



Melville United Church  
Sunday, December 23, 2018  
4th Sunday of Advent



*\* 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:**

Like Mary, let us offer our praise to God wholeheartedly.

**God has not forgotten us, insignificant as we may feel.**

Holy Presence is pure compassion.

**Great Mystery lifts us up and feeds our souls.**

As Christmas approaches let us open our selves  
to the wonder of the love that surrounds us

**Let us worship the Spirit of love together.**

**\*Hymn:** People, Look East

**VU 9**

**Prayer of Approach and Confession:**

We pray for love,

in a world that often feels loveless:

**God, grant us a vision of your future,  
so we may live and love abundantly.**

Let it give us comfort when we are grieving

**and gladness in times of celebration.**

We confess that we sometimes miss the mark.

**We know we are not perfect.**

Too often we act out of personal wants and desires.

**Guide our choices, Holy Presence.**

Too often we busy ourselves leaving little time for Spirit.

**Guide us in the priorities we set, Great Mystery.**

You know us, Holy Oneness - the whole of us.

**Guide us in our living, Source of Love. Amen.**

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	
Minister of Music Team:	Rob White, Suzanne Flewelling
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 23, 2018

### Words of Assurance:

The Holy Presence sees us, all of us, the whole of us,

**God knows our heart of hearts.**

We cannot hide ourselves from God and we don't need to

**because we are loved more than we can ever know.**

Hear this and believe it!

**We give thanks to God, the Source of Love. Amen!**

### Lighting of the Advent Candle:

(written by Don Stiles. Gathering. ACE 2018-19, pg 70. Used with permission.)

*(The first three candles are lit).*

Today we kindle the Advent candle of love.

*(The fourth candle is lit)*

We welcome the warmth that lightens the winter chill,

**the warmth of passionate embrace,**

the warmth that comes from the heart of God.

**Come, Holy Stranger,**

**messenger of love on this Advent journey:**

welcome us as we welcome you.

**We receive the light of love.**

**Advent Song:** Love Shines as a Solitary Star **MV 220**

**Love 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).**

**Music:** Make It Christmas Day (*band*)

**Scripture:** Micah 5:2-5a (*New Revised Standard Version*)

*(Out of Bethlehem in Judea shall come a leader)*

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of God, in the majesty of the name of his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

**Words to Ponder:** - Based on thoughts by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**\*Hymn:** O, Little Town of Bethlehem

**VU 64**

**Scripture:** Luke 1:39-45 (*New Revised Standard Version*)

*(Mary visits Elizabeth)*

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the angel of the Lord."

**Words to Ponder:** Mary, Nazareth Girl

- *Ann Weems*

**Hymn:** She Walked in the Summer

**VU 12** - *solo* - *Marion Loree*

**Scripture:** Luke 1:47-55 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Edition*)

*(Mary sings a song of praise to God)*

And Mary said,

"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Saviour. For you have looked with favour upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.

For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name. Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy - the promise you made to our ancestors - to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."

**Words to Ponder:** Mary's Prayer  
(Based on 'Mary's Prayer' - by Max Lucado - One Incredible Moment)

**Anthem:** Unto Us a Child is Born - John Carter

**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.**

**Ministry of Music:** What Child is This/Carol of the Bells (band)

**\*Offertory Prayer:**

**This is a season of giving gifts, and so we come now to give our gifts of time, money and talent to this faith community. We give that our congregation can thrive. We give to help others. We give to help ourselves feel good. But most of all we give because we have been given so much and we want to give some back. Bless our gifts, Spirit of Love, and bless us at this Christmas time. 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:**

God birthing hope,  
fill us with kindness and compassion.  
Give us eyes to search you out  
in the least likely of places.  
**Fill our lives with hope!**

God birthing peace,  
fill our world with all that is green and growing.  
Give us hands to tend this earthly garden  
and to care for your children everywhere.  
**Fill our world with peace!**

God birthing joy,  
fill this holy place of Melville United Church  
with singing and dancing  
as we serve in your way.  
**Fill your peoples with joy!**

God birthing love,  
fill our days with story and memory.  
Open us once more to new beginnings  
and to as many possibilities as there are stars in the sky.  
**Fill our lives with love!**

*Our prayers continue...*

**The Lord's Prayer: (Aramaic Translation)**  
**Loving Presence, luminous in all creation,**  
**hallowed be your name.**  
**Thy kin-dom come,**  
**May we reflect on Earth**  
**the yielding perfection of the heavens.**  
**Help us to receive an illumined measure from Earth this day.**  
**Forgive us when we trespass against others,**  
**human and other-than-human,**  
**as we forgive others who trespass against us.**  
**Keep us on the path of wisdom**  
**when we are tempted to take the selfish path.**  
**May it be your rule we follow,**  
**your power we exercise,**  
**and your radiance that allures.**  
**May this be the truth that guides our lives,**  
**the ground from which our future will grow,**  
**until we meet again. Amen.**

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

**VU 35**

**\*Blessing:**

Let us go forth as a people of hope.

**We go, singing a song of peace.**

Let us go forth with joy in our hearts.

**We go forth, with love overflowing.**

Let us go, as people of God,

**We go, knowing we are never alone.**

Go, knowing God is with you - always!

**Amen!**

**Parting Song:** Go Now in Love, Guided by the Light

**MV 211**

**Go now in love,**

**guided by the light of Christ,**

**so you may be**

**nourished by the Word of Life.** (Repeat)

**Postlude:**

**Prayer of the Week:**

Teach us to sing your praise, O God. Teach us to sing with notes formed by hopes and acts of justice. Teach us to sing with harmonies shaped by mercy's wide embrace. Teach us to sing Mary's song of birth and rebirth for all creation in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

**Partners in Prayer:** Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference:** Fruitland, Stoney Creek

**Prayer Tree Captain:** Alison Rainford

**Welcomers:**

Doreen and Larry Broome,  
Barb Gregory, Mark Andrews

**Counters:**

Larry Broome and Karen Smillie