Image by Ben Kerckz from Pixabay

Merging Waters United Church

Christmas Eve December 24, 2024

7:00 PM

WELCOME / BIENVENUE

People of all ages, identities, and walks of life are welcome.	Toutes et tous sont bienvenus, peu importe l'âge, l'identité ou les conditions de vie.
Wherever you are, whoever you are, we welcome you in love and community to worship.	Peu importe où que vous soyez, qui que vous soyez, nous vous accueillons dans l'amour et la communauté pour louer Dieu ensembles.
Wherever we are, we're close in one another's hearts.	Notre amour n'est jamais limité par la distance.

Please join in the responses in **bold text.** Veuillez vous joindre aux réponses en **texte gras.**

Keep our worship scent-free! To help fellow worshippers with chemical sensitivities, please do not wear perfume or scented products (lotion, hair spray) if attending in person.

Veillez à ce que notre culte soit exempt d'odeurs ! Pour aider les fidèles souffrant de sensibilités chimiques, nous vous demandons de ne pas porter de parfum ou de produits parfumés (lotion, laque) si vous assistez au culte en personne.

To protect personal privacy, please do not take photos or videos without authorization.

Pour protéger la vie privée, ne prenez pas de photos ou de vidéos sans autorisation.

WELCOME

LIFE AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

GATHERING

OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

CENTERING MUSIC

Way Down in Bethlehem
Raffi

There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
Way down in Bethlehem,
Way down in Bethlehem.

They laid him in a manger, oh my Lord,
They laid him in a manger, oh my Lord,
They laid him in a manger, oh my Lord,
They laid him in a manger, oh my Lord,
Way down in Bethlehem,
Way down in Bethlehem.

They named the baby Jesus, oh my Lord,
They named the baby Jesus, oh my Lord,
They named the baby Jesus, oh my Lord,
They named the baby Jesus, oh my Lord,
Way down in Bethlehem,
Way down in Bethlehem.

There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
There was a little baby, oh my Lord,
Way down in Bethlehem,
Way down in Bethlehem.

CALL TO WORSHIP

If tomorrow morning you woke up
and there were no Christmas lights
no household decorations
no Christmas trees or presents
no family gathered for special meals...

If tomorrow morning you woke up
and there was no jolly old St. Nicholas
no Rudolph, sleigh, or reindeer
no dream of festive fruit and food
nor bottled Christmas cheer...

If tomorrow morning you woke up
and all you had was only this story
a Jewish baby born in a first century hovel
another illegitimate child in Bethlehem
"the love of God embodied in a baby"...

If tomorrow morning you woke up
and on your lips were only the simple words
"for unto you is born this day
in the midst of our living
one in whom you can experience God"...

Would it be enough?
Would it be enough to know
that you are in the midst of all that God is...
would it be enough to know
that you are a part of God's justice that might yet be...?

To see God through the window of this stable
to know the spirit of God in the birth cry
to feel the breath of God in the whimper
to see the earthiness of God in the straw
to experience the presence of God in flesh and blood...

To see God through the window of this stable
to have the song of God ringing in our ears
to be "blown away" by the power of God's word
to know that the dirt–the floor–is holy ground
to be grounded in the being of God...

To see God through the window of this stable
to have our ears burn as the disempowered are empowered
to watch the world's greatest humbled at the feet of the poor
to know God, not in the somewhere out there,
but in the every day

to feel God in the heart-ache, to feel God in the laughter...

To see God through the window of this stable
to see God not as a little baby, but as the ground of all that is alive
to be moved to pursue the way of God in the wilderness
to cherish every moment of every hour of every living thing
to be as a Christ, as a God presence in the living that surrounds us...

Would it be enough?
Would it be enough to know
that you are in the midst of all that God is...
would it be enough to know
that you are a part of God's justice that might yet be...?

Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!
It must be more than just the straw tickling a baby's toe
it must be more than a stable full of animals settling for the night
it must be more than a manger holding new life
it must be more than carols and candles...

Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!
What a unique and privileged experience this is
free to wander in unafraid and laughing
unrestricted speech, stories of God and faith
hope, peace, joy, love, and one called Jesus...

Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!
A wonderful and wonder-filled time
a time of God's desire not to be separated from
a time of God's desire to be intimately acquainted with
the women and men, the young and old of this world...

Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!
To be joined with family and friends in a Holy moment
for the praise of our God in word and spirit
for the love of our God so graciously offered
to witness to the birth of Jesus, a new way of being alive...

Would it be enough?
Would it be enough to know
that you are in the midst of all that God is...
would it be enough to know
that you are a part of God's justice that might yet be...?

If tomorrow morning you woke up
and there were no Christmas lights
no household decorations
no Christmas trees or presents
no family gathered for special meals...

Would it be enough?
Would it be enough to know
that you are in the midst of all that God is…
would it be enough to know
that you are a part of God's justice that might yet be…?

"For you have nothing to fear!…
I come to proclaim good news to you–
news of a great joy to be shared…newness is born…
Glory to God…And on earth, peace…."
God's will to all!

Let us come and see…
Let us experience what God is making known.

HYMN: VU # 60 (v 1-3) 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.

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.

Source: Advent Unwrapped 2024

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

May the carols of angels lead us to Hope, the hope born in a manger this night.

May the wisdom of shepherds and magi lead us to Peace, the peace born in a manger this night.*

May the stars dancing in the sky lead us to Joy, the joy born in a manger this night.*

May the courage of Mary and Joseph lead us to Love, the love born in a manger this night.*

May the light of Christ be born in our hearts once again this Christmas.

May we discover hope, peace, joy, and love as we come to the manger this night.* Amen.

Source: GatheringWorship.ca: Written by Susan Lukey. Used with permission. The United Church of Canada.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD/ WE HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

SONG O Christmas Tree

SCRIPTURE READING/THE WORD **Luke 2:1–14, (15–20) The Voice**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

HYMN VU # 82 A Light Is Gleaming V 1& 2

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

1 When light comes pouring into the darkest place,
it hurts our eyes to see the glow.
Sometimes a word of hope reminds us of our fears,
our memories and tears.

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

2 When night is round us and every shadow grows,
a star is there to light our way.
It tells a story of Jesus who came near to say:
"God's light will ever stay."

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

SONG — Light the Candles All Around the World

Teresa Jennings

All of the people all around the world,
have their own ways, their own celebrations.
And that's okay. That's okay. That's the way that it should be.
Everyone. Every way. Every nation.
But wouldn't it be nice if we could have one celebration
All of us together, just one time, one day, one world?
We could light the candles all around the world!
Let them shine. Let them shine, in harmony.
Oh, light the candles all around the world!
Let them shine. Let them shine. Oh, let them shine!
We are the people all around the world,
with our own ways, our own celebrations.
And that's okay. That's okay. That's the way that it should be.
Everyone. Every way. Every nation.
But wouldn't it be nice if we could have one celebration,
All of us together, just one time, one day, one world?
We could light the candles all around the world!
Let them shine. Let them shine, in harmony.
Oh, light the candles all around the world!
Let the shine. Let them shine. Oh, let them shine!
Light the candles all around the world!
Let them shine!
Let them shine, in harmony!
Oh, light the candles all around the world!
Let them shine! Let them shine!
Oh, let them shine!
Let them shine!
Let them shine!
Oh, let them shine!
Shine!

HYMN VU # 82 — A Light Is Gleaming V 3 & 4

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

3 And Jesus showed us a brighter path to walk.
He showed us things we hadn't seen.
Now we, like Jesus, can help creation shine,
and this will be a sign:

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love

is burning bright, living in the light.

4 So let us live in the brightness God has giv'n,
and let us rise to see the dawn.
We trust that God is here a-sparkle and ablaze,
- warming all our days.

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

WE RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS

OFFERING

OFFERING SONG: From Spark to Star

Music and Lyrics by Michael Woytiuk

When a spark takes hold,
And sets a wick to dancing flame
Like hope, it glows with grace divine
A kindling spirit old in time.

In winter evenings dark and cold
the stars in celestial frame we behold
And all who gaze from earth's vast globe
May sense a spirit born of old

Now with the seasons quickening pace
Make some space
For a peace filled hush
A moment still,
A feeling of awe!

So with great joy we now extol
In spark, in flame and shining star
A birth of love, a babe foretold,
The gifts of spirit born of old.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

THE LORD'S / JESUS' PRAYER

Our Mother, Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your 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 them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
for Yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

LIGHTING THE TAPERS

WE GO FORTH WITH GOD

BLESSING AND SENDING

As we go out into the night:
May the joy of the angels sing in our voices;
may the hope of the shepherds enliven our minds;
may the strong faith of Mary strengthen our spirits;
and the love of the Baby shine in our hearts.
May God's blessing be on all of us, this holy night and forever.
Merry Christmas

CLOSING HYMN: VU # 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.

SENDING SONG — We wish You a Merry Christmas

Pierre Gallant

Thank you for joining with us in worship today ♡

MERGING WATERS UNITED CHURCH

A community of caring within the United Church of Canada
24 Maple, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
Lisa Byer-de-Wever, Pastor
Michael Woytiuk, Ministry of Music
Jo-Anne Windover, Office Administrator
office@mergingwaters.ca
(514) 457-5819
www.mergingwaters.ca

UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.

29-Dec	First Sunday after Christmas	Annual Ecumenical Worship 10:30 AM @ Merging Waters UC