

**Melville United Church**  
**Sunday December 24, 2017**  
**Advent 4**



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\* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*

**Bold print invites congregational response.**

Presiding Today: Marion Loree

**Prelude**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Call to Worship:** *(based on Psalm 89)*

What shall we sing?

**That God's love is loyal and never-ending!**

What shall we shout?

**God's faithfulness is for all generations!**

What shall we proclaim?

**God's covenant is our firm foundation!**

\***Hymn:** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**VU 2**

**Opening Prayer:**

**There are times, comforting One, when we feel puzzled by what we sense your Spirit is leading us to do. In those times, we feel afraid and very alone. Let us hear, in our hearts, the message to "not be afraid" and the reminder that you are with us as we worship together in this place. Amen.**

**Prayer for Inner Healing:**

Sometimes we have ideas of how things should be, and we do not want to know of other options. God of wonders,

**help us to reveal your promise in our world.**

Sometimes we think that God can only be found in certain places, or in certain ways.

<p>Melville United Church St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781 Team Ministry</p>	
Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music:	
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
Pastoral Care	Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree
Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain	Alison Rainford
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**December 24, 2017**

God of no limits,

**help us to reveal your promise in our world.**

Sometimes we cannot believe the things that are asked of us,  
and assume we must be misunderstanding.

God of surprises,

**help us to reveal your promise in our world.**

Sometimes we hear God calling us, and we let go of all of those things  
that hold us back and, like Mary, we say “nothing is impossible with God.”

God of wonders,

**help us to reveal your promise in our world. Amen.**

**Words of Affirmation:**

The angel said to Mary - “All things are possible with God.”

When we open ourselves to God, we also find this to be true.

**We find our voices and the world is changed  
and we are changed too.**

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**Ministry of Music:** Christ is Born in Bethlehem - Larson, Brooks.

**Theme Conversation:** God uses us.

**Lighting of the Advent Candle:** Shepherds, Love

*(First three candles are lit)*

**Shepherds, where are you going?**

**Can we go, too?**

We are rushing off to Bethlehem.

The angels came and told us that a baby was born.

Not just any baby, but God’s baby, Jesus.

This baby is God’s gift of hope and peace,  
joy and love for the whole wide world.

The angels will watch the sheep, but we have to go.

There is no time to waste,

we are so excited. We are filled with joy!

We must see this child, this baby Jesus.

Yes, you can come with us, but you must hurry.

**Thank you, shepherds, for your faith  
and your gift of love.**

**We will join you on this Advent adventure.**

*(The fourth candle is lit)*

**Song: Hope is a Star**

**VU 7 -all verses**

**Children’s Prayer:**

**Dear God,**

**help our lips to praise** *(touch lips)*

**help our hands to serve** *(hold out hands)*

**help our heart to love** *(fold hands across chest)*

**Amen.**

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 *(The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation)*  
*(Who will build God’s house?)*

When David finally settled into the palace, and YHWH gave him rest  
from enemies on every side, he said to the prophet Nathan, “Here I am  
living in this house of cedar while the Ark of God sits in a tent!”

Nathan replied to David, “Go, do whatever you have in mind, for  
YHWH is with you.”

That night the word of YHWH came to Nathan, and said, “Go and tell  
my servant David that this is what YHWH wants: ‘Are you the one to  
build me a Temple? I have been without a Temple from the day I  
brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving  
from place to place with a Tent as my dwelling place. Wherever I  
traveled with the people of Israel, did I ever say to the governors whom  
I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built  
me a Temple made out of cedar?’”

“Now then, tell my servant, David, ‘This is what YHWH Omnipotent  
says: I took you from the pastures and from following sheep to be the

ruler of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and destroyed all your enemies in your path. I will give you fame like the fame of the great ones on the earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel. I will plant them where they will have a home of their own - a place where they will never be disturbed. Never again will the sinners oppress them as they did in the past ever since the time I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. I will give you security from all your enemies.

“Furthermore, I alone will establish your house. Your family and your dynasty will last forever.”

**Responsive Reading:** The Magnificat (Song of Mary) **VU 898** (Refrain 1)

**Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38 (*The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation*)  
(*The angel Gabriel visits Mary*)

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favoured one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favour with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus - ‘Deliverance.’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgement seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

The angel answered her, “The Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you - hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.”

Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.”  
With that the angel left her.

**Message:** Do Not Be Afraid

**Hymn:** Oh, How Joyfully

**VU 57**

**Offering:**

**\*Offering Hymn:** Behold, Behold

**MV 115**

**Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold.)**

**I make all things new, beginning with you  
and starting from today.**

**Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold.)**

**I make all things new, my promise is true,  
for I am Christ the way. (Repeat).**

**\*Offertory Prayer:**

**Through these gifts and through the offering of our time and talents,  
Holy Oneness, may we be agents of hope, peace, joy and love in your  
world, lifting people up in love so that they may experience an  
abundant future. Amen.**

**Joys and Concerns:**

**Prayer Prelude:** May We But Wait

**MV 175**

**May we but wait upon Love’s word,**

**Knowing our prayer is heard. (Repeat)**

**Prayers of the People:**

**Response:**

Come to us, O God,

**And may we give birth to your promises.**

**Prayer of Jesus:**

**\*Hymn:** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

**VU 35**

**\*Blessing:**

Go with joy!

**We are ready to welcome God's love.**

Go with peace!

**We are prepared to welcome the Prince of Peace.**

Go with hope!

**We understand that with God all is possible.**

Above all, go with love!

**We know that God's love is available for everyone - always!**

Amen.

**\*Parting Song:** I Am Walking the Path of Love

MV 221

**I am walking a path of love,**

**I am walking a path of love,**

**I am walking a path of love,**

**lead me home, lead me home. (Repeat)**

**Postlude:**

**Prayer of the Week:**

Holiness,

Word, Music, Song -

into this night, Your cry comes, once again.

Open our ears to hear You.

Open our mouths to sing You.

Open our very lives,

that we might live You in the world,

Light within Light.

Amen.

**Partners in Prayer:** Centre Wellington Food Bank

**Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference:** First -Pilgrim, Hamilton

**Prayer Tree Captain:** Alison Rainford

**Welcomers:** Vivian, Havey and Mark Andrews, Ralph Rainford

**Counters:** Karen Smillie and Richard Wright



**Wishing you and your family a Happy  
& Blessed Christmas**

**May hope fill you heart.**

**May peace bless your spirit.**

**May joy guide your journey.**

**May love light your way.**

