

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay  
Liturgy Communion Worship**

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – November 30, 2025

**Call to Worship/Lighting the Advent Candle**

The light shines in the darkness,

**We come to worship, seeking the light of Christ once again.**

Shine into our lives and into your world this Advent.

**Renew us with fresh hope.**

*Light the first Advent candle.*

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**\*Hymn**

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus*

**110**

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver; born a child and yet a King;  
born to reign in us forever; now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

"Come, thou long-expected Jesus." Words by Charles Wesley. Public domain.

**Prayer of Adoration and Confession**

Almighty and everlasting God,

You hold all our days in your hands, and embrace us in your everlasting arms.

In a tired and violent world, you are hope. In a hectic and busy world, you are peace.

In a hurting world, you are comfort. In Jesus Christ, you bring love into this world,  
and call us to embody his love in all we do and say.

In our worship this day, we offer you our love and loyalty, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit. Make us one in worship and service, so that the world will see your hope at work in us and through us, making all things new.

**God of hope,**

**we confess that we often prefer to accept half-truths and pleasing ideas,  
rather than your challenging word. We praise our own cleverness rather than  
your wisdom. We have exploited others for our benefit and used the earth  
without a thought for its wellbeing.**

**In your mercy, forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are,  
and direct who we shall be through the mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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## Assurance of Forgiveness

Receive the Good News in hope. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Trust in the hope that you are forgiven and that, with God, new things are possible.

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## Prayer for Understanding

God of hope and healing, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, your Living Word.

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## Scripture Reading Isaiah 2:1-5

The Message Isaiah got regarding Judah and Jerusalem:  
There's a day coming when the mountain of God's House  
Will be The Mountain - solid, towering over all mountains.  
All nations will river toward it, people from all over set out for it.  
They'll say, "Come, let's climb God's Mountain,  
go to the House of the God of Jacob.

He'll show us the way he works  
so we can live the way we're made."

Zion's the source of the revelation.

God's Message comes from Jerusalem.

He'll settle things fairly between nations.

He'll make things right between many peoples.

They'll turn their swords into shovels, their spears into hoes.

No more will nation fight nation; they won't play war anymore.

Come, family of Jacob, let's live in the light of God. Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

## Message Vigilant Hope

If you were to visit the United Nations Headquarters in New York City and walk through the North Garden you would find there a striking statue, one in which a man of strength is taking a hammer and shaping a sword into a plowshare, which is a component of a plow. The plowshare is the cutting or leading edge of the plow. A plow is a farm implement which breaks ground. My farm boy husband also explained to me that it renews the ground bringing up fresh new soil. This is an interesting detail that I had not thought of and is of value when considering the scripture reading today.

Given the current state of global affairs today and Russia's war on the Ukraine, one might be taken aback to know that it was gifted to the United Nations on December 4, 1959 by the delegation from the Soviet Union. "The statue was presented during a time when the world was grappling with the aftermath of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. It

serves as a powerful reminder of the need for peace and cooperation among nations. The gift from the Soviet Union was particularly significant, symboling a hope for reconciliation and a commitment to disarmament.”<sup>1</sup>

It would seem now, just as it was in the time of Isaiah, that people working for peace and experiencing peace seems to be short lived in the long view of the world. Humanity seems to have a penchant for messing up what is good and falling into a state of upheaval, fear, and at times chaos. We seem to forget what it takes to live in peace and many of us are losing hope for peace.

Then God breaks in, as God has a tendency to do. The Old and New Testaments are filled with stories of people losing their way with rulers and governments creating systems and policies that destroyed lives. Even these few verses in Isaiah come in the midst of wars that threaten the lives and livelihoods of the people in Jerusalem where Isaiah worked in the monarchy and, out of that, was called in a vision by God to speak against what the Israelites were doing at that time. The decisions that were being made by leaders took them from the promises of God and led them into great turmoil. The way of being in the world took them out of relationship with God into trusting in themselves to know and do better.

These five verses in Isaiah speak to a hope that people can work for a world in which weapons that take life can be transformed into tools that benefit humanity. Tools that bring life to both people and creation.

These words are as prophetic today as they were in the time of ancient Israel. We continue to live in a world in which chaos, pain, suffering, abuse, and power appear to have the upper hand. It is happening in the nucleus of families and relationships, and it is in the big picture of global conflict.

Yet into this Isaiah speaks of a vision of hope in which, as the statue at the United Nations depicts, people come together for peace and stability, for well-being and love for people of all nations and creation. And because Isaiah was writing as a man of God, he sees this as people coming to God and “[God will] show us the way he works so we can live the way we’re made.”<sup>2</sup>

So the question is, how does God work? The answer is given to us in the life of Jesus and this starts with God becoming a human being. A human baby. God began with us. God grew and walked among us in the person of Jesus and showed us what God’s ways look like...feeding the hungry, healing the hurting, teaching about grace, peace, and truth. Jesus came and loved others, taught about injustice and about speaking out

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<sup>1</sup> [united nations swords into plowshares statue - Search](#). Accessed November 30, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

against acts of injustice. Jesus showed in word and deed what love and compassion look like. And because of Jesus, because God choose to walk among us as a person, we have hope.

Hope means believing that things can get better. Yes, it is hard to believe the world can change, and to tell you the truth we may not see much change in our life times. Still there have always been people who have worked for change. There are people in our own time who are working for change, and God calls upon us to be part of that work. As Christians we believe that heaven can be on earth. It is what we live for. We pray it in the Lord's Prayer with the words, "...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven."

As followers of Christ and believers of who God is and what God can do, we trust that what we do now to make the world a better place will have an impact, even if we don't see the change. We trust that God is working in and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about a world in which all people come together in peace, in love, and in joy.

This is Advent hope. It is hope that trusts. Hope that waits expectantly for change. Hope that gives us courage to do the hard work. Hope that is filled with compassion for all humanity and creation itself. Hope that waits for Christ's return.

It may sound lofty, but it is as earthy as the ground. It is accomplished in moments and in lifetimes. It is hope that is vigilant and for us began with the birth of a child who grew into a man that changed the world through his life, death, resurrection and ascension. The whole story captured in one life. The hope of the world given to us in the birth of Jesus and a time to come when Jesus will once again be fully with us. So live with hope. Live into the promises of God for you and for all humanity.

And one day we will see God make things right between many peoples. Turning their swords into shovels, their spears into hoes. No more will nation fight nation; they won't play war anymore. Come, let's live in the light of God!

### **Prayers of the People**

Surprising and Steadfast God,

In the anticipation of your coming, keep us awake so that we will see you at work in the world. We give you thanks for moments of joy and celebration in our lives, for times of excitement and surprise; for love given and received, for friendships that furnish our life with meaning and happiness, and for family that reflects your unconditional love. In all our relationships and encounters, allow us to see you in one another.

We pray for the coming of your kingdom week by week. Today we pray for the nations, and for all those who frame laws and shape society, who are charged to keep the peace and administer justice. We thank you for leaders who are faithful to their

responsibilities. And we pray for places where justice is twisted in the interests of the powerful, and innocents suffer as a result.

Move in the hearts and minds of leaders for the sake of justice and generosity, so that people everywhere will experience freedom and have hope for their futures.

We pray for those who are suffering this day,  
for those who are ill, for those who mourn,  
and for all who fear the future and what it may bring.

Surround them with your love, support them with strength,  
and inspire the hope they need to face another day.

Eternal God, all souls are precious to you;  
the dead, as well as the living, are in your care.  
We thank you for your saints of every generation,  
and for those dear to our own hearts,  
who have entered into your eternal presence.  
Keep us in communion with them,  
and bring us with them at the last to dwell in your light.

Hear us as we offer prayers in silence for all those on our hearts this day:

Joining our voices into one, we pray as Jesus taught:

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## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen**

## Invitation to the Offering

This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Hope, coming to us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that hope that we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake.

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There are various ways that people give to this congregation for our work as God's people, through signing up for a monthly donation, or sending an e-transfer.

Check out the opportunities to support St. Andrew's ministry at our website,  
[St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

## \*Hymn

*We've a story to tell to the nations*

**765**

1. We've a story to tell to the nations  
that shall turn their hearts to the right,  
a story of truth and mercy,

a story of peace and light,  
a story of peace and light,  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light.

2. We've a song to be sung to the nations  
that shall lift their hearts to the Lord,  
a song that shall conquer evil  
and shatter the spear and sword,  
and shatter the spear and sword.  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light.

3. We've a message to give to the nations,  
that the Lord who reigneth above  
hath sent us his Son to save us,  
and show us that God is love,  
and show us that God is love,  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light.

"We've a story to tell the nations." Words by Colin Sterne. Public Domain

## **Benediction**

Go in hope this day, and keep awake! Watch for signs of God at work around you and within you. Look for opportunities to serve others in Jesus' name.

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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