyond Ourselves to Minister to the World

Hymn: "Hail to God's Own Anointed" (*Voices United #30*)

- 1. Hail to God's own anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed, God's reign on earth begun!
Christ comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.**
- 2. Christ comes with justice surely to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong,
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.**
- 3. Christ shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald, go,
and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.**
- 4. To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.
the tide of time shall never his covenant remove.
His name shall stand for ever: that name to us is Love.**

Blessing and Sending Forth

Go! Go and prepare the way for the coming of Wisdom!

Go forth blessed by Christ, ready to bring to the world the good news of God's grace.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Postlude: "Fugue in D Minor" (Felix Mendelssohn)