



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

<b>Minister of Worship &amp; Pastoral Care</b>	<b>Rev. Marion Loree</b>
<b>Minister of Faith Formation &amp; Outreach</b>	
<b>Minister of Music Team:</b>	<b>Rob White, Suzanne Flewelling</b>
<b>Church Secretary:</b>	<b>Gerri McCullough</b>
<b>Custodian:</b>	<b>Robert Mitchell</b>
<b>Chair of Church Council:</b>	<b>Allan Hons</b>
<b>Pastoral Care</b>	<b>Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree</b>
<b>Chair of Pastoral Care</b>	
<b>&amp; Prayer Chain Captain</b>	<b>Alison Rainford</b>
<b>Secretary's Office hours:</b>	<b>8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. T., T. &amp; F.</b>
<b>E-Mail:</b>	<b>secretary@melvilleunited.com</b>
<b>Web Site:</b>	<b>www.melvilleunited.com</b>
<b>Pastoral Care Numbers</b>	<b>519-826-9385, 519-835-8605</b>
	<b>519-843-3841</b>

**Melville United Church**  
**Sunday, December 24, 2018**  
**Early Christmas Eve Service - 5:00 p.m.**

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

**Bold print invites congregational response.**

Presiding: Lillian Gohn, Suzanne Flewelling, Martha Duncan

**Prelude**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Sharing the Light**

**Call to Worship:**

Why do we gather here, on a night so beautifully dark and quiet?

**To celebrate the birth of a child.**

Who is the child that is born this night?

**The One, the Christ, the God-with-Us.**

Who are we, that we commemorate this birth?

**His sisters and brothers and siblings,**

**His disciples and friends.**

Then, as family and friends, let us come together,

To tell stories and sing songs, to share in the feast of thanksgiving

**To celebrate and worship our God!**

*(Richard Bott, Pacific Spirit P.C., Vancouver, B.C.)*

**\*VU 64 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!**

**Above they deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by,**

**Yet in they dark streets shineth the everlasting light,**

**The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**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.**

**How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!**

**So God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.**

**No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls  
 will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, decent 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, a bid with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

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

### **Lighting of the Advent Candles**

*(As the first candle is lit)*

On the first Sunday of Advent we lit a candle for Hope.

*(As the second candle is lit)*

On the second Sunday we lit a candle for Peace.

*(As the third candle is lit)*

On the third Sunday we lit a candle for Joy

*(As the fourth candle is lit)*

On the fourth Sunday we lit a candle for Love.

This night, this blessed night, we light the candle that brings all of these together.

Tonight we light the Christ candle.

**This is what we have waited for.**

This is the hope, born of Mary,

**This is the Peace, lived on earth,**

This is the Joy of God's love shown in human life,

**This is the Love that wraps us, holds us, sustains us and gives us life.**

Tonight we celebrate Christ's light born again into the world!

**With all of God's creatures we sing Hallelujah!**

*(The Christ candle is lit)*

This is the candle of Christ, a light to the world.

**In its glow, we are blessed. In its glow, God's love is revealed.**

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

### **Opening Prayer:**

Holy One, as we gather around the manger, hold us in the glow of your love. May this light give us new vision and greater spiritual clarity, that as we marvel at the mystery of this moment, we will remain in the eternity of your love. In the name of Jesus, we make this prayer.

**Amen.** *(Don Uhryniw, Emmanuel U.C., Peterborough, ON)*

**Presentation: “The Star Who Couldn’t Twinkle”**

*(The story of the star will unfold ...we will sing the carols in the order they appear. Please remain seated for these.)*

In the beginning...

**Song:** Try to Twinkle Little Star  
**Try to twinkle little star,**  
**Then we’ll know just what you are.**  
**Up above the world so high,**  
**Like a diamond in the sky,**  
**Try to twinkle little star,**  
**Then we’ll know just what you are.**

*The little star slid down the heavens to find Mary...*

**Song:** Jesus Our Brother  
**“I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown,**  
**“I carried the mother uphill and down,**  
**I carried his mother to Bethlehem town,**  
**“I,” said the donkey shaggy and brown.**

*The little star saw Bethlehem...*

**Carol:** Away in a Manger  
**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.**

*The Glowing Angel appeared again...*

**Carol:** VU 75 While Shepherds Watched Their Flock by Night  
**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,**  
**all seated on the ground,**  
**the angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.**

**“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread**  
**had seized their troubled mind,**  
**“glad tidings of great joy I bring, to you and hu – man - kind.”**

**“The heavenly babe you there shall find,**  
**To human view displayed,**  
**All meantly wrapped in swaddling bands, and in a manger laid.”**

*Far away in the East...*

**Song:** Still, Still, Still

**Still, Still, Still;**

**The night is calm and still.**

**The Christ child in his crib lies sleeping,**

**Angels round him watch are keeping.**

**Still, Still, Still; the night is calm and still.**

**Joy, Joy , Joy;**

**glad tidings of great joy.**

**For through God's holy incarnation**

**Christ is born for our salvation.**

**Joy, Joy, Joy; glad tidings of great joy.**

*The Christmas Star's light grew larger...*

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

*(Congregation please stand)*

**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,**

Refrain

**O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,**

**O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,**

**Sing all ye citizens of heaven above,**

**Glory to God, in the highest,**

Refrain

**O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,**

**O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Prayers of the people.**

Loving and gracious God, the story of the star gave us great hope as it made sure Mary and Joseph were safe and warm to wait for the baby to be born this night, let this be a sign God can change the world through one small light.

**With our whole being, we open our being to love being born**

Ever-loving God, we wish for the sun to rise. We await the morning light to shine, bringing with it the hope of a new day. We open our whole being to your Love, come in the form of a most vulnerable baby.

**With our whole being, we open our being to love being born**

Taking one more step toward learning to live and lean into Your abundant love: we pray for ourselves, for our loved ones, and for the hurting.

**Together we have found the way of hope, of peace, of joy of love and faith. It is that light that never fails. Amen**

**Special Music:** “The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth”

## **The offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

Here we present our gifts, O God:

Symbols of our very selves given to you, signs of our willingness to follow the path of vulnerability, concrete expressions of our internal discipleship.

Bless them for your mission in the world, just as you bless us, we pray. Amen.

*(Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, ON)*

**Hymn:** VU 59 “Joy to the World”

**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.**

**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.**

**No more let sins and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground: he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.**

**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.**

**Commissioning:**

This holy night,  
May you feel God's presence with you.  
May you know Christ,  
as sure and powerful as a light in the shadows.  
And may the Spirit use you to be seeds of grace for a waiting world.  
Merry Christmas! Amen.

*(Elaine Bidgood Street, First Lutheran Rugby Leeds, North Dakota)*

**Welcomers:**

Mary Lloyd, Mark Andrews,  
Isobel Glennie, Alison Rainford