

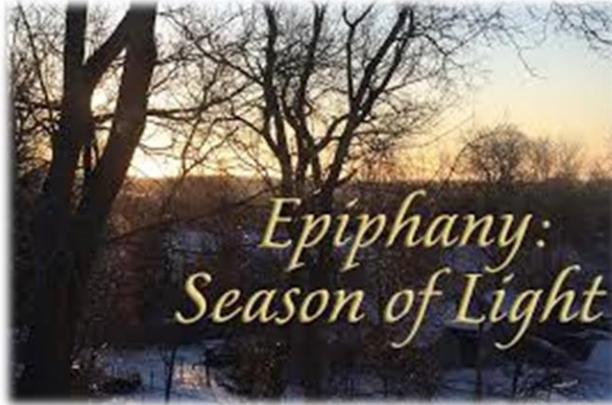
Home Worship, January 10, 2021 Baptism of Jesus [Epiphany- Season of Light]

Gathering Music

“Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light “

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51jBz8wlgYY>

[Rist, Schop/Bach] sung by Sound Choir of Sound, Washington



Opening Words

We are born of Infinite Love

Light guides our path.

Living water nourishes our thirsty souls.

We are beloved ones, a joy to the Holy One.

As we gather may we share the Light and Love and Joy of beloved community.

Opening Prayer

God, your love shaped us and gave birth to us. Your light guides our path. Your waters of baptism nourish our dry and thirsty souls. This living water washes us clean of the dust and dirt that cling to us. This water brings us comfort and courage. We are your beloved, in whom you are well pleased. Help us love each other and take delight in all your beloved children. In the name of Jesus who shows us the way of love. Amen.

We Sing

I Am the Light of the World

<https://vimeo.com/463702098>

[Jim Strathdee] sung by Jim and Jean Strathdee

Readings

read by Judy Nelson

Mark 1:2-11

Jesus is baptized

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased'

Matthew 21:12-15

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; but you are making it a den of robbers.' The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David', they became angry

Lines from the Poem

“Let America be America Again”

by Langston Hughes, American poet, 1902-1967- you can read the whole poem at

https://poets.org/poem/let-america-be-america-again?fbclid=IwAR1UJgwSQJcvRBT3lrFAoC3NdR2jko64PL5_8CViWRAcSWOci5mMclui45

Let America be America again.
The land that never has been yet.
And yet must be -the land where everyone is free.
The land that's mine- the poor, First Nation's, Black Man's, ME

Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plough is the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.

The mountains and the endless plain-
All, all the stretches of these great, green states-
And make America again!

Special Music based on Micah 6:8 What Does the Lord Require of You?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLZKitdgpq0>

[Jim Strathdee] pianist Evan Mounce and singer Laura Brandt [aka McLean]

Laura was in St Andrews twice with the Opera Workshop This goes by very fast- you may want to play it twice. It has 3 parts, starting with the first one, then underlaying the second one, then overlaying the 3rd one:

Part 1: What does the Lord require of me? What does the Lord require of me?

Part 2: Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.

Part 3: To seek justice and love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

Reflection

In Search Of Wisdom For The Living Of These Days

Where do I begin? I begin with a story

told in a play by Swiss author Max Frisch 'Biedermann und die Brandstifter', (The_Fireraisers)

A well-meaning man takes vagrants into his house, to lodge with him for free.
They make it clear that they are arsonists and intend to burn down his house.
He pays no attention.
Sure enough they end up burning down his house, as promised.

It happens today

Today, Frisch's Fire-raisers live south of the border-

We know what their leader has had in mind- and we know what he's wanted his followers to do- and on Wednesday they did it in full force.

The events on Wednesday were the equivalent of burning the house down.

Storming the citadel of American democracy - that was fire enough to wake some people up, about the dangerous lies which were leading to violence,

Or the double standard: - a primarily white crowd, some with confederate flags , getting away with behaviour that would never be tolerated from Black Americans- who have lost their lives for far less

Or the notion that some votes matter more than others: the votes challenged by the losing candidate and his supporters are known to be primarily Black and Latino/Latina.

We can only hope and pray enough people with power wake up before there is any more fire-raising. And we can listen for wake-up calls too.

Part of the Fire-raiser story of the states is about the pandemic of racism

A pandemic to which we in Canada are not immune,

So why am I preaching about this?

Because it is a spiritual matter.

It's a spiritual matter when it's on our hearts - as it was for many of us this week-

Whether we are American or have family in the US or simply we feel closely connected because this is our neighbour and ally or because we and they both treasure democracy in our common life, and the peaceful transition of power, or because we care about human rights-

Including the rights of all people to have their votes and their lives matter- especially those who haven't always had a vote or a voice.

And our hearts are heavy , I'm sure, when we see a President and Commander in Chief not protecting his people but endangering them-

Contrary to the duty of anyone in public office.

Biblical prophets speak against rulers who do not protect their subjects and do not do their duty by the vulnerable - likening them to shepherds who do not look after their sheep.

The God of the Jewish and Christian people had much to say about such rulers.

It was a spiritual problem, not just a political one.

It's about how we live together as a human community.

Our common life is a spiritual matter

Micah's teaching - to seek justice and love kindness and walk humbly with God- tells us all how we are to live together-

And everything Jesus said or did reflects this same teaching.

We saw Jesus' placards at the Washington riot-

Wrongly so-

Jesus would have no part of this

Jesus protested yes.

Some of us have protested too, peacefully, on peace marches or Women's Marches or perhaps Black or Indigenous Lives matter.

But what we saw Wednesday was not a protest - it was a riot.

When Jesus protests against the money-changers, he isn't endangering anyone's life.

He isn't trespassing where he isn't allowed to be.

He for sure isn't shoring up the ego of a tyrant- in fact he lost his life because tyrants wanted him gone.

He's angry, but he's angry that religious leaders are oppressing and exploring the people-
Requiring even the poor to pay temple tax and buy sacrificial animals-
You can imagine the rates changed by on-site vendors and moneychangers with captive customers.

There and elsewhere, Jesus is with the oppressed, the poor, the marginalized, those of different ethnic backgrounds, those who get the worst deal.
His religion is about healing and feeding and befriending and including them.

Where would Jesus not be?

He would not be with tyrants -

He would not be with those preaching greed or racism or sexism,

He would not be with those abusing marginalized and vulnerable people.

There was no voting, no democracy in his day-

But we can be sure he'd be with those trying to get the Black vote out,

And trying to make every vote count, and not bowing to pressure from the powerful who want a different outcome.

And he would not be inciting his followers to violence- he would not even let them return violence with violence at his arrest.

Jesus' baptism wasn't just about him.

Nothing was just about him.

Baptism was about everyone being beloved,

Especially, always, those who most needed love, the sick, the lonely, the poor, the hungry, the forgotten, those ignored and oppressed.

Those Langston Hughes mentions,

Who never enjoyed the bounty and blessings others had in abundance.

And since all were beloved, our calling is to treat all as beloved- meaning justice.

As the Black theologian Cornel West said "Justice is love in public".

Jesus came to inspire Love in public, not hate, not cruelty.

Jesus came to shed Light on injustice, so that justice could appear.

When some would co-opt Jesus to do harm, we must put this message out wherever we can-

Along with those of all faiths who seek to speak truth in love, who seek to protect the vulnerable, who seek justice and love kindness

But what do we do?

We remember- our words and actions matter, even if we aren't famous. Especially when some use the Bible and use Jesus to oppress or abuse people, or to avoid their responsibilities as citizens-

You and I need to tell a different story .

We need to be among those who spread love and justice and compassion wherever we can-

Sometimes we live our faith best by remaining at our post, doing the work of love.

Like those aides who rescued the electoral boxes from the Senate-

those cleaning staff, many of them persons of colour, who cleaned up the mess after the looters left the Capitol.

Those keeping elections free and fair when pressured to do otherwise,

My friend Kimberly working as a doctor amid outbreaks in Calgary,

My Facebook friend Erin working in a special care home in the Yukon- delighted to see them vaccinated- and now seconded to a team taking vaccinations on the road.

In the words of the American poet Adrienne Rich:

“My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,
with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.”

There is much you and I can't fix.

But we can live as those who are beloved and treat others as beloved,
Especially those who have not always heard that they are beloved.

We can seek justice and love kindness and walk humbly with the Holy One,

In our words, in our deeds, as we remain faithfully at our posts- as without extraordinary power we reconstitute the world.

Music of Reflection

When Pain of The World

<https://vimeo.com/463704662>

[Jim Strathdee] sung by Jim and Jean Strathdee

Stewardship Seconds

Stewardship is ascribing to God the glory of God's creation of the heavens and the earth.

Minute for Mission

showing Love in Action through Margaret's Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01bV5fYgFDQ>

Offering Prayer

God of all gifts, your light and love give our lives hope and meaning. We share that light and love as we give what we have and what we are. Through our giving may we strengthen this beloved community and send love and light into this world, that all may find the hope and healing they need, that they too may let their light shine. Amen.

Prayer

Holy One, we give thanks that we are your beloved ones,

Cherished as we are, challenged to grow in faith, hope and love, challenged to honour all as your beloved. In these days we pray that love, justice, compassion and respect may spread through this world, especially where the threads of community are frayed and broken-In these days we pray especially for our American neighbours, for their safety in these tense days, and for the healing of their nation, And the continued realizing of Martin Luther King's dream of beloved community.

We pray that we too may tend beloved community where we are, especially with those who may think their lives don't matter, Those at the receiving end of racism, of homophobia and other prejudices.

God of compassion, we remember before you those who especially need your comforting spirit at this time, those living with illness, grief or troubles of any kind, those who find the restrictions of COVID times especially burdensome, In a moment of silence, we hold in love and light those who need our prayers. These and all our prayers we offer in the name of your beloved one, whose prayer we say together

Announcements and Joys and Concerns

We will be doing At Home and Zoom from now through Feb. 14, to allow for back and forth changes in our Zone and the challenges of winter weather. Next week your leader is Rev. Ali Anningson. Scotch Ridge Annual Meeting is postponed till January 26. Subject to a return to Yellow. Wesley Annual Meeting is postponed TBC. Jane will continue to offer Thurs. night FB live at 7 p.m. [or for later viewing] on her Jane Doull page and a Zoom coffee drop-in Fridays at 10.

Music to Encourage Us

Everyday People

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-g4UWvcZn5U>

[Jack Johnson] by Playing for Change- this seems to capture the world as we'd like it to be and can help make it be!

Blessing

You have been blessed from the beginning. You are filled to overflowing with Grace, enough for you, enough for all. Know you are God's wondrous and beautiful creation Accept the gift of freedom for new beginnings and possibilities, for you and for all! Share light and love, with glad and generous hearts!

Music as We Go Forth

Dona Nobis Pacem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qF5WDCFymq>

sung by Carrie Newcomer

"It's that time of year when we have the opportunity to subscribe to the Broadview Magazine. The price remains at \$25.00 for a year's subscription.

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