

**Welcome to Melville United Church**

December 1, 2013 - First of Advent

The Hanging of the Greens Service

MINISTERS: The People of the Congregation

\*You are invited to stand in body and/or in spirit.

**Our Mission**

We seek, we pray, we act knowing that Jesus is amongst us.

**Our Vision**

Knowing we are not alone on our spiritual journeys, Melville United Church seeks to be an open, compassionate and inclusive Christian community; honouring and serving the living Christ in all that we do.

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**WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

PRELUDE: Prelude on "Nun komm there Heiden Heiland"

(Come Lord Jesus) - J. S. Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Chorus: VU 22 Wait For the Lord 4X

**Wait for the Lord, God's day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart!**

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**Lighting of the Advent Candle** (on insert) - The Ogilvie Family

**OPENING PRAYER**

One: Gather with us, God of eternal glory, as we seek your presence in the signs and symbols of this Christmas season;

**All: as we prepare for Christmas celebrations, keep us open to the miracle of your grace, which is for all people, in all times and places;**

One: fill us with wonder and awe once again at the wideness of your mercy and the fullness of your love.

**All: As we are blessed by your grace, so send us forth to touch our world with love. Amen.**

### **The Garland: God's Welcome Extended to All People**

- One:** A garland is often found lining the handrails into homes as a symbol of welcome and approach. For the Christian church at Christmas, it reminds us that God's welcome is for people of all social, economic, and cultural groups. God's embrace is particularly clear for those who live in constant fear of social ridicule and exclusion.
- Two:** Mary knew such fear as she realized the social consequence of her decision to parent God's chosen one, Jesus. As a single, unwed mother, Mary could have faced total exclusion from the community, certain poverty, or even death by stoning.
- One:** When Joseph opted to marry her, he broke through all social expectations with bold, new action.
- All:** **And so Mary sang this song of deep joy that speaks so clearly of God's radical inclusion...**

**Scripture:** Luke 1:46–55

Hymn VU 7 Hope is a Star

### **The Poinsettia: A Symbol of the Unexpected**

- One:** The poinsettia is native to Mexico, often growing 10 feet in height. Its "flowers" are actually at the centre of the colourful leaves, and the part that looks like a flower (the red, white, or pink parts) are leaves. However, the plants only develop their lovely coloured leaves when they have been subjected to a specific number of hours of dark in a 24-hour period. This unique feature of a poinsettia makes it a symbol of surprise...like our God who makes our deserts bloom and our barren places spring to life.

**Scripture:** Isaiah 35:1–2

Hymn VU 222 Come, Let Us Sing

### **The Wreaths: A Symbol of Never-Ending Love**

- One:** The wreath is made of evergreen. Evergreen trees remind us of the never-ending gift of God's love. The wreath is shaped into a circle that has no beginning and no ending. The love of God holds us without conditions. With the tenderness of a parent, God seeks us out even when we feel abandoned and lost. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah felt lost and abandoned by God. What they dreamed for most in life simply hadn't happened. Then, just when they had given up all hope, something remarkable happened...

**Scripture:** Luke 1:5-25

Hymn VU 5 All earth is Waiting

### **Prayer of Confession**

- One:** God of infinite love, we confess that we are quick to give up on ourselves and on others. We fail to trust that you are with us when our lives become filled up with busyness or darkness, sadness or conflict.
- All:** **Forgive us when we fail to see your face in the people around us. Fill us with your graciousness that as we are forgiven, so we may become a forgiving, reconciling people. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

- One:** In ancient times, mistletoe was considered the "meeting place" for warring parties. Under the mistletoe, enemies could exchange the "kiss of peace" and work to let go of anger and past hurts enough to really listen to each other and understand one another's points of view. In the presence of God's love we gather, continually grateful for God's forgiveness and grace. We are a forgiven people. We are freed by God's grace to reach out to a broken world with compassion and love.

**Passing of the Peace**

One: Peace be with you.

All: **and also with you ...**

Response

Hymn VU 958 Halle, Halle, Halle

Reading: Luke 1:57–66

Chorus: VU 10 Prepare the Way of the Lord - 3X

Reading: Luke 1:67–79

**The Christmas Tree: A Symbol of Celebration and Rebirth**

One: The Christmas tree is also evergreen: a symbol of rebirth in a time of dormancy (winter). The evergreen reminds us that new life is possible, even in the darkest times in our lives. The needles on the tree point upwards as if joyfully giving thanks to the creator of life. The Christmas tree is full of wonder for small children and adults alike. Its lights cause even the saddest heart to sing.

Hymn VU 820 Make a Joyful Noise

**The Candles and Lights: God Promises to Give Light**

One: The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when the darkness of the world would be replaced by light and when that light would bless all people. Into our personal darkness comes Jesus, not just once long ago, but again and again—holding up God’s promise of hope, even when life is filled with struggle. Listen for Isaiah’s words...

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2 and 60:1-3

Hymn VU 79 Arise, Your Light Is Come

**OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD.**

**Call to the Offering**

With thankful hearts for the life of Jesus and for the many blessings we have received we bring our gifts to God.

Anthem: 'Tis December - Joan J. Pinkston

Offering response: VU 537 Your Work O God.

**Your work O God needs many hands**

**To help you everywhere**

**And some there are who cannot serve**

**Unless our gifts we share.**

**PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS**

Loving God, you are the one who can create miracles, turning small acts of kindness, into awesome acts of abundance. Bless these gifts we pray and may they go out into your world and make a difference. Amen

Celebration of Communion

**The New Creed**

**Bringing in the Manger. - A symbol of preparation and hospitality.**

One: The manger is a centuries old symbol of preparation and hospitality that touches the hearts of Christians of all denominations throughout the world. Advent it a time of waiting. A time of preparing our hearts to welcome the Christ Child.

*For unto us a child will be born...*

**WE GO OUT RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT**

Hymn VU 218 We Praise You O God

**BLESSING**

SUNG BENEDICTION Go Make a Difference

**Go make a diff'rence, we can make a diff'rence**

**Go make a diff'rence in the world**

**Go make a diff'rence, we can make a diff'rence**

**Go make a diff'rence in the world**

**We are the salt of the earth, called to let the people see  
The love of God in you and me  
We are the light of the world, not to be hidden, but be seen  
Go make a difference in the world**

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Postlude: Improvisation on "Sing We Now for Christmas"

**OUR WORSHIP ENDS - OUR SERVICE BEGINS**

PLEASE JOIN US NOW FOR A TIME OF  
FELLOWSHIP AND REFRESHMENTS.

**This Sunday's Readers:**

- Ben Bell
- Evan Duncan
- Graham Dunsmore
- Caitie Johnston
- Alison McLeod
- William Mitchell
- Daniel O'Leary
- Kaillie Rawn
- Sarah Schmidt

\* \* \* \* \*

- Partners in Prayer:** Grand River Community Church
- Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference:** Emmanuel, Hamilton
- Prayer Tree Captain:** Alison Rainford

- Welcomers:** Elizabeth Stintson, Barb Lynden,  
Eleanor Johnston, Ralph Rainford
- Counters:** David Ogilvie (Captain, Norma Martin  
Dorothy Collin

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Dec. 1, 2013

**If you are worshiping with us for the first time, welcome!** Please sign our Guest Book at the back of the church or in the entranceway.

**Today at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary** - the Centre Wellington Singers are performing their concert here at Melville. Tickets are Adults \$15.00 each.

**There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday December 15, 2013** to receive the report and recommendation of the Joint Search Committ.

**The next meeting of the Joint Search Committee** will be on Thursday December 12 at 8 p.m. in the Chapel.

**All ladies of the church are invited to a UCW Pot Luck dinner, Dec. 16,** appetizers at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Come for good food, music and fellowship.

**Children's Choir for Christmas.** The Children's choir will sing during the Family service on Christmas Eve. They will sing a couple of easy Carols, which we will practice on Sundays in December starting on the 8th after the service. The practices will run from 12 to 12:30. If you would like to participate please come and/or contact Matthias Schmidt

**The Spirituality Circle will meet only on Monday, Dec 9** in the parlour. The meetings will go back to the regular schedule of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays in the New Year.

**Dec. 6 Candlelight Vigil** - An evening to pray and light candles in memory of women and children who have lost their lives to violence will be held on Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. at Moorefield United Church. Dec. 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The vigil is a partnership of Moorefield United Church and the Rural Women's Support Centre in Palmerston. All men and women with an interest in ending violence are welcome. Please plan to stay for a reception afterwards.

**Pastoral Care Workshop** - Pastoral Care 101 will be offered on Friday Dec 6th at 11:30 a.m.. This is an introduction to pastoral care including the gift of deep listening. All are welcome to attend.

**White Gift Sunday, December 15.** Melville is supporting Centre Wellington High School's Aboriginal Club drive for children and baby gifts, winter clothing, and diapers. All items to be sent to a First Nation community in Northern Ontario and an Inuit community in Nunavut. Please bring items wrapped in white to worship on December 15.

**Please note that the Christmas Eve Services** will be 6:30 p.m. for the family and 10 p.m. will be Communion.

**Angel Memory Tree** - This initiative will be done differently this year from the past. If you wish to donate to the Angel Memory Tree project, please use the Special Givings envelope in your pew and the collection plate. Make sure you indicate "Angels" and make sure your name is clear on the envelope. This donation will be added to your givings.

**During the December 22nd service**, there will be a de-covenanting ceremony for Val. The service will be followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us to say farewell to Val and to wish her all the best as she plans to retire from the ministry to pursue other paths. If you would like to donate towards a gift for Val, please see Ralph Rainford. Thank you.

**Please assist with Sunday morning Coffee** by signing up on the sheet on the Parlour door. Cookies, coffee and tea are supplied. If you cannot help you may wish to donate cookies. Just place them labelled in the upstairs kitchen.

**Have you ever been to the Kitchener Christmas market?** Well, if you liked that then come and celebrate St Nicholas Day at our own DIY Christmas Market! Friday Dec. 6th. Potluck at 5:30 p.m., followed by DIY Bazaar booths, storytelling and puppet show, music from The Band, and more! For all ages.

**CW Food Bank Christmas Hamper program has begun!!** Melville has been asked to contribute 300 cereal boxes....healthier choices please. These items need to be collected by December 8th to allow time to deliver to the Sportsplex to be included in the hampers. The food bank is also looking for a few volunteers to help with the distribution of the hampers... if you would like to help in this manner, please speak to Mary Lloyd for more details.

**2014 United Church calendars are in.** If you are interested in purchasing one, please see Doreen after church. A reminder that Mission and Outreach's Hot Dog lunch in December is in support of the Pastoral Care shut-in bags which will include calendars for our shut-ins.. Please plan to attend this lunch.

**Handel's Messiah sing-a-long**, presented by the Guelph Chamber Choir. December 22 at 3:00 p.m. at St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph.

**Dec. 7, 7:00 pm at Harcourt United Church, Snow Angel:** featuring four award-winning choirs and the newest addition to the GYS family, the Young Men's Choir, singing a mix of traditional carols to contemporary popular selections. Saturday, December 7, 2013, 7:00 pm, Harcourt United Church, Guelph. Tickets @ River Run Box Office, 519-763-3000 or [www.riverrun.ca](http://www.riverrun.ca). Adults \$25, Students & Seniors \$20, eyeGo . For info visit [www.guelphyouthsingers.com](http://www.guelphyouthsingers.com) or call 519-821-8574.

**MELVILLE BOOK GROUP** - our next book is available now in the church library. It is "Left Neglected" by Lisa Genova. We will be discussing it on Sunday, Dec. 29. Anyone is welcome to sign out a book even if you aren't able to make it to discussion.

**Wednesday, 15 January, 7 – 9 pm:** "Seeking to live faithfully in a time of church decline and religious upheaval." Join John Buttars as he shares a 15 year prayer-reading-reflection journey and finds questions posed through God's Spirit about the church of the past, present and future. A contribution to Chalmers Community Services Centre would be greatly appreciated. In the sanctuary of Dublin United, 68 Suffolk St., Guelph, and sponsored by its Justice and Outreach Committee

<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	January 1 - October 31, 2013	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Envelope givings	138,748	151,667
Other revenue	43,293	40,583
Total income	182,041	192,250
Total expenses	190,786	222,406
Net Income / (Loss)	(8,745)	(30,156)

Although still behind budget, envelope givings have been increasing...thank you! The amazing Fun, Funds and Fellowship team has once again done a tremendous job as fundraising revenue has already surpassed the annual budget by \$5,000! Expenses continue to come in under budget which results in a smaller loss than we had anticipated at this point in the budget

Dec. 1, 2013

**Behold...An Advent Experience - Waterloo Presbytery invites to**  
Worship, to sing with Massed Choirs and to hear the Right Reverend  
Gary Paterson, Moderator of the United Church of Canada 7:00 p.m. in  
at First United Church in Waterloo. More info please call 519-745-8487.

**Please note that the Christmas Eve Services** will be 6:30 p.m. for the  
family and 10 p.m. will be Communion.

**International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

"I ask all in the international community to work together to translate  
the solidarity expressed on this occasion into positive action for peace  
and justice."

Secretary-General of the U N Ban Ki-moon

Message on the International Day of  
Solidarity with the Palestinian People

29 November 2013

[www.un.org/en/events/palestinianday/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/palestinianday/index.shtml)

**WEEKLY CALENDAR**

Mon. Dec. 2 to Sun. Dec. 8 , 2013

Tues.3	9:00	Quilting	Heritage Hall
	12:00	Advent Study	Parlour
Wed. 4	6:30	Advent Study	Chapel
	7:00	Faith Formation	Parlour
Thurs. 5	7:00	Choir	Parlour
Fri. 6	10:00	Coffee Hour	Parlour
	11:00	Meditation	Library
	5:30	Christmas Market	Fellowship Hall
Sat. 7	12:00	Friendship Potluck Lunch	Fellowship Hall
Sun. 8	9:30	Choir	Choir Room
	10.30	Sunday Service	Sanctuary