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MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION:

“The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. for it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.  LET’S NOT LOSE HOPE.”

Our reading this Sunday is the story of John the Baptizer, as told by Mark.  John was a “road builder”. Constructing a road to prepare the way for Jesus’ coming.  But not only was he paving the way for the coming of Jesus’, he was encouraging people to turn around from their way of life and follow the road that would lead them to God.

Encouragement.   That is our calling as well.   Jesus encourages us to follow his way, to build a highway of hope for all around us.  Encourage people by the way we live our lives, encourage people by sharing the talents that they have with others, encourage people to not be afraid.

Encouragement, is an expression of love for God’s people. In one sense, encouragement is like oxygen in the life of a church. It keeps hearts beating, minds clear, and hands inspired to serve. When encouragement is absent from the life of a church, people will feel unloved, unimportant, useless, and forgotten. God knows His people are in need of grace-filled reminders, which is why, He calls us to encourage each other every day until His Son returns.

Encouragement was and is an essential way of extending grace to each other. So, this week, I encourage you all to not lose hope, I encourage you to reach out to someone who may feel lonely, I encourage you, by your words and actions to prepare the way.

Judi Ritcey, LLWL

**Join Zoom Meeting**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83971543383>  
  
**Meeting ID: 839 7154 3383  
Passcode: 487991**

Dial by your location  
         
+1 778 907 2071 Canada  
Meeting ID: 839 7154 3383

**Passcode: 487991**

**Summerland United Church website also provides access to our weekly Zoom church service.**

**Worship with Summerland and Westbank United Churches**

**December 6, 2020 09:45 AM Vancouver  
Judi Ritcey, LLWL – Presiding  
Judi Ritcey – PowerPoint – Summerland United**

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**GATHERING TIME                         9:45AM**

**INTRODUCTION & TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BELL RINGING                                10:00 AM**

**WORDS OF WELCOME    Lois Jefferis, Westbank United**

*A warm welcome to our friends from Summerland and Westbank United Churches who are with us today and to all those joining us from other locations. If there are any visitors joining us today from other congregations or other places, we welcome you and thank you for joining us this morning. If you are comfortable, please unmute yourself and tell us where you are from or what congregation you belong to. Please remember to re-mute yourself.*

**MOMENT OF SILENCE TO VIEW THE CONGREGATION**

**ADVENT CANDLE**

Last Sunday, we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the Candle of Hope.  We light it again as a symbol of our desire for healing and wholeness for our world.

**PRAYER:**  Let us pray together. Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.  Amen.

**LIGHTING OUR CANDLES:**Loving God, we light our candles, not calling for your presence but acknowledging it.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come, people of God, to worship.

**Come, Emmanuel, God-with-us.**

We plant the shoot of Jesse and feed it with the tears of God’s mercy.

**Come, Emmanuel, God-with-us.**

God’s vine takes root in mangers of love and compassion.

God’s vine flourishes and breaks down the walls of pride and greed.

God’s vine casts its shade on the weary and yields life-giving fruits for all who pick from it.

God’s vine is abused and cut down,

but it grows again for all who have faith and love their neighbour.

**Come, Emmanuel, God-with-us.**

Praise God for the saving and living vine; God is with us.

**WE SING TOGETHER -**VU 1 – O Come, O Come Emmanuel

**OPENING PRAYER**

God in whom we place all our hopes, as we gather this second Sunday of Advent, we are keenly aware of pressing needs around us, both our own and those of others. We come waiting, searching, hoping, praying for renewed beginnings among us. We long for the peace we talk of so often to surround us, and for hope to infuse all that we do and are. So, we begin our week with worship, time set aside to sing your praises, to ask for forgiveness, to listen to your still, small voice within us. Come to us now, O God, in silence, in word, and in prayer, even as we come to you, ready to receive. Amen.

**WE SING TOGETHER**VU 4 God of All Places

**SCRIPTURE READING**Mark 1: 1-8 – The Inclusive Bible**– Charlotte Burley, Summerland United**

**REFLECTION**

**ANTHEM                              Prepare the Way – Jim & Jeanne Strathdee**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE           Rev. David Sparks, Summerland United**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER                    Traditional Version**

**OFFERING**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

We bring these gifts—the work of our hands, our hearts, our lives.

We pray that they may be used to bring the hope of Jesus Christ to our world in this time and place.

For our prayer is that your kingdom come, your will be done, now and always. Amen.

**WE SING TOGETHER**Take This Heart of Mine.  Jim & Jeanne Strathdee

**BLESSING:**Go now in peace into this Advent season. Carry the light of hope with you.

And may the presence of God uplift you, the gentleness of Christ live in your hearts,

and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit guide you. Today and always.

**WE SING TOGETHER**VU 5   All the World Is Waiting

**BREAK OUT ROOMS**

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**Scripture Reading:**

**Mark 1: 1-8 – The Inclusive Bible**

1Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

2as it was written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I send my messenger before you   
       to prepare your way,   
       3a herald’s voice in the desert, crying,   
       ‘Make ready the way of our God.   
        Clear a straight path.’”

4And so John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. 6John was clothed in camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate nothing but grasshoppers and wild honey. 7In the course of his preaching, John said, ‘One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. 8I have baptized you in water, but the One to come will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

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**RECORDING OF CHRISTMAS EVE SCRIPTURE WITH LINNEA GOOD**

**Christmas Eve Service - preparing together**

From Linnea: "It is so exciting that we have begun creating a shared "telling" of Luke's Nativity story for our Christmas Eve service together! Thank-you to those who stayed at the end of the service last week and recorded short pieces of the scripture. It was pretty painless, wasn't it! This week, I invite others to stay a short while after break-out rooms close and be recorded saying a line that I give you. I put the words up for you to read - and you say them from memory as best you can on the spot. I noticed it was mostly Summerland United’s who stayed last week. Challenge is issued, now to you others! (We will do this on each of the Sundays in Advent)

**Think about:**

* Position yourself so that there is more light shining *on*you than behind you. Swivel away from windows and turn on a desk lamp.
* You could find a nice place in your home to be in for the recording (a roaring fire in the fireplace, on the deck, by your bookshelf, etc)
* Note: This is not reading - just telling what I give you.
* Is there someone you could make arrangements to assist in getting their own little bit of video to me - someone in a care home, someone who doesn't usually come to our Zoom services, or your far-flung family..? I will give you the scripture to pass on to them.
* Anyone who would like to record their own away from Zoom is welcome to do that too, and email to me.

I think this will be a treasure for us to enjoy and share for years to come.

Our Christmas Eve Service is at 7pm on Dec 24th. Usual Worship link.

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Thanks!

Linnea

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