



## Grace United Church

120 Pine St. Gananoque, ON K7G 1C7

### Ordained Minister

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

**Minister Emeritus:** Rev. J. Harry Seeley B.A.

### Director of Music

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

### Office Administrator

Laurie Cadue

**December 24, 2021**

*Christmas Eve*

**Order of Worship**

7:00 P.M.



### WE GATHER

#### Organ Prelude

*(We prepare our hearts to Welcome the Infant Child)*

**Welcome**

*Rev. Takouhi*

#### Gathering Song Voices United # 62

*"Once in Royal David's City"*

1. Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for a 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 least 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

#### Gathering Call (Responsive):

One: Let us journey with Mary and Joseph to that little town  
of Bethlehem, to once again experience the birth of the  
Christ child.

**All: Let us, like the angels, proclaim this miraculous birth.**

One: Let us, like the shepherds, offer our praise and  
adoration.

**All: Let us bow down and worship him!**

*Jann Sampson, Pinegrove P.C., Thunder Bay, Ontario.*

## **Christmas 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

## **Lighting the Advent Candles**

*Marilyn Belbin, Colleen Harding & Cheryl O'Leary*

- Voice 1:** Love-shine, your moment has come.  
In the dark of the womb you waited.  
Bathed in the balm of the star, you rest.  
Into a world sorely in need of your light, you are born.

**3**

- Voice 2:** When you knock on our door looking for room,  
may we welcome you. Like the herald of your  
birth, call us to share your good news first with  
those who are poor, excluded, and afraid.

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

*(Light the Christ candle and all four Advent candles)*

**Voice 1:** The love of heaven has come to Earth.

**Voice 2:** The call of Christ begins in a baby's cry.  
Listen and respond.

**All: May the light of the Christ continue to light  
our way at Christmas and Always.**

**Voice 1:** Let us pray together

**All: God of Great Love,  
you come among us as a tiny and vulnerable baby,  
making all simple things Sacred. Teach us to care  
for the quiet and tender places of our hearts and  
lives, may we also care for all the "Other" around  
us, near or far. As we are nurtured from Your  
Unconditional Love, may we nurture others  
unconditionally — Your Love is Worth Sharing.  
We submit to your Compassion and Mercy,  
today and always. Amen.**

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

## **Christmas Carol Voices United # 6 "A Candle is Burning"**

1. A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
a candle of hope in December's dark night.  
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,  
our hearts we prepare now, for Jesus is nigh.

**4**

2. A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:  
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;  
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.
3. A candle is burning, a candle of joy;  
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.  
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow,  
as Joy brightens gloom like the sunshine on snow.
4. A candle is burning, a candle of love;  
a candle to point us to heaven above.  
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,  
for Jesus is bringing God's Love to our earth.
5. We honour Messiah with Christ-candle's flame,  
our Christmas Day candles glad tidings proclaim.  
O come all ye faithful, rejoice on this night,  
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Words: Sandra Dean 1986

Music: James R. Murray 1887

Used with the blessing of Mrs. Sandra Dean

### WE SEEK WISDOM

#### 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.**

#### Isaiah 9:2-7

*Brian Brooks*

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.

### Christmas Carol Voices United # 74

*"What Child Is This"*

1. What child is this, who laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

*Refrain:* This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

2. Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.

*Refrain:* This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.

*Refrain:* This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Words: William Chatterton Dix 1865. Music: English Melody, 16<sup>th</sup> century  
Harmonization attrib. John Stainer 1871. Public Domain

**Luke 2:1-7**                      *Linda Brooks*

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.

**Christmas Carol Voices United # 58**

*"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"*

1. Infant holy, infant lowly,  
for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging angels winging,  
noels ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is born for all.  
Christ the babe is born for all.

2. Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping  
vigil till the morning new  
saw the glory, heard the story,  
tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,  
praises voicing greet the morrow:  
Christ the babe was born for you.  
Christ the babe was born for you.

Words: Polish Carol, trans. and para. Edith M.G. Reed 1921  
Music: Polish folk melody, harm A.E. Rusbridge  
Harmony copyright © 1960 A.E. Rusbridge.  
Used by permission of Rosalind Rusbridge.

**Luke 2: 8-14**                      *Vicki Leakey*

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, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"



## **Christmas 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 th'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 heaven-born 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

## **Luke 2:15-20**

*Cliff Edwards*

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.

**Ministry of Music:** "O Holy Night" - Adolphe Adam

**Soloist: Sheri Shenton**

## **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*

## **OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S 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.)



## Offering Song

(Tune **Voices United # 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

## Offertory Prayer (All):

**Many gifts are shared this evening, some hidden under  
shining trees, others tucked in socks and stockings.  
Receive all the gifts that are shared this night, from our  
treasury, and from our table. Bless gifts and givers.  
Bless the act of giving. In your most holy name. Amen.**

*Kate Crawford, Huron Shores U.C., Grand Bend, Ont.*

*"Come and Gather at the Stable"*

(Tune: **Voice United # 333** "Love Divine, All Love Excelling")

1. Come and gather, at the stable  
they have journeyed far from home.  
Mary, Joseph, young and able  
travelled ways as yet unknown.  
With a dream of untold promise  
that great things would come to pass.  
In the sureness of God's blessing  
they found peace and rest at last.
2. Come and gather, 'round the manger  
where the Christ child gently lays.  
Open up our hearts to wonder  
at the glory of that day.  
Visit him with thanks and promise,  
peace and hope and love and joy  
Take them daily into living  
wrapped up in a baby boy.

3. Come and gather, at the table  
where we seek him once again  
Let us enter into mystery  
needed now as needed then.  
In the breaking of the sweet bread  
in the pouring of the wine,  
We meet him again among us  
with a love so dear, divine.
4. Come and gather, in his footsteps  
we will tread where he once went.  
With the lost and lonely people  
now to them we're also sent  
Loving, working, tending, caring  
in our Saviour's name we pray  
In our work and in our worship  
we find hope in every day.

Words: Catherine MacDonald 2005. Music: "Hyfrydol" Rowland Huw Prichard ca. 1831. Words used with the kind permission of Rev. Catherine MacDonald

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

### **Christmas 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

### OUR SERVICE TO GOD CONTINUES AS WE GO FORTH...

#### Commissioning (Responsive)

One: Let the hope that was born in a stable this night be a sign  
that God can change the world through one small light.

**All: May the God of all touch us once again with wonder.**

One: May the spirit of love fill our hearts to overflowing.

**All: May Christ's spirit of peace be upon everyone,  
everywhere.**

One: The grace of Christ be with you, today and forevermore.

**All: Amen.**

*Kim Falls, Bethel Emily P.C., Omeme, Ont.*

#### 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.

#### **Organ Postlude**

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***Thank you for Joining us tonight. We wish you a  
Christmas full of love & joy. Blessings to you and  
your loved ones.***

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#### **Important Notice Regarding Service:**

Due to the rapid increase of the Omicron Variant the Church Board has taken proactive action and decided to move all services to our virtual format until further notice. This was done for the safety of our Church Family and our Community. Services can be viewed on our YouTube Channel. There is no service planned for December 26<sup>th</sup>. On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, Barb Dejeet will be our Guest Worship Leader.

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*This Community of Faith acknowledges all traditional territories, all ceded and unceded lands that we live upon - and give thanks for all the generations of people who have taken care of these lands before us and still do with us today. May we be open to historical truths and may we continue to learn from the past, shape our present time and build a better world with All People.*



*(Picture: Credit to Indigenous Ministries and Justice – The United Church of Canada)*