



Melville United Church
St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781
Team Ministry

Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
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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.

Presiding today - Rev. Marion Loree

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Sharing the Light

Call to Worship:

Come with joy this day.

Come to worship our God.

Our deepest desire is to know God.

Let the light dance and anticipation stir.

We move through Advent waiting and longing.

As we come closer to the birth of the baby

let us be filled with anticipation and joy.

Let us worship in joy together!

***Hymn:** Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

VU 232

Prayer of Approach and Confession:

We pray for joy,

in a world that sometimes feels devoid of joy;

**God, grant us a vision of your future,
so we may live with joy in our hearts.**

Let it give us strength in hard times

and be a cause for celebration in times of bliss.

Sometimes, Holy Presence, we see only the down side of life.

We often overlook the joy and focus on the negative.

Open the childlike eyes of our hearts, Joyful Spark,
and let us experience the joy of your love freely.

**Forgive us our sometimes somber and too serious ways
and let the children teach us to let our joy out! Amen.**

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Words of Assurance:

Feelings of joy are based in love

and God loves us more than we can know.

Hear this and let God's joy fill your heart

for that is where our strength comes from.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

Lighting of the Advent Candle: (written by Don Stiles. Gathering. ACE 2018-19,
pg 70. Used with permission.)

(The first two candles are lit).

Today we kindle the Advent candle of joy.

(The third candle is lit)

We welcome the spark that dances with the Holy Spirit,

the spark that fires and inspires our souls,

The spark of creativity and wonder.

Come, Holy stranger,

evangelist of joy on this Advent journey

welcome us as we welcome you.

We receive the light of joy.

Advent Song: Joy Shines as a Solitary Star

MV 220

Joy shines as the solitary star,

faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,

and illumine the pathway home. (Repeat).

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20 *(The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition)*

(Sing, Daughter of Zion; God comes to bring you home)

Shout for joy, fair Zion; shout, Israel, be glad! Rejoice with all your heart, fair Jerusalem! YHWH has averted your punishment and swept away your foes. Israel, YHWH is among you as ruler; never again need you fear disaster. On that day this must be the message to Jerusalem:

Fear not, Zion, let not your hands hang limp in despair, for YHWH your God is in your midst, a warrior to keep you safe; who will rejoice over you and be glad of it; who will show you love once more, and exult with songs of joy and soothe those who are grieving.

At the appointed time I will take away your cries of woe and you will no longer endure reproach. When that time comes, I will deal with all who oppress you; I will rescue the lost and gather the dispersed. I will win for

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my people praise and renown throughout the whole world.

When that time comes, I will gather you and bring you home. I will win for you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes. It is YHWH God who speaks.

Responsive Reading: Isaiah 12:1a-6

VU 880

(Proclaim God's deeds to the nations)

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7 *(New Revised Standard Version)*

(Rejoice in God always! Again I say Rejoice!)

Rejoice in God always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. God is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Message: Children's Musical - The Littlest Christmas Tree

Hymns: Hope is a Star
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
O Christmas Tree

Children's Prayer:

Dear God,
Help my lips to praise.
Help my hands to serve.
Help my heart to love.
Amen.

Offering:

***Offering Hymn:** Grant Us God, the Grace

VU 540

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.

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***Offertory Prayer:**

God of Joy, the work of our hands and the healing of our hearts belong to you. May these offerings, gladly given, enable the church to support people in the making of choices which will bring joy and may all our giving bring us closer to you. Amen.

Joys and Concerns:

Prayer Prelude: Open Our Hearts MV 21

**Open our hearts, open our minds.
Open our lives to you O loving God.
Open our hearts, open our minds.
Open our lives to you O loving God.
Open our hearts.**

Prayers of the People: *(beginning with "Again, I Say Rejoice" by Bruce Sanguin, If Darwin Prayed).*

When the sun shines,
and when the rain falls,

we rejoice.

When the money gods smile upon us,
and when the bottom falls out of the market,

we rejoice.

When family is the wind beneath our wings,
and when it is a hurricane of hurt.

We rejoice.

When we are strong in body and mind,
and when illness reveals our vulnerability,

we rejoice.

When the beauty of creation drops us to our knees in awe,
and when the injustice of humanity drops us to our knees in prayer,

we rejoice.

For we are in you, and you are in us,
and there is a country of the soul
where the eternal joy of Being
sustains us on this rocky road of becoming.

We rejoice and give thanks.

Our prayers continue...

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The Lord's Prayer:

***Hymn:** Come, Though Long-Expected Jesus VU 2

***Blessing:**

As you wait in expectation for the coming of Emmanuel,
express God's loving-kindness for all humanity in whatever you do.

We go to spread the joy of God's love.

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

Parting Song: Go Now in Joy, Guided by the Light MV 211

**Go now in joy,
guided by the light of Christ,
so you may be
nourished by the Word of Life. (Repeat)**

Postlude:

Prayer of the Week:

Holy Mystery, we are eager to celebrate the day of Jesus' birth. In him we see earth and heaven united. Give us strength and imagination to understand who we are in light of the experiences we share together.
Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Elora Road Christian Fellowship

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: First - Port Credit

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Vivian and Havey and Mark Andrews
Richard Wright

Counters: Richard Wright and Chris Hopewell