

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [Sunday Worship Service Video](#)

- ❖ ***This is a Communion Service*** - *If you wish to share in communion you are invited to have elements at the ready while viewing.*

- ❖ ***Today (Sunday, November 29) at 10:00 is our first live Hebrews e-Café.*** *Laura Rousseau is hosting and you can join on Zoom by using the following information:*
Join using computer audio and video by clicking this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9542153646?pwd=T0tRODRMLMGZxeWlvNzJsUVdPODIUdz09>
Password: jesus
OR Join by telephone by dialling: 1 204 272 7920 and entering the meeting ID 954 215 3646 and the passcode 370976

- ❖ ***Hope, Peace, Joy, Love – Images of Advent*** - *As we prepare for Advent, Laura is collecting words and images to go with our candle lighting that reflect the theme for each week of Advent. If you have a picture that represents Peace for next week please email it to lrousseau@charleswoodunited.org*

- ❖ ***For Children: Our most recent Cool School video*** *is available by clicking here: [CUC Cool School Video 4](#)*
You are welcome to share this with others but please note that you must use the link provided. It is not available by search.

- ❖ ***This is White Gift Week*** *to encourage donations for our Christmas Hamper Program. Information including the grocery list and how to donate can be found by clicking here: [CUC Christmas Hampers](#)* Drop-offs can be made this week between 9:00 and 4:00 or Saturday, December 5 between 10:00 and 12 noon

- ❖ ***Our annual Women's Advent Service*** *will be posted online on **Monday, November 30**. A link will also be sent out on our email network.*

- ❖ ***Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is:***
<https://youtu.be/DmokTqE39kk>

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, November 29, 2020.

“Be Awake” Jesus says as a concluding statement to the lesson he has offered the disciples in Mark 13. Earlier he has told them to “Be on your guard” and the “Keep watch”. Despite these frank and direct instructions the disciples do not necessarily take the message to heart. In the very next chapter we read the account in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of Jesus’ arrest where he has returned to the disciples after an hour of prayer and finds them all asleep. “Could you not have stayed awake for one hour?” Jesus says.

As we enter Advent there can be no better warning that to 'be awake' or 'be alert'. There are things that we all need to do in the best interest of public health. There are things that we all need to do in the best interest of personal safety and wellbeing. And to be honest, we are tired. More and more I hear the expression *pandemic fatigue*. It is a fairly self-explanatory statement. We are tired of the warnings and the precautions and the restrictions. But while some respond to pandemic fatigue by giving in to their fears and anxieties, now is not the time to fall asleep. Now is the time to 'Be Awake'.

Thankfully we have come to Advent. Advent is the start of something new. Advent lifts us up and carries us forward. Advent escorts us out of the season where every day is a little bit darker and leads us toward the turning point of the year where light is added more and more each day. And when I say that Advent is renewing I absolutely include the idea that now is when we decorate and bake and wrap unlike any other season of the year. Thank God Advent is upon us. For Advent awakens us to the promise of Hope.

Recently I was speaking to an old and dear friend of my family. Eleanor Gieb is the retired minister of Westworth United Church. She went to school in Toronto with my father in the early 1960's. She was the minister who confirmed me when I was 16 years old. And she has been a colleague, supporter, and friend since I was a candidate for the ministry in the 1980's. Eleanor called to wish me well in this most unusual of Advents. During that call she said, "Isn't it good that the first candle we light is Hope. Hope is the only light that can stand on its own."

Hope is the only light that can stand on its own. This is the wisdom that the fatigued and anxious need to hear. We do not enter Advent with timid and casual steps, cautiously dipping our toes in the pool of spiritual renewal. We enter Advent with a broad leap and a deep dive and a bold proclamation that Hope has already come. The Christ Child will be born soon enough. But Hope is here.

If only we will be awake to its presence.

Grace and peace,

Michael

P.S. Would you like to follow along with today's bible reading on the video? Click here: [Mark 13:24-37](#)

*P.P.S. For news and events please have a look at the **Life & Work** insert: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>*

*P.P.P.S. You can **support the ministry** of Charleswood United Church by visiting: www.charleswoodunited.org/donate. Thank you to all those who have continued to contribute regularly.*

*P.P.P.P.S. **Did you know** that our YouTube channel contains a **subtitles feature**? If you would like to read the sermon or prayers while listening you can do so by activating the subtitles button on the lower bar of the YouTube screen.*