

Grace United Church  
Christmas Eve Service - 7:00pm  
Join us for our Christmas Eve Service  
of Carols & Stories.  
All are welcome.



# WELCOME TO GRACE UNITED CHURCH



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[Christmas candle glowing on wooden wall background., Photos - Envato Elements](#)

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

*(Remember to pass this bulletin to someone else  
You never know how you will Bless them)*



**Baby Shower for Jesus  
Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>  
10:30am**

You are invited to a baby shower for Jesus. This informal celebration will be held downstairs in the auditorium with carols, readings, prayers, coffee and treats. Please bring a wrapped gift suitable for a young child, or a monetary gift. These gifts will be passed on to a local family. Come and bring a friend! Let's fill the manger!

**Grace United Church**  
120 Pine St., Gananoque  
(613) 382-2161



## 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 18, 2024**

*Blue Christmas*<sup>1</sup> – *Journeying through the Longest Night*<sup>1</sup>

### Loss, Hope, and Healing

Remembering Those We Miss



## WE GATHER SEEKING PEACE, HOPE AND HEALING

### Prelude

### Call to Worship (Responsive)

One: This is a time of expectation; a season when everything around us seems to be alight with anticipation. We gather in quiet hope like the stars that shine with beauty, unvoiced and undemanding, whose depth is seen most clearly in the darkest of nights.

**All: The Light of all lights is the still flame within warming us, keeping us, and making each new day possible.**

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright © Wood Lake Publishing Inc. 2011 Seasons of the Spirit™ Seasons FUSION Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2011–2012

### Opening Prayer (Responsive):

One: As starlight pierces through the shadows of the deepest night, may Love reveal its presence which is always and everywhere with us.

**All: We wait with hopeful tears.**

One: As rain falls from the sky quenching the earth and renewing all life, may Love restore our thirsty spirits.

**All: We wait with hopeful tears.**

One: As tears spring warm into our eyes spilling down our cheeks and toward our hearts may Love have its healing way in us.

**All: We wait with hopeful tears.**

### 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,

-2-



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.

Words: Phillips Brooks 1868

Music: Lewis Henry Redner 1868.

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**Opening Word:**

The Season of Advent is filled with hope that leads into  
Christmas joy. But as the laments in scripture remind us,  
hope is not always present in a way we can feel.  
The following poem expresses this reality.

**Without Hope**

It is easy to feel You  
when hope is in view, even if it is simply  
a butterfly fluttering here and there  
or a spider dropping from her silky thread  
before me.  
Now hope is gone.  
And yesterday a hummingbird buzzed  
by my right ear  
tempting me to believe again.  
But my heart remained like a stone;  
unmoved by the perfect miracle.  
At night when the darkness  
extends our fear beyond  
the walls that by day contain it,  
we hear our children cry sometimes:  
soft kitten whimpers, into silence.  
This is the truth we feel in our bones  
and, sadly, You are not in it.



## **WE BRING OUR PAINS AND SORROWS TO GOD WITH TRUST**

### **Scripture reading - based on Isaiah 40:1–5**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
It is now a time to speak tenderly to you and say:  
Your time of sorrow is over;  
you have received  
more than your fair share of suffering.  
A highway to your heart  
is being prepared for God's love.  
The valleys of despair will be lifted up  
and the mountains of challenge  
will be brought low.  
Goodness and Loving Mercies  
will make their way to you  
and all shall see it.  
This is a word of hope for the hopeless;  
a way for those who are groping in the shadows.  
Remember, nothing is impossible for God.

### **Prayer of Gratitude: More Voices # 46, Bless the Lord**

*(Invitation to light a tealight candle in memory of loved ones as we sing together –  
More Voices # 46)*

### **Reflective Song of Praise: More Voices United #46 Bless the Lord**

*(Repeat through candle lighting ceremony)*

Chorus: Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless God's holy name. (Repeat)  
Bless the Lord.

## **The Prayer that Jesus Taught His Followers (All)**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom  
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 kingdom, the  
power, and the glory forever and ever. **Amen.**

## **WE GO FORTH WITH PEACE, HOPE AND HEALING**

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

#### **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; English trans. John Freeman Young 1863, et al.  
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