

Melville United Church
Sunday December 3, 2017
Advent 1



** Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding Today: Marion Loree

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

**Wise Ones from the East,
where are you going?
Can we go, too?**

We have seen an amazing star.

It shines brighter than any other star.

We are going to follow this star and see where it takes us.

We think it will lead us to a child who will soon be born,
a child of God who will change the world.

We have faith that God will show us the way.

We have great hope that our quest will be successful.

And, yes, you can come with us.

Thank you, wise Ones, for your faith and your gift of hope.

We will join you on this Advent adventure.

(The first candle is lit)

Song: Hope is a star - VU 7 vs 1.

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.**

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

**The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.**

Melville United Church

St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781

Team Ministry **December 3, 2017**

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
Secretary's Office hours:	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. T., T. & F.
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Call to Worship:

In every season of life,

God is always with us, even when we believe otherwise.

In this season of waiting,

**Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning of our discipleship,
not the end of the journey.**

In this season of Advent anticipation and hope,

the Spirit opens our ears to the songs of the angels.

Come, let us worship together.

***Hymn:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs 1,2,6,7) **VU 1**

Opening Prayer:

In this time when hearts tremble with fears about tomorrow:

come into our awareness.

In those moments when our hearts are parched
from wandering through the wilderness of worry:

come into our awareness.

In these days when the powers of the world can distract us from faith

come into our awareness.

In the nights when our souls grow cold with doubt:

come into our awareness.

God-who-is-present-even-now,

come into our awareness, to fill us with hope. Amen.

Prayer for Inner Healing:

God of Love, you are near to us,
yet we continue to seal our hearts with indifference to a suffering world.

Tear open our hearts that we might be more compassionate.

God of mercy, we continue to build our lives with bricks of bitterness.

Tear open our anger, that we might be more forgiving.

We are embraced in your Love,

yet we fold our arms, closing ourselves off from those around us.

Tear open our souls, that we might radiate a Spirit of love.

Shine through our lives this Advent season. Amen.

Words of Affirmation:

Even now, the presence of Spirit is with us,
mercy transcending anger,
hope overcoming despair, love triumphing over hate.

This is good news, my friends;

This is news of great joy for each of us.

Let us live as people of love.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Ministry of Music: When Will the Little Babe Come - Ruth Elaine Schram

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The elements of communion today will be served by intinction. When the time comes you will be invited to come to the front, take a piece of bread from the communal tray then move to one of the cups on either side to dip and then consume your bread. Please take the time you need before returning to your seat. If you cannot come forward for whatever reason to receive the elements you will be served in your seat.

Invitation:

As we make our way into the Advent season...

.... So come and share this time.

May God be with us.

God is here among us.

Let us open our hearts to God

We open them to God and to one another.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom. Angelic messengers delivered news. From that Bethlehem beginning, Jesus spent his life serving others, that all might know the compassionate care of a loving God. Today, Jesus serves us yet again, as we gather at this table prepared for us. Together, we are the Body of Christ.

At this table, we bear witness to our faith.

At this table, God brings wholeness out of brokenness and healing to our world.

Let us break bread together.

Blessing be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

**Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages;
your ancient promise still brings us hope.**

The Story Remembered

As we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth....

....And, in our remembering, we declare the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died and Christ is risen.

Christ will come again!

Prayer:

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life,

whoever comes to me will never be hungry;

whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. All are welcome to share in the feast!

Sharing of the Meal:

Post Communion Prayer

God of Christmas promise, God of childlike hope, we give thanks for this holy mystery in which we experience your presence. In this meal, we have been replenished and strengthened by the light of love rekindled within us. Lead us to live lives marked by truth, and help us to boldly carry the light into the world. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day the world will be changed. May we go from here to speak love and to walk in the way of Jesus. Amen.

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: Mark 13:24-37 (*The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation*)
(*Stay alert!*)

"But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Promised One coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then the angels will be sent to gather the chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Promised One is near, right at the door. The truth is, before this generation has passed away, all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it - neither the angels of

heaven , nor the Only Begotten - no one but Abba God. Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come.

“It is like people traveling abroad. They leave their home and put the workers in charge, each with a certain task, and those who watch at the front gate are ordered to stay on the alert. So stay alert! You do not know when the owner of the house is coming, whether at dusk, at midnight, when the cock crows or at early dawn. Do not let the owner come suddenly and catch you asleep. What I say to you, I say to all: stay alert!”

Reader: Don Grant

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9 (*The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation*)
(*We are the clay, God is the potter*)

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would shake before you! As fire kindles the brushwood and the fire makes water boil, make your Name known to your adversaries, and let the nations tremble before you! When you did awesome things that we could not have expected, you came down, and the mountains quaked in your presence! From ages past no ear has ever heard, no eye has ever seen any God but you intervening for those who wait for you!

Oh, that you would find us doing right, that we would be mindful of you in our ways! You are angry because we are sinful; we sinned for so long - how can we be saved? All of us became unclean and soiled, even our good deeds are polluted. We have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. No one calls upon your Name, there is none who clings to you, for you hid your face from us and delivered us into the hands of our sins.

Yet you are our mother and father, YHWH; we are the clay and you are the potter, we are all the work of your hands. Don't let your anger go beyond measure, O God, don't remember our sins forever, for we are all your people.

Message: A Light In the Distance

Hymn: A Light is Gleaming

VU 82

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:**

May we be alert enough to watch for the opportunities we will have to serve others in this season of holiness, as well as the ways in which we can offer those intangible gifts of our presence. Great Mystery, we present these offerings as a token of our commitment and gratitude. 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: (beginning with Apocalyptic Awakening by Bruce Sanguin - *If Darwin Prayed*)

Prayer of Jesus:

***Hymn:** Living Christ, Bring Us Love

VU 599

***Blessing:**

As Spirit has been present with us,

May we be present to those we serve this week.

As we have been fed with Christ, the Bread of Life,

May we nourish others with peace and grace.

As we were welcomed to the table of the Spirit of Hope,

May we welcome all in the spirit of love.

Go now, knowing that the love of God, the peace of Christ
and the companionship of the Holy Spirit is with you now - always!

Amen.

***Parting Song:** I Am Walking the Path of Hope MV 221

I am walking a path of hope,

I am walking a path of hope,

I am walking a path of hope,

lead me home, lead me home. (Repeat)

Postlude:**Prayer of the Week:**

As we begin our annual pilgrimage to Bethlehem, God of prophets and of the poor, may we discover you revealed in the hope, peace, joy, and love of this season. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Alma United Church

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: Emanuel, Hamilton

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Vivian, Havey and Mark Andrews,
Joyce Keizerwaard

Counters: Karen Smillie, Kaillie Rawn