

Melville United Church
December 22, 2019
4th Sunday of Advent

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* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today - Rev. Marion Loree
Assisting - Brad Halls

We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Indigenous peoples with whom Treaty 4 - also known as the Haldimand Tract - was signed and the territory wherein our church resides, and we acknowledge our responsibilities as treaty members.

Prelude

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

Welcome & Announcements

Joys, Concerns

God Moments/Moments of Awe

Sharing the Light

We light a candle

**in the name of the God who creates life,
in the name of the Christ Presence who loves life,
in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.**

Centering words:

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. -Rumi

You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. – Buddha

Gathering Hymn: Love is the Touch

MV 89

Ministry of Music : Follow the Star

-Sally K. Albrecht

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

Voice 1: On this last Sunday of Advent, we light four candles. Our first light was

for hope, our second for peace, and our third for joy.

Today we light the candle

for love.

Voice 2: *(read while the fourth candle is lit)*

We have waited and travelled together in this Season of Advent. This week, our light is for love. For hundreds of years, people have journeyed toward the light of Christ. Why? Because in Jesus, the love of God burns brightly. Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. After the excitement of Christmas has passed, all the gifts opened, all our energy spent, the love of God remains. God's love will burn like a candle in our hearts.

All: May the light of hope, peace, joy, and love guide our living and our loving. Amen.

Advent Song: The Light of the World

- Paul Chappel

**Love is what we pray for this holy day,
As we wait for the coming of Christ,
And we light the candle of love today,
As we wait for the light of the world.**

**The light of the world that comes at Christmas,
The light of the world that loves us all,
But we only see this light as a candle
as we wait for the light of the world.**

WE WORSHIP TOGETHER

Call to Worship:

The season has ripened and the waiting is all but over.

God is with us. God is for us.

Our hearts are often empty, but our hearts yearn to be full.

God is with us. God is for us.

“Yes” can be our prayer.

“Yes” can be our way of life.

God is with us. God is for us.

Let us worship God together.

Opening Prayer:

God of dreams and dreamers,

you speak to us at all times

and sometimes when we least expect it.

Help us to pay attention as did Joseph and Mary.

Help us to be trusting and faithful.

Let us continue to see your world come alive in our world.

Open our hearts and our minds to your presence here today.

We know we often forget about your presence with us.

So, Gracious One, receive our silent confessions that we offer now.

(Time of silence)

In your love respond to our deepest need.

Amen.

Words of Affirmation:

Our ancestors trusted that a glimpse of God’s presence is all one needed to be restored in faith and to re-ignite the light that is always within.

May the same be true of us.

Open your eyes to the spark of God’s light in you and around you.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Christmas Story in Scripture and Song

Ministry of Music : It’s Still the Greatest Story Ever Told

-W.J. Gaither

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7 (New Revised Standard Version)

(Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

About the Music:

Music: O Little Town of Bethlehem (vs 1,2,4)

VU 64

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

(Angels appear to the shepherds)

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of God stood before them, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you; you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!”

About the Music:**Music:** It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (vs 1,2,4) **VU 44****Scripture:** Luke 2:15-19(The shepherds go to Bethlehem)

When the angel had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which God has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

About the Music:**Music:** While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (vs 1-4) **VU 75****Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-3, 7-12(Astrologers come from the East)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wisemen from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him.

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it

stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

About the Music:**Music:** The First Nowell (vs 1,3,4,5) **VU 91****Scripture:** John 1:29-34(John the Baptizer recognizes Jesus)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Only Begotten of God."

About the Music:**Music:** Good Christian Friends Rejoice **VU 35**

WE RESPOND**Offering:**

Ministry of Music: Let This Christmas Be (Christ in Me) -Dahl Cole
Baxley

Was It a Night Like Tonight? -Greg &
Carol
Tornquist

***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.

***Offertory Prayer:**

Holy Presence, as we hear the Christmas story re-told, let our hearts be filled with joy in the presence of your love with us. Open our hearts to sharing your love, to sharing our resources and sharing our own hearts in care. Bless these gifts and bless us. Amen.

Prayer Prelude: God, Listen to Your Children **VU 400**
God, listen to your children praying,
God, send your Spirit in this place;
God, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Prayers of the People:**Lord's Prayer:****WE PREPARE TO LEAVE**

***Hymn:** Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness (vs 1,2,4) **VU 28**

***Blessing:**

Assured and inspired by God's presence with us,
we gladly journey into the unfolding week.
Challenged by the needs of our community and the world,
we seek to be a living example of God's love to all people.
Friends, go in the hope, peace, joy and love of God.
We go out in the name of Christ
and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May you enjoy a blessed Christmas
surrounded by the love of family and friends!
Go, now, knowing you never go alone
for God's love is with you - always!
Amen.

Parting Song: Take Up His Song **MV**
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Take up his song of love and go into the world.
Take up his song of love in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives;
lay them down, in love lay them down,
and take up his song.

Postlude:

Prayer of the Week:

God of all time and space, we rejoice in your abundant love. Open our hearts to celebrate the gift of Jesus and all the possibility he brings. Bless us with patience and vision, faithfulness and courage, as we follow the Christ. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church

Western Ontario Waterways: Lakeshore: Goderich

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Mark Andrews, Lynda and Norm Porritt, Ralph Rainford

Counters: Kaillie Rawn and Norm Porritt