

**Visions United Spirit Gathering  
December 2, 2022  
From Generation to Generation  
Advent 3: "A Better Way" (Joy)**

\* *Stand as able*

**Our Community Gathers**

**Gathering Music/Prelude**

**Welcome**

*God's Doors Are Open to All!  
Open Doors · Open Minds · Open Hands · Open Hearts*  
Visions United seeks to be a safe place for people of all  
races, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds,  
sexual orientations and gender identities to worship.

**Acknowledgement of Land**

One: We remember with gratitude  
that we live and worship on lands that are, by law,  
the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq.

**All: May we live with respect on this land,  
and in peace and friendship with its people**

**Sharing of WOW moments**

**Threshold Moment**      We Can Choose a Better Way      *adapted Shawn Redden from Sanctified Art*

**Theme Song** (*seated*)      From Generation to Generation      *Words: Debi Burns*  
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From generation to generation,  
we have shared the Christmas story  
of a baby in a manger,  
who was born in Bethlehem.  
Hope is winging, Peace now ringing,  
Joy we're singing, Love he's brining

We can choose a better way.  
And find joy in ev-'ry day

**Lighting of the Advent Candle – Joy**

*Candle lighter: Liam Holeiter*

**Sharing the Peace**

The Joy of Christ be with you!  
**And also with you!**

**\*Song** (*stand*) VU#7 Hope is a Star (*v3, refrain*)

Words: Brian Wren, Music: Joan Collier Fogg  
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## **We Listen for Wisdom**

**Theme Conversation for All Ages**      Christmas Traditions from Generation to Generation

*What are some of your Christmas traditions  
that have been passed down from 'generation to generation'?  
Maybe a cherished ornament, a holiday recipe,  
a family Christmas photo, a nativity/creche, some other tradition?  
This Advent, we are invited to participate in a 'show and tell' of sorts,  
and each week a few people can share a tradition with us.  
(Children's program begins)*

**Wisdom Reading**      Matthew 1:18-25

**Reflection**      The Courageous Choice

*Artwork by Lisle Gwynn Garrity*

**Invitation to Prayer**

**Prayer for Healing and Confession**      Words: Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).

We pause in this moment of prayer.  
A million times a day we have opportunity to be gracious,  
to assume the best in others,  
to give the benefit of the doubt.  
A million times a day we could choose the better way,  
but sometimes we don't.  
Fear and greed kick in.  
Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel.  
Comparison and critique lead the charge.  
Forgive us for forgetting we are descendants of Joseph.  
Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood.  
Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you.  
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,  
and the wisdom to choose a better way. Amen.

**Promise of Grace**

*Reader: Jane Aikman*

Poem "Instructions for a Hard Choice" by Sarah (Are) Speed

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**Special Music**      Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

*Music: Timothy R. Matthews*

*Duet: Martha Shaw, piano and Janet Tidd, violin*

**Reflection**      We Can Choose a Better Way

## **We Respond with Prayer and Gratitude**

**Affirming the Story in Faith**

We believe in a God who offers second chances  
and does not hold grudges.  
We believe in a God who opens the door to new life  
and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.  
We believe in a God who believes in us—  
believes that we can make a difference,  
that we can choose grace over comparison,  
love over hate, peace over war.

And so we strive to live our lives in love.  
 We strive to listen as Joseph listened,  
 and to be the people that God calls us to be.  
 It's all that easy, and it's all that hard.  
 This we believe. Amen.

**\*Song** (*stand*)      A Better Way

Words: Anna Strickland ©2021  
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 Music: Traditional English Carol (18<sup>th</sup> cent.) Public Domain

## Our Community at Prayer

**\*Carol Sing** (*stand*)

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VU #35 Good Christian Friends Rejoice (*v1&2*)

VU #50 He is Born (*v1 French; v4 English*)

VU #48 Hark the Herald Angels (*v1 & v3*)

## Invitation to Generosity & Blessing of Our Gifts (*Gifts brought forward during singing*)

Song: O What a Wonderful Gift (*refrain, v4, refrain*)

Words/Music: Linnea Good  
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*Refrain:*

Oh — what a wonderful gift!

Oh — what a wonderful gift!

God gives lives of hope and --love.

Oh, what a wonderful gift!

*Verse 4:*

So, as we bring our gifts,

And of-fer them with pray'r,

May we be people seeking peace

And justice ev-'ry-where

*Refrain plus tag:*

Oh, what a wonderful, Oh, what a wonderful, Oh what a wonderful gift!

## The Work of the Congregation - Announcements

### We Go Forth to Be a Blessing

**\*Song** (*stand*)      VU#59 Joy to the World (*vs. 1&2*)

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## Blessing

Words: Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).

## Postlude Music for the Journey

***Thank You for Joining Us!***  
***May Each of Us Carry the Spirit into the world with us.***