



**Advent 4**  
**"I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Peace"**

**Prelude - Ian Brown**

**Welcome**

**Crossing the Threshold**

The "great light" prophesied by Isaiah in today's text is echoed in the good news of John's Gospel: the light that brings peace—that saves people from all that would extinguish it—has been there from the beginning. The Word is made flesh and dwells among us. The light is with us... will we believe it? Will we continue embodying the peace meant for all creation?

I believe in the light, I believe in the light  
That has come, that has come, and is coming.

I believe in the light, I believe in the light  
That has come, that has come, and is coming.

We see the star rising  
We hear the glad tidings  
We know we are not alone

**Candlelighting Prayer**

Holy One,  
we thank you for your gift of peace on earth.  
Even in the midst of fear,

of challenge, of struggle—  
even when we aren't sure that  
goodwill among us can be found,  
ignite the flame of peace within us, (light candle)  
**... that we might glow with its brilliance  
from the inside out.**

**I believe in the light,  
I believe in the light,  
that has come... that has come...  
and is coming.**

Help us face the pain of life  
and embrace the assurance that light is already here, and always coming.  
**Amen.**

**If you have not already lit your advent candle or luminary I invite you to do that  
now**

### **Opening Hymn**

*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

*O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*O come, O Dayspring, from on high,  
And cheer us by your drawing nigh  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And deaths dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind;  
O bid our sad divisions cease*

*and be yourself our King of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

## **WE PROCLAIM**

### **Children's Time to Shine**

*"This Little Light of Mine"*

#### **Isaiah Reading**

*Isaiah 9: 2-7*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

#### **Gospel Reading**

*John 1: 1-18*

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.  
Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word

nothing came into being.

What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The true light that shines on all people  
was coming into the world.

The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world didn't recognize the light.

The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him.

But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.

The Word became flesh and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John testified about him, crying out, "This is the one of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace; as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God.

God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made God known.

## **Sermon**

### **WE RESPOND**

#### **Prayers of the People**

Holy God, in a season when every heart should be happy and light, many of us are struggling with the heaviness of life—burdens that steal the joy right out of our stockings. Tragedy arrives as innocent victims suffer, and an inner voice whispers, "Be afraid!" We need your peace. We confess that our hearts are too often filled with wonder of a different kind: wondering when the bills will be paid, when this pandemic will be over, when the terror will stop, when rest will come. Will it ever? Is the message still true? In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again.

This Advent, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed Your peace more than now. Holy one, You've promised rest for the weary, victory for the battle-scarred, peace for the anxious, and acceptance for the broken hearted—not just at Advent, but every day of every year. Your name is still called "Wonderful," "Counselor," "The Mighty God," and "The Prince of Peace." We know you offer a peace beyond understanding, fill us with that peace today.

We take a moment to pray for those who are facing a first Christmas without a loved one. For all who grieve, may you know the presence of comfort, peace and hope. We especially pray for the many who have lost loved ones this year for whom they have not been able to gather and celebrate their lives and mark their deaths.

We remember those people and situations that cause our hearts to break. O God give us glimpses of hope, love, joy and peace. May we feel your presence filling us, restoring us. We do not pray for joy, hope or peace that is temporary or fleeting, but a joy, peace and hope that runs deep and sustains us even in moments of despair. May your holy presence be a blanket comfort this night. Come oh Come Emmanuel breath upon us the peace that passes all understanding filled with the assurance and comfort that we do not suffer this time alone.

We pray all this in the name of the One who is to come. Light of the world Amen.

### **Offering Announcement and Opportunities to “Fill the Night” with Peace**

*I want to take a moment to thank all of those who have given to Squamish United Church this past year. We know it has been a tough year financially for many and so we want to acknowledge your generosity as you care for this church and the work we do you are caring for this community of faith, the community of Squamish and the world beyond. Thank you. Your continued generosity will be much appreciated as we enter into the Christmas season and the New Year. In peace and Love. Thank you. (You will be able to find ways to give on our website or after the credits at the end of this service.*

### **Doxology**

**Believe, with a peaceful heart!  
Believe, and shine your light!  
Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!**

**And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"  
let the poor say, "I am rich  
because of what our God has done for us."  
Believe!**

### **WE GO FORTH**

#### **Carol of Resistance**

*Introduction to the Carol:*

Our Carol of Resistance this week is part of the repertoire of Christmas songs that were created by people who endured brutal hardships as the result of African colonization

and North American slavery. But, though people of African descent were ripped from much of their cultural heritage, they maintained their heritage of group song, punctuated by West African rhythms and vocal stylings. Of course the safest thing for oppressed peoples to sing about was the religious beliefs that, first forced upon them by their oppressors, later gave many hope in the midst of suffering. “Go Tell It On The Mountain” is probably the best-known African American Christmas song and the words “seeker” and “watchman” are thought by some to have been code words for those seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad. It was made popular by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the 19th century as these college students—themselves freed slaves—traveled the country to raise money and awareness. They were turned away from hotels, railway waiting rooms, and even some churches because of their color. As we sing, let us honor them, honor all who have endured slavery and the continued systemic racism caused by slavery. Let us...

*“Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.”*

... indeed that the Prince of Peace that calls us  
to break the chains of oppression... is *born!*

Hymn “*Go Tell It On the Mountain*” VU 43

*Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!*

*While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light*

*Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!*

*The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! Above the Earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth*

*Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!*

*Down in a lowly manger  
Our humble Christ was born  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn*

*Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!*

## **Benediction**

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news  
that the light has dawned and shines on all people,  
fill the night left by sadness with messages of peace.  
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that peace alive in you  
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.  
Raise your voices and repeat after me...  
“do not be afraid!”  
**“do not be afraid!”**  
**Amen!**

*Let us now carry the light of peace into the world.*

## **Handbell Benediction**

### **Worship Notes**

Worship series design © Worship Design Studio by Marcia McFee. Used, adapted, and live-streamed with permission. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com).

Be sure to list all resources that require citation and permission or license notes in your worship guide or in the description of your video posts.