

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH



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Advent 4, Love

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Communion. Please be sure to grab a communion cup on your way into the sanctuary. And remember, all are welcome at God's table!

WE GATHER

Welcome -

Welcome to this fourth Sunday of Advent! The arrival of the Christ Child draws closer as we prepare for the celebrations of the season may our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour, for God looks with favour upon us and sees our unrealized potential.

In the tradition of Mary, and all who have said "yes" to God, let us gather now in joyful worship.

Announcements

Acknowledging Our Kinship - As we gather in this time of expectant waiting, we begin by acknowledging the gifts we have already received and thanking Creator God, from whom all blessings flow, for this land on which we live and worship. We acknowledge and give thanks to those who were stewards of the land before our ancestors came and we give thanks to them for the blessing of the sharing of this land. With open hearts we commit ourselves to living into this and every Advent with love and respect with all our relations.

Advent Candle Lighting - **When we feel invisible, ineffective Too small to make a difference The Holy invites us to be God-Bearers And we find Love**

(Love candle is lit)

Where in the world do we find Love these days?

Gathering Hymn (Tune of O Come, O Come Emmanuel)

O come you source of Love unto us all
Enlighten us and help us hear
your call

To bear your Love out into the wild

And celebrate God's wondrous holy Child! Rejoice, rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well

Call To Worship

We have been looking for a sign.

Emmanuel—God with us.

We have been waiting for a savior.

Emmanuel—God with us.

The time is near—can it be?

Emmanuel—God with us.

Come let us worship the God of sign, wonder, and promise.

Hymn - Once in Royal David's City

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, even in the midst of this season of goodwill,

there is much to confess. In spite of holiday cheer,

stress and anxiety rule our lives.

We miss the reason for the season, focusing instead on Christmas

parties, long to-do lists,

and trying to get the shopping done.

We fail to think about your reordered world—

a world where the lowly are lifted up and the hungry are filled with

good things.

Help us adjust our Christmas priorities, that we might join with you, O

God, in preparing a world that welcomes the one who brings us peace.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading - Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

Meditation - *Mary's Song*

Hymn - Song of Mary - 899 VU

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to Offering

Offering Hymn - In the Bleak Mid-winter - 55 VU - Verse 4

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him — give my heart.

Offering Prayer -

On our own what we have to give doesn't amount to much
in the light of all you have given to me and in the face of so much
need.

Put together as a congregation, what we offer you here in love
becomes more, not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in
its usefulness.

We ask you to bless our gifts and with the addition of your blessing,
just as it was with the loaves and fishes, there is enough for all. Amen

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern -

Lord our God,
you have revealed yourself as One
who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
In a world that looks away from injustice,
You cast your eyes on the destitute, the poor, and the wronged;
You have called us to follow you,
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release for the captives
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed
and to proclaim the time of your blessing.

Be present with your church, Lord,
as we respond to your call.
Open our eyes to the downtrodden.
Fill us with compassion for the plight of the alien,
the refugee, and the immigrant.
Lead us into ministries that help orphans and widows.
Give us courage to block the paths of the ungodly
who exploit the poor.

Set us free from pious exercises
that prevent us from the true worship you choose:
Sharing bread with the hungry,
Sharing homes with the homeless,
Sharing clothes with the naked,
Sharing hearts with our own kin.

So may your justice roll down like waters,
your righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Lead our footsteps to stand with the poor,
that we might stand with you.

Have mercy, O God:
Scatter the proud,
Put down the mighty,
Lift up the lowly,
Fill up the hungry,
And send the rich away empty-handed.

Our Father, etc. ...
The Lord's Prayer

Communion Service

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise: "I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up."

(Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for the Refiner's fire, repair, and renewal, the promised birth (and rebirth) of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise, Mary sings ancient trust—the song of generations—that God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble. She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples: Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear that the kingdom of God is near. In the deep of our own winter, we look for them: bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope, you, O Wisdom, O Endless Love, O Radiant Dawn, are there, keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight, that valley's peace be lifted up and mountain's might brought low so that all God's people might rejoice together, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night, as humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable and were witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared with all whom he met, in food and story. We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,

Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body, which I give for you. When you share it, remember me."

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks, said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me."

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all. With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

Bless us, O God, and these your gifts. Encourage us to share your life and love, which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy. Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children: those who feel alone or afraid...those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence... those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...those who long only to hear that they are loved...

God made known in Jesus Christ, hear our prayer. We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Sharing the Bread & Cup

Prayer after Communion -

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger. At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always, that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives, and become hosts to God's presence and people.

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world, where the lonely and longing gather. Lead us to the mangers of our time, where hope and renewal are born again. Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.

Final Hymn - O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Commissioning and Benediction

As you leave this place, may the words of the angel ring in your ears. You have found favour with God. God is coming to you.

God wants to bring new life to birth within you. Live expectantly. Live confidently. Live in God's favour and God's love.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Christmas Eve Service on

December 24th at 5pm. All are welcome.



Carol Sing on December 26. Wear your favourite Christmas Sweater or tie.



In this season of giving we are bringing back some of the Offertory liturgy, however, we will still not be passing the offering plate. All gifts, to all ministries are a blessing and there are many ways to contribute including: placing your gift in the plate before the service, mailing in or dropping off your gift to 60 West Ave., St. Thomas or speak to the office about setting up Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR). Thanks in advance for your continued support of this important ministries.



We are still in need of ushers for the month of December. Please let Cheryl know if you can help out.



Please check the hall for a Coffee sign up list, to help with Fellowship time after Sunday Service.



It's that time again and back to routine
We're asking you kindly and won't be mean
For your Committee or groups annual report
It'd be divine if you kept it short.
You can email it or submit to Sue
Just hand it in, she knows what to do.
So get your report to Sue, do it today!!
I thank you so much, what else can I say?