



December 12, 2021

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
December 12, 2021
Third Sunday of Advent
White Gift Sunday

Presiding today – The children and youth of Melville United Church and Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Gathering and Praise

Our service today is adapted

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And

*from **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel: One-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant**, written by Rev. Susan Lukey. © 2019 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include this notice.*

Welcome

I greet you in the name of the One whose coming we celebrate, the One whose coming we anticipate.

We gather in community today – December 12, 2021 virtually and in person. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person.

As we gather today, we are in the midst of the season of Advent, a time for the preparation of our hearts and selves for the arrival of Jesus. The liturgical colour for Advent is blue or purple—the soft colour of the sky just before dawn. It is a time of already, and not yet. Jesus has come historically, but we also prepare ourselves for his coming again.

Announcements

- **2021-2022 Gifts with Vision** catalogues are out. These gifts are perfect for those difficult to buy for people. There's no going out, no standing in line, no wondering if the item you ordered will be here in time for Christmas, no wrapping. And you will be helping out those in need near and far. Items address healing and reconciliation, leadership, counter racism, wellness and safe spaces, education, poverty and hunger, the future, Mission & Service. Gifts range from \$5 to \$140. Gifts include food for the north, help build a well, purchasing Covid vaccines for the Global South and East, and much more. You can find the full catalogue at www.giftswithvision.ca.
- We will be celebrating White Gift Sunday this Sunday, December 12th. Although toys have often been what we offer as our white gifts, the food bank is doing something different this year. Therefore the Social Justice and Outreach Committee asks you to make your white gift offering one of money or food or personal and feminine hygiene products. If you are making a monetary gift by cheque, **please make the check payable to Melville United Church** so we can issue a tax receipt, and we will forward the money on to the food bank.

- The Social Justice and Outreach Committee will be holding a **book study** focussing on Indigenous experience by **reading and reflecting on the book Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga**. It will be possible to borrow or purchase the book, depending on the number of people attending. The study will be held by Zoom on Monday nights from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in January and February. If you are interested in attending the study, please contact Lynda the office administrator or Rev. Lynda at minister@melvilleunited.com or by text at 709-682-8756. **We need your response by Monday, December 20th.**
- We continue to **collect items for the food bank**. A list of the most needed items was sent out, and if you need a printed copy, just let someone on the Social Justice team or Rev. Lynda know, and we will get it to you. In addition to non-perishable food items, the food bank is also looking for personal and feminine hygiene products as well as fresh vegetables, apples and oranges.
- **Mitten Tree** – We will once again be placing a mitten tree in the sanctuary and ask you to decorate it with mitts, hats, scarves and socks to keep folks in need warm during the winter.
- **High School Students Swap** – Centre Wellington District High School is collecting indoor and outdoor new and gently used clothing for students to access for free. Please take your donation directly to the high school. Swap ends December 17th.
- **Calling for Your List of Favourite Hymns** – We are looking for your favourite hymns from Voices United, More Voices or any others. Please complete the list on the handout and place it on the offering plate, return it to Lynda the office administrator, Rev Lynda or someone on the Worship and Music Committee.
- **Advent Study** – Advent is sometimes just the thing that stands between us and Christmas, or an opportunity to get at all those Christmas preparations—getting the Christmas cards sent, baking, picking out a tree, wrapping presents... What about preparing our hearts? That is just as important an activity for the weeks leading up to December 24th. With that in mind, we will be holding an Advent study on Monday nights during Advent: November 29th, December 6th, 13th and 20th from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. We will be meeting by Zoom and using the study materials in the Advent Unwrapped resource from the United Church of Canada. You can find the materials at <https://united-church.ca/worship-theme/advent-unwrapped> at the bottom under “Worship Blogs.” Please let Rev. Lynda or a member of the Faith Formation Committee know if you are interested.
- **Christmas Bake Sale Plus - Dec. 18, 10 - 4**, Your Funds, Fun and Fellowship Committee will offer a wide variety of homemade Christmas goodies and UCW meat pies. We are baking cookies, squares, tarts (butter tarts and mince), homemade fudge, candy and Christmas pudding with sauce. Please donate if you can. Buy yourself some treats and buy boxes or plates of goodies for gift giving. Let your neighbours know about our Christmas Bake Sale Plus. We will have a table of Christmas ornaments etc. also. Do you have some excess ornaments/decorations etc. to donate? Contact Marg 519-843-3274.
- **Upcoming Services:**
 - December 19 – Fourth Sunday of Advent – Christmas Cantata musical service
 - December 24 – Christmas Eve
 - 4pm – Family Christmas Service to be held outside in the garden
 - 7pm – Traditional Christmas Service to be held in the sanctuary
 - December 26 – Boxing Day – 11am – Casual Service

I invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.

Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, **Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021**, p.25. Used with permission.*

Land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship to the land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship with each other on this land is sacred and holy.

It calls for respect and appreciation.

And so we offer our appreciation, our thanksgiving, and our respect

that we can gather in this place and on this land

as a result of the welcome that comes through the Haldimand Treaty and the Simcoe Patent -
Treaty No. 4,

which allow for peaceful and respectful living on this land.

Thanks to the

Petun,

Haudenosaunee,

Anishinabewaki,

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation,

Odawa and

Mississauga people

who have lived on and walked these lands for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that we are connected with the people who have lived here for all these years
because of the treaties.

Because we are treaty people, we must honour the responsibilities that come with it.

May we be people who remember this with gratitude and respect.

Gathering Hymn: Go, Tell It on the Mountain VU 43

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

- 3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.
Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

Advent Candle Lighting – Éric Hébert-Daly

Two blue/purple Advent candles are lit.

Joy can be elusive.

In shadowed times, it is difficult for us to find joy.

The night may feel like it is closing in on us on these shortest days of the year.

Yet we believe that joy is possible.

We believe that light will return.

Embracing joy in times of trouble is a choice.

May we find the strength to choose joy.

May we let God lead us through the tears to the places and people of joy.

May joy be found in a manger and throughout the world.

The pink Advent candle is lit.

Sung Response: Hope Is a Star VU 7 verse 3

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born.

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.

Call to Worship:

1: When life is chaotic and not going well,

2: remember that God is with you and come to worship.

1: When people are blaming each other for things that are out of their control,

2: remember that God is with you and come spend time in God's community.

1: When you feel lonely and conflicted,

2: take a deep breath and remember that God is with you.

1: Come find comfort today in this gathering of God's people.

All: We know that God is with us. That's why we're here to worship.

Opening Prayer: (unison)

**Compassionate God,
sometimes we feel frightened, angry, confused,
excited or frustrated, happy or sad,
delighted or nervous, and sometimes just discombobulated.
Sometimes we don't know what to feel.
Give us a sign that it won't last forever.
Remind us that a feeling is just a temporary thing,
but you are always there for us, no matter what we are feeling,
no matter how messy life gets.
You are our God, and we are not alone.
Thanks be to you, forever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn: Joy to the World

VU 59

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 No more let sins and sorrows 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.
- 4 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.

Hearing God's Word

Scripture: Luke 1:26–38

It was the sixth month of the year,
when the angel Gabriel came to visit a young woman named Mary.
Mary lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee.
She was engaged to a man named Joseph.
The angel said to Mary, "Greetings, beautiful Mary. God is with you."
But Mary was confused. "Who was this? Why was he saying these things to her?"

The angel continued, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God has chosen you to do something special. You are going to have a baby, and it will be God's child. You will name him, Jesus, which means 'God saves us.' This baby of yours will be a great person. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the ruler of his people forever and ever." Mary was still confused. "How can this be? I'm not yet married." The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. This will be God's holy child. Nothing is impossible for God." Then Mary nodded and said, "Here I am. I'm ready. Let it be just as you say." Then the angel left.

(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)

Mary, with her cloak wrapped tightly around her, walks up on to the stage.

Mary's Monologue: This is a disaster. It was so amazing and so awesome when the angel came to me. I was overwhelmed with wonder. I felt as if I could do anything. But now the reality is setting in. What will Joseph say? What will my family say? What will the community say? How could God do this to me? I think I'm having a panic attack! *(she takes several quick shallow breaths)* Oh dear, I said "Yes" to this. *(her breaths get quieter and slower)* What will Joseph say? Will he abandon me? *(her breathing speeds up again)* I really think I'm having a panic attack!

One or two sheep come up to Mary, brush against her, and say, Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

Mary calms down as she pats the lambs and smiles, and they leave together.

Hymn: Mary, Woman of the Promise **VU 16**

- 1 Mary, woman of the promise,
bearer of your people's dreams,
through your open, willing spirit
waters of God's goodness streamed.
- 2 Mary, song of holy wisdom,
sung before the world began,
faithful to the Word within, you
carried out God's wondrous plan.
- 3 Mary, morning star of justice,
mirror of the Radiant Light,
in the shadows of life's journey,
be a beacon for our sight.
- 4 Mary, model of compassion,
wounded by your offspring's pain,
when our hearts are torn by sorrow,
teach us how to love again.
- 5 Mary, woman of the Gospel,
precious home for treasured seed,
help us to be true disciples,
bearing fruit in word and deed.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18–25

This is how the birth of Jesus happened.

Mary and Joseph were engaged but they were not yet married.

Mary told Joseph that she was pregnant with God’s child.

Joseph was a good man and he didn’t want to hurt Mary.

But he was also confused and upset.

Then an angel came to Joseph in a dream and said,

“Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

Her baby is God’s child. It’s true.

When her son is born, name him Jesus.

He will also be called ‘Emmanuel.’ That means ‘God is with us.’”

When Joseph woke up from his dream, he welcomed Mary into his home.

Then, when her baby was born, he named him Jesus.

(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)

Joseph enters, leaning on his staff.

Joseph’s Monologue: My life is a nightmare right now. I was working so hard to get ready for the wedding, building a house and all of the furniture that Mary and I would need. Then she comes to tell me she is pregnant. What am I supposed to say to that? She says the child is from God. What am I supposed to say to that? I have been so angry. I love Mary. I want to care for her. But how could she do this to me? (He pauses.) And then this dream—telling me it will be alright. Okay. I’m a good person. I’ll do what God asks, but my life still feels like a nightmare right now.

One or two sheep come up to Joseph, brush against him, and say,

Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

Joseph pats the lambs, shrugs, and gives a big sigh, and they leave together.

Ministry of Music: Mary Did You Know words by Mark Lowry and music by Buddy Greene sung by Kim Wood accompanied by Suzanne Flewelling

Scripture: Luke 2:8–16

Near Bethlehem, there were shepherds living in the fields.

They kept guard over their flocks of sheep each night.

Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared before them.

The shepherds were afraid,

but the angel said,

“Do not be afraid.

I bring you good news, joyful news.

Today in Bethlehem the Saviour has been born.

Go and find the baby lying in a manger.”

Suddenly the sky was filled with angels who sang:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and peace to everyone on earth.”

When the angels had left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem.

They found Mary and Joseph and the baby in the manger.

When the shepherds left the stable, they began to tell everyone about Jesus’ birth.

They shouted out praise to God as they returned to the fields.
Mary listened carefully and watched carefully.
She wanted to remember everything that happened that night.
And Mary treasured all of this in her heart.
(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)

*A group of shepherds walks, talking excitedly about going to Bethlehem, needing to find the baby.
One stops as others continue down the aisle.*

Shepherd's Monologue: *(clearly super excited)* It was amazing. No! Awesome. No! Tremendously outstanding. Astonishing, marvellous, inspiring, remarkable, incredible, surprising! *(takes a deep breath, trying to calm down)* The angels. Hundreds of them. No, thousands of them. *(speaks faster and faster)* The sky was full of them. I was there and still I don't believe it. And then one spoke and told of us of God's peace. And then told us about a baby from God, in Bethlehem. And that we should go and find the baby. And that's what we're doing. Going to Bethlehem. I just can't believe it. It's so amazing. But wait a minute. We left all the sheep in the field *(turns back to the field then back to follow the other shepherds)* Yikes, no one is watching the sheep! *(keeps looking repeatedly back to the field then forward to Bethlehem)* I don't know what to do.

*One or two sheep come up to the shepherd, brush against him, and say,
Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.*

*The shepherd calms down as he pats the lambs and says,
Yes, little lamb(s), you're so good at helping me remember that!*

The shepherd and lambs leave together following the other shepherds.

Hymn: O Come All You Faithful VU 60 verses 1, 3, and 4

- 1 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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

- 4 See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Scripture: Matthew 2:1–12

King Herod was king in Jerusalem when Jesus was born.

Three wise travellers from the East came looking for the baby.

They were following a star.

They asked King Herod to help them find the baby.

“Where is the child who has been born, the one who will be the new king?

We saw his star in the east and we have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened.

He called together his priests and scribes and asked where the child would be born.

Then Herod gave the wise travellers directions to Bethlehem.

He said to them, “Go, find the child, and when you find him, let me know where he is.

I want to worship him, too.”

Then the wise ones set off again.

They followed the star to Bethlehem.

The star stopped over a house.

The Wise Ones went in and found the baby and his mother.

They knelt down and worshipped Jesus.

Then they gave three gifts to the baby: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

A message came to them in a dream.

They were told that King Herod wanted to kill the baby.

So they didn’t go back to Herod.

They went home another way.

(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)

A group of Wise Ones (two, three, five, twelve, or more) enter. Each is pointing a different way, and they are saying, “This way! No, this way! I’m sure it’s this way!” One stops as the rest continue on.

Wise One’s Monologue: You should have heard the arguments. We should go this way. No, the star is telling us to go this way. No, I’m sure it is this way. Talk about confusion. And then what to bring for a gift for a royal baby. Gold, frankincense, myrrh. I thought it should be a soft blanket, stitched with gold embroidery, of course. Yup—there were arguments before we left. Confusion about which way to go, confusion about what gift to bring. It’s a wonder we even got on the road. Somehow, we made it to Jerusalem. We were welcomed into the presence of King Herod because, of course, we are important people. But somehow, I don’t trust him. Yes, he gave us a possible location for the child. But he can’t be too happy about this baby. It doesn’t seem to be his son. He said to return and tell him about the baby, but I don’t trust his motives. It’s all quite confusing. I’m not sure how we’re going to make sense of all this. Now, which way is Bethlehem? Looks like my friends have decided which way to go, though they aren’t usually right about anything. They’ll need my input. (shakes his head) Confusing, confusing, confusing!

*One or two sheep come up to the Wise One, brush against him, and say,
Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.*

*The Wise One sighs, relaxes, and strolls off after the other Wise Ones, and says,
One step at a time. Just one step at a time.*

Responding to God's Word

Hymn: Do You Hear What I Hear? *by Noel Regney and Gloria Adele Shayne*

Said the night wind to the little lamb
Do you see what I see?
(Do you see what I see?)
Way up in the sky, little lamb
Do you see what I see?
(Do you see what I see?)
A star, a star, dancing in the night
With a tail as big as a kite
With a tail as big as a kite

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear?
(Do you hear what I hear?)
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear?
(Do you hear what I hear?)
A song, a song high above the trees
With a voice as big as the sea
With a voice as big as the sea

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king
Do you know what I know?
(Do you know what I know?)
In your palace warm, mighty king
Do you know what I know?
(Do you know what I know?)
A Child, a Child shivers in the cold
Let us bring him silver and gold
Let us bring him silver and gold

Said the king to the people everywhere
Listen to what I say!
(Listen to what I say!)
Pray for peace, people, everywhere
Listen to what I say!
(Listen to what I say!)
The Child, the Child sleeping in the night
He will bring us goodness and light
He will bring us goodness and light

Scripture: Luke 2:1–7

In those days an order went out from Emperor Augustus.
He said that all the world should pay taxes.
Everyone went to their own hometowns to pay the tax.
Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee
to the city of Bethlehem
because that was the place where his grandparents came from.
He was engaged to Mary, and Mary was expecting a child.
So, they travelled together to Bethlehem.
When they got there, it was time for the baby to be born.
Mary gave birth to her first son.
She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger
because there was no room in the inn.
(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)

Innkeeper stands on stage with lantern and yawns.

Innkeeper's Monologue: What do people expect? That they can just come knocking at my door anytime of the day or night and find a room? Especially with the census going on and all these extra people. What do they think I am, a miracle worker? I was just tucked into my bed, everything done for the day, and then I heard it again. Knock, knock, knock. It was a young couple. She was pregnant and she was in labour. What was I to do? I had no room. I told them that. But tough as I try to be, I've got a soft heart when it comes to babies. So, I took them to the barn. I have no clue what they're going to do tomorrow. But for tonight they have a warm spot...a bit stinky but still warm. I'm heading back to bed. *(Shakes his head)* I do feel sorry for that young couple, though! Having their baby in a barn!

One or two sheep come up to the innkeeper, brush against him, and say,
Baa! God is with **them; they** are not alone.

Innkeeper smiles and says,
That's right! Now you get back to the barn and remind them of that!
(Yawns and heads off to bed)

Reflection on the Nativity Scene

2: Today we've heard from some of the key characters in the story, who have shared with us what they felt and what they experienced on that first Christmas.

We are reminded that life today, as it was then, is full of surprises, challenges and problems.

Racism, the pandemic, Indigenous bigotry, oppression of non-whites and LGBTQ.

In these times, joy can be obscured and less obvious. A hidden gift.

We feel joy when we look for God's presence—Jesus.

1: Which character fits for you today? What place would you take in the nativity scene today?

Hymn: Away in a Manger (VU 69) (*You might repeat the whole hymn more than once to allow everyone to find their place.*)

- 1 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.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Martha: Mary was anxious at the angel's announcement because raising children is hard work, but that she was also overcome with joy. Raising children is mostly the work of parents, but it can also involve many others ("it takes a village"). We experience life not only as individuals but also in relationship and in community, with each person offering some sort of gift to us (wisdom, laughter, encouragement, challenge, etc.) and we, something to them.

The Sheep—Once More

The little sheep once more, after the hymn ends, come to the manger and say, That's Emmanuel; that's God with us. We are not alone!

Joys and Concerns

Preparation for Prayer

Let us practice the art of Praying with our Eyes Wide Open, that in seeing the world and those within it we are called to tend we may be *opening the eyes of our hearts to all in need around us* (*Lamont Koerner '81 MDiv God Pause for Thursday, September 16, 2021 from Luther Seminary*):

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

The petitions for this prayer were created from ideas given by a group of children and youth on one of the Sundays prior to this service. Please add petitions from the hearts of children, youth, and adults in your congregation.

Share the American Sign Language motions for peace and love and invite people to sign those words in the responses below. Learn the signs at www.handspeak.com.

Call: And so we pray...

Response: **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

1: Loving God, we are here to celebrate and to receive the joyful story of the birth of Jesus. Yet, even as we celebrate, we know that there are many in need here and around the world.

2: We think of those who won't be with family or friends for Christmas, those who are sad and grieving for a loved one, and all who are facing struggles and challenges of many kinds. And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

1: We think of (*name a current local or world situation—e.g., a place where there has been a recent disaster*), And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

2: We think of (*name a current local or world situation—e.g., the people who fight for human rights and dignity around the world*) And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

1: We pray for the earth, and animals who are feeling the effects of climate change. May we, the people of the earth, find a path to heal the damage to our climate and to our earth. And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

1: We think of all who are sick today and all who are grieving.
We think of those who don't have homes in which to live,
and those who aren't safe from abuse and violence at home.
We think of those who are lonely and those who are being bullied.
And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

2: We think of those who are experiencing so many emotions this Christmas, especially those who are not feeling merry or joyous.
And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

1: We think of all women who are pregnant and all couples who are expecting a baby.
We know they have worries as well as excitement.
And so we pray...

May all the world know your love and peace, O God.

2: We can have so many different memories and emotions at Christmas.

Like those there at the first Christmas, we can be happy, sad, joyful, angry, peaceful, and frustrated. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Ones, and the innkeeper all discovered you were with them. They found your joy when Jesus was born.

In the same way, may we here
and people everywhere
find joy in knowing that you are with us, today and always.

For Jesus came as Emmanuel, God-with-us.

For this we give thanks

and we pray the words that Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Minute for Mission: Generosity Makes Hearts Sing with Joy



“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God,” says the book of Colossians 3:16.

From the beginning of time, people have known that nothing stirs the heart and brings people together quite like music. Music has the power to change our world, and when we harness it, we do too.

That's why [Embracing the Spirit grants](#)(opens in a new tab) supported through your Mission & Service gifts and [Seeds of Hope grants](#)(opens in a new tab) administered by the United Church Foundation fund music projects that build community and tend to the soul across our United Church.

For example, your generosity makes a joyful noise at Sprucedale United Church in Chatham, Ontario, where an outreach ministry provides free ukulele lessons to adults so they can provide entertainment to local retirement and nursing homes. Thanks to your support, Prairie Points Pastoral Charge in southwestern Alberta received a grant to license songs to create a condensed songbook for use in hospitals and lodges. At Port Nelson United Church in Burlington, Ontario, your gifts helped fund a new handbell choir and in Kamloops United Church, Kamloops, British Columbia, a drop-in pride choir for LGBTQ2S+ community members and allies.

“When harnessed for good, music helps us take important steps to social justice,” says Sarah Charters, Director of Philanthropy and President of the United Church Foundation. “Looking back, music has played a key role in anti-war, civil rights, and women’s movements. How many of us on a personal level have been motivated to make a life change after listening to a song or turn to music to soothe our spirit? Music is the language of the spirit,” she says.

Your generosity means that our United Church can pool resources to make an incredible impact in local communities from coast to coast. An impact none of us could ever make alone. Thank you for fostering spirituality, community, and inspiring social change through music. Your generosity makes hearts sing with joy.

Offering

In many communities today, poverty goes unseen. Churches still play a vital role not only in making someone’s Christmas with simple gifts, but also in declaring that unseen needs are not forgotten. This is the joy that Mary expresses in her Magnificat: that God sees the needs of God’s people and promises to rectify injustice, reconcile relationships, and mend the broken. The liturgical significance of actual gifts given in worship is the visibility of the offering and the ability of people of all ages to contribute.

Our White Gifts help to bring surprises that are useful and supportive to people in need in this community and this area.

If you would like to do your part by making a monetary donation to Melville United Church, there are several ways to do that.

1. By leaving your offering envelope on the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary.
2. Cheque (post-dated cheques are welcome): made payable to Melville United Church-which can be mailed to the church at P.O. Box 41, Fergus ON N1M 2W7 or put in the mail slot beside the parking lot door.
3. Donate online through the Canada Helps web-site
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church>
4. Call or email Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).
5. E-transfer directly from your bank. E-mail to secretary@melvilledunited.com

Thanks to all of you who continue to contribute so much to make Melville the caring community of faith that it is. May you be blessed.

Offering Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter**VU 55 v.4**

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.

The offering is collected during the singing of the hymn.

Prayer of Dedication

All things come from you, Creating God, and with joy we offer our gifts in return. Bless us, and what we do here, that we and all your people might experience the renewal of life you reveal in Christ Jesus. Open our hearts and minds to receive your continual gift of transformation this day, and always. **Amen.**

Hymn: Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**VU 35**

- 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Give ye heed to what we say: News! News!
Jesus Christ is born today.
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

- 2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy!
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

- 3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace!
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Commissioning and Benediction

1: Go, make sure that you help create a world where everyone has full stomachs and a safe place to sleep.

2: Go, make sure that everyone knows that God's love is with them, no matter what mess they are in.

1: And remember!

2: God's love is big love. God's arms can hold everyone in the world. God's heart keeps our hearts warm with compassion.

Sheep come to stage once more and say,
Baa! God is with you! You are not alone! No matter how messy it gets!

All Sing

Chorus of **Go, Tell It on the Mountain"** **VU 43** (*repeat several times*)

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

God, surely you are my salvation.
I begin this day without fear, trusting you,
for you are my strength.
Help me to meditate all day
on the thought that you are rejoicing in me!
And keep me keenly aware, as I travel through this day,
of ways that I may help others, especially those with special needs.
Then bring me home to you at the close of the day. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1.** Copyright 2012.*

Thank you, God, for the gift of today
and for guarding my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus.
All that I did and all that I left undone,
I now give over to your safekeeping,
trusting in your peace that surpasses all understanding.
Be my rest as I sleep tonight,
and renew me in your love for another day. Amen.