

Sunday 3 November 2024 - Pentecost 24 - Nearing the Kingdom
Profession of Faith by Charlene James & Baptism of Ella Winchell James

Prelude

Be Thou My Vision *Wayne Johnson - piano*

Call to Worship

Based on Psalm 146 by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Awake my body, awake my soul!
Trust in Holy One who made heaven and earth;
who keeps faith and executes justice;
who sets prisoners free and lifts up the lowly;
who cares for you as you are.
Awake my sacred being.

Song

Teach Me, God To Wonder **VU299**

Lighting the Christ Candle

by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

We light this candle to celebrate the presence of the Christ;
the sacred incarnate in flesh, in mind and in spirit;
Sun behind all suns, Fresh Breath of Morning, Ground of Being.

Candle is lit

Statement of Purpose

The sacrament of baptism proclaims and celebrates the grace of God. By water and the Spirit, we are called, claimed, and commissioned: we are called God's own, welcomed as children of God; we are claimed by Christ, united with Christ, united with one another and the Christian community of every time and place; we are commissioned to Christ's ministry of love, peace, and justice, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit for the work of the church in the world.

The church is a community of people with varied gifts, united by the Holy Spirit. We gather to celebrate God's presence, to discern God's truth, and to follow the way of Jesus. By our baptism we are made members of Christ's church. We exercise this membership in the denomination to which we belong, which for us is The United Church of Canada, and within the context of a local community of faith. We are now to welcome into this congregation one who is already a member of the church of Jesus Christ.

Presentation

On behalf of the congregation of Roxboro United Church, I present Charlene James for initiation into the body of Christ through profession of faith.

Profession of Faith and Promises

Profession of Faith in The Triune God

Do you believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

I do, by the grace of God.

Commitment to Seek Justice and Resist Evil

Trusting the gracious mercy of God, will you turn from the forces of evil, and renounce their power?

I will, God being my helper.

Commitment to Follow the Way of Jesus Christ

Will you follow Jesus' way of love and justice?

I will, God being my helper.

Commitment to the Mission and Ministry of the Church

Will you join with us, as together we celebrate God's presence within and all around, live with respect in creation, which nourishes and grounds us, love and serve others with care and respect, seek justice and resist evil by honouring God's Spirit in all life?

I will, trusting in God's help and guidance.

Congregational Commitment

Beloved friends, let us pledge to Charlene our support and care.

As your siblings in Christ, we rejoice in the gifts you bring to us.

We pledge to you our love and our support.

**With God's help, we will together live out
the mission and ministry of Christ's church.**

Welcome of New Member

In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you to the privileges and responsibilities of membership in this congregation. We give thanks to God for your witness among us.

Corporate Confession of Faith

**We are not alone,
we live in God's world.**

**We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

**We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Baptism

Friends Charlene has some good news to share with us.

What's the good news?

I have a daughter.

Praise God! We have another life in our world.

Let all the people say, "Amen."

Amen!

What's her name?

Her name is Ella Winchell James

Why do you bring her here?

I am bringing her here because I love my child
and recognize that she has been blessed by God
and I would like her to be included in Roxboro's Faith Community.

We rejoice with you in the gift of your child

**and we promise to be a Community of Faith where you will find
a circle of belonging in which Ella will have a place.**

As friends, we will offer a home to worship God and learn the Sacred Story.

Charlene with Ella, and the sponsors move to the front.

Affirmations and Questions

And now we have a new life among us.

So, Ella, welcome to this world, this amazing and scary world.

Welcome to light and dark, hot and cold, evil and good.

Welcome to hate and love, lies and truth, bad times and good times.

Welcome to the long human pilgrimage from birth to death.

Anything can happen here; everything is possible.

Some things must be chosen; others left behind.

Welcome to the real world and this circle of friends.

Here we turn to God for help in making the choices that lead to life.

Ella, for you Jesus Christ was born; for you he passed through the waters of baptism;
for you he broke bread with sinners and outcasts; for you he endured the agony of the cross;
for you he triumphed over death.

You, little child, know nothing of this.

How will you ever know? Who will ever tell you?

I will!

Ella, this is too big a job for your mother alone. Who is going to help her?

We will!

(Sponsors' response: And so will we!)

Ella, who will protect and nourish you
and answer your questions about faith, life, compassion, justice, and peace?

I will!

Who is going to help her?

We will!

(Sponsors' response: And so will we!)

Prayer

Spirit of God, you brooded over the waters at creation's birth.

Be with us now.

We confess that: we have lived in darkness, be our dawn;

we have lived in error, be our truth; we have lived in indecision, be our resolve.

Attend to this child, this family, and this household.

Forgive us and send your Spirit to guide us as we struggle to make the right choices.

Act of Baptism

Ella, the Holy One who created you has made this promise:

“Don't be afraid; I have rescued you.

I have called you by name; now you belong to me.

I am your God, the One who saves you.” *(Is. 43.1,2)*

Ella Winchell James,

I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, mother of all.

Ella, know that you are now in the care of all who surround you.

Know that you belong to God and to this household.

Welcome

Friends, this is Ella a daughter of God!

Welcome, Ella!

Ella, I have a little poem for you. It goes like this:

Here's the Cross where Jesus bled.

Here's the Book where the story is read.

Here's the Table where we are fed.

Here's the Light by which we are led.

Ella, this is the light of Christ passed to you by Church and family.

May this light be yours.

Blessing

The Lord Bless Thee And Keep Thee **VU965**

He Came Singing Love

Mark 12.28-34 *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition.*

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28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” 29 Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” 32 Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; 33 and ‘to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” 34 When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Another Voice

Brian McLaren from Do I Stay Christian Copyright © 2023 by Brian McLaren

Divine love is the nest in which the other desires are nurtured, and it is inherent in all other loves. What I’m suggesting recalls the words in 1 John 4, that “God is love.” When we desire the good of the planet, the good of all people, and our own good, we are participating in a love that is bigger than us. As a Christian, I would say we are joining God in God’s loving desire for the well-being of the beloved. To love the love that loves the parts is to love the whole. To unify our desires in love is, I think, what Jesus must have meant by purity of heart (see Matthew 5:8).

Song

He Came Singing Love **VU359**

Minister’s Reflection

Nearing the Kingdom

Offering Time

Offertory

Arioso in G by J.S. Bach *Wayne Johnson - piano*

Prayer Time

The Lord’s Prayer

VU960

Song

For All The Saints **VU705**

Statement of Hope

Every child is a child of God!

Every child may be God’s new Messiah!

The prophet Isaiah wrote at the birth of his own child,

“The spirit of God will give this child wisdom, the skill and knowledge
to lead God’s people, and the joy that comes with serving God.

This little child will lead them!” (Isaiah 11.2-4)

As we follow Ella into the world,
may God make safe for us each steep,
may Christ make open to us each pass,
may the Spirit make clear to us each road,
and may we travel hand in hand with God.

Postlude

Eternal Father, Strong To Save *Wayne Johnson - piano*