

December 15, 2024

“Anointing for Justice: Who Belongs?”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

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SEASON OF ADVENT: Together on the Journey!

One of our Mennonite songbooks evokes wonderful images of voices blending in praise as we travel together on a path toward a deeper understanding of faith. The road can be smooth for stretches but also includes rough patches that challenge or discourage. But if we pay attention, we may notice God’s guiding hand directing us.

Third Sunday of Advent: Anointing for Justice: Who Belongs?

God’s vision of shalom and justice depicts a kingdom in which we radically realign ourselves with the marginalized and oppressed. Who needs to hear the invitation to belong in God’s kingdom?

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Stan)

Call to Worship: based on Isaiah 61:1 (Steve)

Leader: Merciful One: you anoint us for justice, you call us to you.

People: Your Spirit is poured out upon us.

Leader: Yours is the way of release and restoration.

People: May your love flow through us to heal the brokenhearted.

May we declare your good news to bring hope to the poor.

Leader: You anoint us; we are yours.

People: We delight and rejoice in you.

Opening Prayer (Steve)

Congregational Singing (Stan)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

*“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.*

“God’s Word teaches a very hard, disturbing truth. Those who neglect the poor and the oppressed are really not God’s people at all—no matter how frequently they practice their religious rituals nor how orthodox are their creeds and confessions.” —Ronald J. Sidder

Candle lighting



Reader 1: Like a cloth with frayed edges, our world leaves people on the fringes;

Reader 2: Those who aren't accepted, who don't belong;

Reader 1: The poor, the brokenhearted, the prisoners, the oppressed.

Reader 2: But God's kingdom shows us another way.

Candle lighting (first three Advent candles are lit)

All: Give us eyes to notice those on the fringes and arms to extend our boundaries, inviting all to become woven into our communities.

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Isaiah 61:1–11 Luke 4:16–21

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. God has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God...

Luke 4:16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

"Sermon: "On the Road Towards Justice!" (Steve)

The Spirit anoints people for God's action in the world. The Spirit's anointing for restorative justice in the world is an ongoing mission for all Christ-bearers. Anointed and empowered — who else could be joining us in the partnership as we journey?

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD



Congregational Singing (Stan)

Response

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music

Sending: Based on Isaiah 61:10–11 (Steve)

In the hope of God,
What was once cast aside now grows back;
Those on the fringes are woven back into the fabric.
Go forth now, clothed in joy!

"To hold a people in oppression you have to convince them first that they are supposed to be oppressed."

— John Henrik Clarke

"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice, and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation." — Malcolm X