



December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve 7:00pm

Melville United Church

300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9

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Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

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Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

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Melville United Church
Sunday December 24th, 2023
Christmas Eve Service 7:00pm

*Presiding: Rev. Ruth Brown,
with Colleen Weber and the Melville Choir*

Prelude

Carol: 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.

Welcome

Announcements:

If you are worshipping with us for the first time, welcome! Please join us for refreshments and conversation in the parlour after the service.

- **Free Electric Stove** available. It's a fully functional electric stove from our main kitchen. If you or someone you know is in need, please contact the office or Barry Rawn at brawn@cogeco.ca to arrange pickup.

- **UCW meat pies** are available now. \$5 each. Buy after church or contact Marg 519-843-3274 OR margfrayne@hotmail.com

- Join us on **December 29th** at **1:00pm** in the Fellowship Hall as we **celebrate the life of Les Johnston**. The Johnston family extends their gratitude to our Melville family for the cards, visits, and condolences. This informal gathering will provide an opportunity for anyone wishing to share comments or anecdotes in remembrance.
- Join us for **Coffee Hour - December 31st** following Sunday Service for a festive New Year's Eve get together! Enjoy pizza, mock champagne, and cookies.
- **Rides needed for seniors:** Can you help? Rides to Wed Piano Concert (Noon - 1pm), Friday Morning Coffee (10 - 11am), and Sunday Service (11am - Noon). Please speak to Lorna Bevcar
- **Church envelopes** are ready for pickup at the back of the church. If you don't see your envelopes or would like some, please contact Lynda in the office secretary@melvilleunited.com or 519-843-1781
- **The Newsletter is out.** Our latest Melville newsletter should be in your home by now. Some went out on the grapevine and others were hand delivered or sent by Royal Mail. If you usually receive yours electronically and it has not arrived, please check your spam file and or trash. If you cannot find it, please contact the church office and inform our administrator Lynda and we will make it right. If you are not on the grapevine, please help us to keep our postage costs down by adding your name. Questions or concerns, please see Ralph Rainford.
- The music series "**Mid-Day Music at Melville**" presented by pianist Brad Halls will take a two-week break over Christmas and New Year's, and our regular Broadway repertoire will return on Wednesday, January 10, 2024.
- **Friday or Sunday Coffee Time** – We encourage people to sign up to host either a Friday or a Sunday Coffee Time. It is not difficult! We'd be pleased to show you how. Sign-up sheets are at the Parlour Door. Please speak to Lorna Bevcar or Marg Frayne.
- Thank you for your donations to the **Food Bank** there is an ongoing need of nonperishables, toiletries, or a gift card. Baskets are in the sanctuary.
- **Volunteer Tutors Needed!** Join the Reading Rocks program by the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County. Support children's reading skills one-on-one. Program runs **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm**, at JD Hogarth Public School from **Feb 5th to Apr 10th**. Training provided. Contact Lynda at LDAWC@gmail.com or apply at <https://form.jotform.com/203084991501251>

Land Acknowledgement

Let us take time to acknowledge the peoples who have lived on and stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

God, help us to be thankful, and to become better neighbours and stewards that we might continue to honour these lands.

Carol: VU 60 O Come all ye faithful vs 1,3 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: R
- 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; R

Sung Response: A Candle is Burning VU 6 vs 5

We honour Messiah with Christ-candle's flame,
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Gathering Prayer (adapted from a Christmas prayer by Jane Doull)

Holy One, giver of life and love, we give thanks for your good news of great joy.

We give thanks for the dreams which take flesh and dwell among us. May your Spirit wrap us round with bright wings as we see, hear and live the Christmas story. May we let go of fear and doubt, as we celebrate your living, loving presence this holy night. Amen.

Ministry of Music: This Peaceful Night - words by Nancy Price & Don Besig, music by Don Besig performed by the Melville Choir

Scripture: Gospel of Luke 2: 1-20 King James Version

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Response

The Word of Life and Love **Thanks be to God!**

Carol: Once in Royal David's City

VU 62

- 1 Once in royal David's city
 stood a lowly cattleshed,
 where a mother laid her baby
 in a manger for his bed.
 Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little child.

- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
 who, with God, is over all,
 and his shelter was a stable,
 and his cradle was a stall.
 There among the poor and lowly
 lived on earth our Saviour holy.

- 3 For he is our lifelong pattern;
 daily, when on earth he grew,
 he was tempted, scorned, rejected,
 tears and smiles like us he knew.
 Thus he feels for all our sadness,
 and he shares in all our gladness.

- 4 And our eyes at last shall see him,
 through his own redeeming love;
 for that child who seemed so helpless
 is our Lord in heaven above;
 and he leads his children on
 to the place where he is gone.

Reflection: The manger of our hearts...

Carol: O little Town of Bethlehem

VU 64

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

- 2 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.

- 3 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.

- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend 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, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

The Communion Meal

All are welcome to come forward down the centre aisle to receive the elements. The bread and individual cups will be offered. When you have partaken of the elements please pick up a candle and move to the outer aisles of the sanctuary to form a circle. Ushers will guide us through this process.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer

God is with us! **We are not alone!**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love,
**you are beyond complete knowledge, above perfect description. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love, you are creative and self-giving, generously
moving in all the near and distant corners of the starry universe. Nothing exists that does not
find its source in you.**

Even when we turn away from you, you are with us;
your presence never fails us, your gifts of hope, peace, joy and love transform us.

We praise you for Christ Jesus, as eternal as your love, and our bond to one another. We
rejoice this holy night with people of every time and place, with angels and archangels, with
shepherds and sheep and all creatures great and small, together we proclaim the glory of your
name;

Holy, holy, holy are you. Holy, holy, blessed are you.

It is Jesus, God incarnate, the babe born in Bethlehem, who joins us together as a community of
broken yet hopeful and joyful believers:

**loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants in our time and
place.**

On the night before Jesus died, he took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, "Take
and eat; whenever you do this, remember me." After supper, Jesus took the cup, and poured it
out, saying, "This is the new covenant, remember me."

**In this sacred feast we remember Jesus, his birth, his growing in Wisdom and Spirit, his
friendships, his teaching, his healing, his vision of the kingdom on earth as in heaven. We
remember his promises, and the price he paid for who he was, what he said, and what he did.
We remember Jesus arisen; the life that will never, never die.**

We remember all with whom Jesus would have us share God's life and love, those who have
trouble of any kind, those who are in danger, those who are lost and alone and in pain, in
particular we remember..... those for whom this night holds little hope, let alone joy.

**We remember these ones, even as we remember ourselves, seeking to welcome with care
and healing compassion, as he would have us do.**

Gathering all our prayers, we remember Jesus as we pray;

**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.

In sharing this meal, we embody the mystery of our faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Holy Mystery, God the Spirit, we call on you to bless these familiar things;
Sacred sign and seal of your abundant grace and eternal faithfulness.

Bless this bread and this cup,
the wheat and the grape, the farmer and the harvest, the seed and the sower.

In the sharing of these ordinary things may we taste and see your extraordinary goodness
Through Christ, in Christ, and with Christ; in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God
most holy, now and forever. Amen

Breaking the Bread, Pouring the Cup:

The body of Christ, **the bread of life.**

The lifeblood of Christ, **the cup of blessing.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Ministry of Music as we share the meal: Nativity Carol - words and music by John Rutter performed
by Colleen Weber and Linda Mae Ogilvie

Prayer after Communion:

Creator of the Starry Universe, we thank you for the wonder of this sacred feast.

**By your love, we have been fed; in your abiding life, we are strengthened. May we be open to
the gift of your coming again into the manger of our hearts, into the stables of our world.**

Amen

Sharing the Light

Carol: Silent Night VU 67

1 Silent night! Holy night!
 All is calm, all is bright
 round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
 sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night! Holy night!
 Shepherds quake at the sight:
 glories stream from heaven afar,
 heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
 Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.

3 Silent night! Holy night!
 Son of God, love's pure light
 radiant beams from thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Blessing

Go forth rejoicing in all we have seen and heard! May the Spirit within us sing a new song of love and hope, peace and joy.

May the light of these small candles remind us of that the Light that shines in our hearts and in our world, guiding us this holy night and through all the days and nights yet to come. Amen.

Merry Christmas

Postlude

Worship Schedule

December 24 th 11:00 am	Advent 4- Family Christmas Morning	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
December 24 th 7:00 pm	Advent 4-Candles, Communion, 7 Music	Rev. Ruth Brown
December 31st	1 st Sunday after Christmas	Rev. Jeff Hawkins