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Melville United Church St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781 Team Ministry	
Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music:	Matthias Schmidt
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
Pastoral Care	Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree
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* Congregation please stand as you are able.

Bold print invites congregational response.

Prelude

Welcome

Prelude/Centering Time:

Ministry of Music: Sussex Carol - arr. D. Willcocks

sung by Schmidt Family

Call to Worship:

The moment is near.

**Our feet have brought us close
 to the place where love is born.**

Our hearts are filled with trembling hopes
 for the future of the world,

**hopes that have formed and grown within us
 as we have walked this way together.**

A star hovers over us and waits in expectation.

**Surely the Christ will come
 and we will find a place for the birthing.**

***Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful VU 60**

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:
 come and behold him, born the King of angels;
 O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
 sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
 glory to God in the highest:
 O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
 Jesus, to thee be glory given;
 word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
 O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Opening Prayer:

Our lives are stilled in trembling hope, O God.
 Hope that within a womb of faithfulness,
 in our ordinary human lives,
 holiness may be conceived and brought forth.

**Let us be still and hear your promises
 echoing in the melodies of distant singing.**

Let us pause and look, for we may be among the welcoming -
 the ones who greet joy and love in the midst of human life.

**Let us be still and hear your promises
 in the melodies of distant singing. Amen.**

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Hymn: A Candle is Burning VU 6

- 1 A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
 a candle of hope in December's dark night.
 While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
 our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.
- 2 A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
 a candle to signal that conflict must cease:
 for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
 a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.
- 3 A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
 a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
 Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
 as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.
- 4 A candle is burning, a candle of love,
 a candle to point us to heaven above.
 A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
 for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

5 We honour Messiah with Christ-candle's flame,
 our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
 O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
 as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Prayer of Confession and Affirmation:

The wonder of Christmas worship is that we are together.

The joy of the Christmas season is that compassion flourishes and
 relationship is restored.

The inspiration of the Christmas season is that refugees and the poor
 are honoured.

The glory of this holy time is clear. God's love is always there for us.

Forgive us, O God, when we miss the significance of your love.

Open the door of the Bethlehem stable, and lead us to the light.

The coming of Christ is our turning point. Know the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Ministry of Music: Unto Us a Child is Born - John Carter Melville Choir

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem VU 64

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
 how still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 the silent stars go by;
 yet in thy dark streets shineth
 the everlasting light;
 the hopes and fears of all the years
 are met in thee tonight.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary;
 and gathered all above,
 while mortals sleep, the angels keep
 their watch of wondering love.
 O morning stars, together
 proclaim the holy birth,
 and praises sing to God the King,
 and peace to all on earth.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
 descend to us, we pray;
 cast out our sin, and enter in;
 be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 the great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 our Lord Emmanuel.

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

Hymn: While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

VU 75

- 1 While shepherds watched their flocks by night
 all seated on the ground,
 the angel of the Lord came down,
 and glory shone around.
- 2 'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
 had seized their troubled mind;
 'glad tidings of great joy I bring
 to you and humankind.
- 3 'To you in David's town this day
 is born of David's line
 a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
 and this shall be the sign:
- 4 'The heavenly babe you there shall find
 to human view displayed,
 all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
 and in a manger laid.'
- 5 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
 appeared a shining throng
 of angels praising God, who thus
 addressed their joyful song:
- 6 'All glory be to God on high,
 and to the earth be peace!
 Good will to all from highest heaven
 begin, and never cease.'

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20

***Hymn: Away In a Manger**

VU 69

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
 I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
 and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
 close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
 and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Reflection: O Lord, You Were Born!

By Ann Weems

Hymn: It Came upon the Midnight Clear

VU 44

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
 that glorious song of old,
 from angels bending near the earth
 to touch their harps of gold,
 'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
 from heaven's all-gracious King!'
 The world in solemn stillness lay
 to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come
 with peaceful wings unfurled;
 and still their heavenly music floats
 o'er all the weary world;
 above its sad and lowly plains
 they bend on hovering wing,
 and ever o'er its Babel sounds
 the blessed angels sing.

4 For, lo! the days are hastening on,
 by prophets seen of old,
 when with the ever-circling years
 shall come the time foretold,
 when peace shall over all the earth
 its ancient splendours fling,
 and the whole world send back the song
 which now the angels sing.

Our Christmas Prayers:

The Prayer of Jesus:

Invitation to Communion:

Christmas Communion:

In this crossover moment.....

....as the whole universe sings:

Refrain: Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis deo!

Words of Institution:

Sharing of the Elements: *(people come forward to form a circle - we will serve each other saying)*

“The gifts of Christmas are yours”

Post Communion Prayer

Before “Silent Night” *(each person is invited to take a candle from the baskets)*

***Hymn:** Silent Night

VU 67

1 Silent night! Holy night!
 All is calm, all is bright
 round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
 sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace..

2 Silent night! Holy night!
 Shepherds quake at the sight:
 glories stream from heaven afar,
 heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
 Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.

3 Silent night! Holy night!
 Son of God, love's pure light
 radiant beams from thy holy face,
 with the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

***Blessing:**

***Parting Song: Joy to the World VU 59**

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
 let earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare him room,
 and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
 and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
 let all their songs employ,
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4 He rules the earth with truth and grace,
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of his righteousness
 and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
 and wonders, wonders of his love.

Postlude: Hallelujah Christmas (Cohen/Cloverton) Marion Loree

Welcomers: Mary Lloyd, Graeme Chalmers,
 Andrew Chalmers