

**WELCOME
TO
GRACE UNITED CHURCH**



***Where Everyone is Part of the Family
&
Worship is a Lifestyle NOT an Event***



Grace United Church
120 Pine St. Gananoque, ON K7G 1C7

Ordained Minister

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro B.A., B.Th., M.Div.

Director of Music

Mr. Paul Harding, B. Mus, B. Ed

Office Administrator

Laurie Cadue

December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve

Order of Worship¹

7:00 P.M.



WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Organ Prelude –

*(We prepare our hearts to Welcome the Infant Child –
Emmanuel – God with Us!)*

Welcome

(Please Stand as Able)

Gathering Song of Praise & Worship: Voices United #60

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

- 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.**

¹ Portions of this worship is adapted from Advent Unwrapped – United Church of Canada - 2016

- 2 God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten, not created:
**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.**
- 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Words: English trans. Frederick Oakeley 1841 et al. Music: attrib. John Francis Wade ca. 1743
Descant: Sir David Willcocks. Public Domain

Gathering Call (Responsive):

One: Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

All: longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

One: Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

All: that this world can change for the better.

One: Here, in the stillness of a winter's night,
we gather to share the light of Christ,
a light that shines in the nightfall.

**All: We gather in the wonder of this night
to share our joy and thanks for new life.**

Carol: Voices United #64

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

- 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.

Words: Phillips Brooks 1868

Music: Lewis Henry Redner 1868. Public Domain

(Please Be Seated)

Lighting the Advent Candles - Diane Kirkby & Tom Marlor

The four Advent candles are lit before the service begins.

Voice 1: The season for watching and waiting is over.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. This
is the light of the world, and the darkness cannot extinguish it.

The Christ Candle is lit.

Voice 2 : "O sing to the Lord a new song;

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Tell of his salvation from day to day.

"Declare his glory among the nations,

His marvelous works among all the peoples" (Psalm 96:1-3).

**All: "Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.
Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
Tremble before him, all the earth" (Psalm 96:7-9).**

Voice 1: "Say among the nations, 'The Lord is King!'
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his truth" (Psalm 96:10a, 11a, 13b).

**All: The light shines in the darkness and
the darkness cannot put it out.**



(Please stand as able)

Carol Voices United #7

"Hope is a Star"

- 1 Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.
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.
- 2 Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth.
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.

- 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.
- 4 Love is a flame that burns in our heart,
Jesus has come and will never depart.
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.

Words: Brian Wren 1985

Music: Joan Collier Fogg 1987

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(Please be seated)

WE SEEK WISDOM FROM THE SACRED STORIES

Prayer of Illumination (All):

We make room for you this night of all nights, dear Lord: room in our minds and hearts; room also in our life together. Let your creation and creatures teach us once again that we ALL have a part in your world, in Your Heart. Amen.

The First Lesson **Genesis 1:26–2:4 - *Barb Jenkins***

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."
So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he

created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens...

Reader: Here ends the First Lesson

All: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #1

"O Come, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (verses 1, 2, 6, 7)

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel

that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

6 O come, O Dayspring, from on high,
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

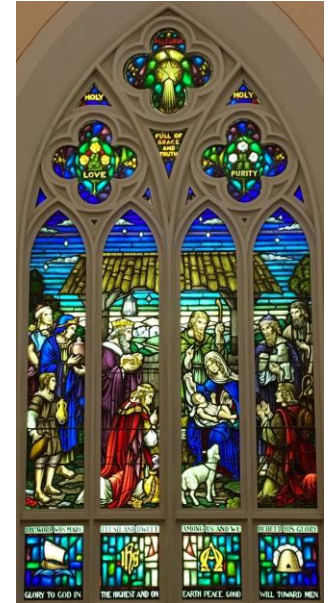
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us the Prince of Peace.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Words: From the Latin Antiphons for Advent. Ca. 9th century, trans. John Mason Neal 1851, et al
Music: 15th century plainsong melody. Arr Healey Willan. Words copyright ©The Church Pension Fund. Used by permission. Arrangement copyright © Concordia Publishing House.
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(Please be seated)



The Second Lesson **Isaiah 9:2, 6–7** - *Christina Charney*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Reader: Here ends the Second Lesson

All: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #62

"Once in Royal David's City"

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.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander 1848, alt.

Music: Henry John Gauntlett 1849, harm. Arthur Henry Mann
Public Domain

(Please be seated)

The Third Lesson **Luke 1:26–35** - *Pamela Shea*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of

greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

Reader: Here ends the Third Lesson

All: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #48

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'***

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,



late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'***

3 Hail, the heavenborn Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'***

Words: Charles Wesley 1739, alt. Music: Felix Mendelssohn 1840,
adapt. William Hayman Cummings 1856. Public Domain

(Please be seated)

The Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1–20 - Julie Price

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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord 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 the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, 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 he favors!" When the angels 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 the Lord 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reader: Here ends the Fourth Lesson

All: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #71

"'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"

- 1 'Twas in the moon of wintertime,
when all the birds had fled,
that mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:
**Refrain: Jesus your King is born,
Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria.**
- 2 Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender babe was found,
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high:
**Refrain: Jesus your King is born,
Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria.**
- 3 The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on
the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
Refrain: Jesus your King is born,

**Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria.**

4

O children of the forest free,
the angel song is true,
the holy child of earth and heaven
is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy:
**Refrain: Jesus your King is born,
Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria.**

Words: Jean de Brébeuf ca 1641, English trans. Jesse Edgar Middleton 1926, alt.
Music: French folksong, 16th century; arr. H. Barrie Cabena 1970
English words copyright © 1927 The Frederick Harris Music Company
Arrangement copyright © 1971 H. Barrie Cabena

(Please be seated)

The Fifth Lesson John 1:1–14 - Colleen Harding

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world

did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reader: Here ends the Fifth Lesson

All: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #59

"Joy to the World"

- 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.

Words: Isaac Watts 1719, alt.

Music: attrib. George Frideric Handel 1742

arr. Lowell Mason 1836 Public Domain

(Please be seated)

A CHRISTMAS POEM – Rev. Takouhi

"The Chosen One"

by Gretchen Huntley

He stood lonely;
It was almost Christmas Day
All the other trees had been chosen
And headed on their way
They would brighten many homes
When t'was Christmas morn
But oh not this little one
He stood there so forlorn
Darkness came, he fell asleep
With a heavy heart
He so wanted a home
And to a family be a part
But something special happened
As morning dawned clear and bright
The heavens had opened up
It had snowed all night

The little tree was beautiful
Every branch covered in fresh snow
And on the very top of the tree
There sat a heavenly glow

This tree was decorated by angels
They came to earth that night
And before they left in the morning
It was such a glorious sight

There were no store bought lights
Or shiny decorations anywhere
And yet the tree glowed bright
With beauty beyond compare

The little tree heard the wind
No, it was a voice
Speaking very gently it said
"You were my special choice"

You my little friend represent
Everything Christmas should be
It's not about the fancy stuff
It's all about love you see

Ministry of Music: "O Holy Night" Christina Kaya

A Christmas Prayer (All):

**Almighty God, Jesus became Your Word and dwelt among us,
born in Bethlehem, a manger, a lowly place. Yet, he lived with the
highest standards of Your Love. May this Christmas we hear Your
Call to live like Jesus and become Your Word, Your dwelling place**



on earth once
again. May our breath intermingle with Your Spirit, may our
actions be rooted in the Compassion of Jesus, making Your
Blessed Gift — Eternal Love, apparent to all. Amen.

*From **The True Gift Lives on – By Rev. Takouhi***

WE RESPOND IN LOVE

Offering: *We share as we are able with Care and Compassion....*

(All offerings, unless otherwise designated, will go toward the Benevolent Fund for those in need in our wider community.)

Offertory Song - (Tune **VU 44** "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear") (x2)

We bring our gifts to you O God.
We bring our dreams and prayers.
Receive them, bless them, send them out.
To show the world we care.



Words: Author unknown.

Music: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

Public domain.

The Prayer of Jesus (All): *(From the New Zealand Prayer Book)*

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is Heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your Heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and

come on Earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.

MOVING IN GOD'S WAY...

Sharing the Christ Light

Lighting of the candles – *(Readers/Participants)*

The story behind "Silent Night, Holy Night"

Christina Kaya

(Please stand as able)

Carol: Voices United #67

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

- 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.

Words: Joseph Mohr 1818, Eng. trans. John Freeman Young 1863, et al.
Music: Franz Xavier Gruber 1818
Public Domain.

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Blessing *"We Wish You a Merry Christmas"*

We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Postlude