

Applewood United Church
An Affirming Community
Hybrid Worship for December 17, 2023
4th Sunday of Advent

(*please stand in body or in spirit; **bold** print is for all)

Music for Gathering: "Light a Candle"

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Centering Music: "Jesus Came Bringing Us Love" MV 33

Jesus came bringing us love,
Jesus came bringing us love,
Jesus came bringing us love,
hallelujah forever more!



***Call To Worship and Opening Prayer:**

One: Our waiting time is almost over.

All: Christmas looms on the horizon.

One: Are our homes ready?

All: Are our hearts ready?

One: God gathers us here to experience joy and wonder
in our waiting.

All: God brings us together to experience caring and community together.

One: With hearts and voices lifted,

All: Let us worship God together. Merciful God, we have gathered in hope, sought peace, and laughed with joy. Now we come to share the great love you have for us. We are strengthened by your promises, and we rejoice in your blessings. Amen. (Adapted from The Gathering Used by permission)

***Carol:** "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy" VU 73

The virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory, (clap, clap)

he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.

The angels sang when the baby was born,
the angels sang when the baby was born,
the angels sang when the baby was born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.

The shepherds came where the baby was born,
the shepherds came where the baby was born,
the shepherds came where the baby was born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!
He come from the glory, (clap, clap)
he come from the glorious kingdom.

Lighting the Advent Candle of Love: *(a United Church resource) Lighting the Candles in an Advent Wreath is a very old tradition in the church. It can remind us of our connections to creation and to one another; it can remind us that Advent is not just a waiting time, but a time of action when we seek to live out the promise of hope, peace, joy and love in the world by what we do and what we say. May the small lights we share in our worship light our paths to the work of justice, kindness and care for all.*

Voice 1: "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Voice 2: What does love feel like in the new world?

Voice 1: Love feels like knowing I am a sacred piece of a magnificent whole. Love feels like acceptance and gratitude. Love feels like being cherished.

Voice 2: Advent Is the beginning of this new world, a better world, where you, and me, and all of God's creation are treasured and beloved.

Voice 1: May it be so. (The fourth candle is lit)

Sung Response: "Hope is a Star" VU 7, verse 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.

A Musical Gift from Applewood Choir and Friends:

Let the Whole World Sing!

Choir: "Let the Whole World Sing"

Carol: "O Come All Ye Faithful" VU 60, verses 1 and 3

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.

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.

Choir: "Come, Come Emmanuel"

Carol: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" VU 44, verses 1 and 4

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold,
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

For, lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,

when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

In the Bleak Midwinter (*Please join in singing "Still Still"*)
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.
The Virgin's tender arms enfolding,
warm and safe the child are holding.
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.

Carol: "What Child Is This?" VU 74 verses 1 & 2
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?

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

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

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

Choir: "Christ is Born, Sing Noel!"

Choir: "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow"

Solo: "Stille Nacht"

Carol: "Silent Night" VU 67
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.

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.

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.

Choir: "Hear the News of Christmas"

Choir: "Let the Whole World Sing"

Carol: "Joy to the World" VU 59
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.

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.

Invitation to the Offering

Gift of Music: "I'll Be Home for Christmas"

***Hymn of Dedication:** "What Can I Do?" MV 191
What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

***Prayer of Dedication:**

All: Gracious God, we return to you a portion of your blessings knowing that you hold our future in your hands. May these gifts and the givers be signs of your abundant blessing in our world. Amen. *Wanda Winfield, Blenheim U.C. (from the Gathering 2016)*

Prayers of the People: (A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson)

One: Loving God, help us to remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the Wise Men.

**All: Close the door on hate and
open the door of love all over the world.**

One: Let kindness come with every gift and
good desires with every greeting.

**All: Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings, and teach us
to be merry with clear hearts.**

One: May the Christmas morning make us happy
to be thy children, and the Christmas evening
bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts.

All: Forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake!

One: We continue in prayer as we sing...

The Lord's Prayer VU 959

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil
for the kingdom, the power and glory are yours,
now and forever.

***Closing Carol:** "Go Tell It on the Mountain" VU 43

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.
Go, tell it on the mountain,

over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

***Commissioning / Benediction**

***Amen:** VU 431

Music for Scattering

