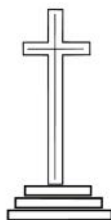


**Welcome to
The Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge
Woodhouse United Church and
Grace United Church
Worship From Home Service
Sunday, December 19, 2021**



**Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge
Box 814, 18 Chapman St. West,
Port Dover, ON N0A 1N0
Church Office: 519-583-0342**

Email: graceunitedportdover@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.graceunitedportdover.org>

Ministers: All People of the Community of Faith

Woodhouse Organist: Pat Tiller

Grace Pianist: Cheryl Copeman

Office Administrator: Jackie Misner-Hilton

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Frank Walker, OM

Licensed Lay Worship Leader: Heather King

Volunteer Associate Minister: Rev. Sheena Riley-Marini

Pastoral Charge Minister: Rev. Kathryn Vance, DM

Cell: 519-717-7426 or kathrynvance55@yahoo.ca

Office Hours 9:00 am – 11:30 am (Mon. – Thurs)

December 19 2021

4th Sunday of Advent

We Gather to Worship

Land Acknowledgement

Welcome and Announcements

Joke There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. “Is there anything breakable in here?” asked the postal clerk. “Only the Ten Commandments,” answered the lady.

The Bible is Opened and Christ Candle Lit

Call to Worship

The candles of our Advent wreath are lit and casting their glow; the lights on the Christmas tree burn bright and God is calling us.

We hear the call and have answered.

Come, gather, bask in the light of Christ.

Come and prepare to listen to the word of God, the restorer and provider.

We gather, our spirits filled with both yearning and praise.

Let us open our hearts and answer God’s call to worship. Let us pray:

God, our restorer, you make dreamers out of all of us. As we sit in the glow of the Advent candles and sing hymns about the coming of your son, Jesus, we are touched by your joy and hope, your love and provision. You have done great things for us, and so we come today prepared to hear your words that will enfold our sorrows and encourage our joy.

We thank you, God, our provider. We praise you. Amen.

Sally Tuffin, St. Paul’s U.C., Prescott, Ont.

Hymn – VU #29 **Hark the Glad Sound**

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:

let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.
He comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

Advent Candle Lighting Week 4 –LOVE

It won't be long now. Our Advent waiting is almost over. In the last three weeks, we have lit the candles of hope, peace, and joy. (*Light 2 purple and the pink candles*) The day of Emmanuel, God-with-Us, is very near. Love is the theme of this day.

What does love look like?

Love looks like a parent working three or four minimum-wage jobs to pay the rent and buy the groceries. Love looks like that same parent deciding to buy school sneakers rather than the medicine the doctor said she needed. Love looks like a tiny baby, tightly bundled, lying in the feed trough in a barn - God became one of us and one like us, trying to find a home in the world. Love looks like that same baby, grown to adulthood now, kneeling at the feet of his friends, washing the muck from their feet, telling them, "You should do as I have done to you." Love is a solitary figure carrying a cross, carrying the weight of all the world's pain and sadness, yours and mine, too.

What does love feel like?

Love feels like a warm blanket on a cold night. Love feels like a heart overflowing. Love feels like a heart broken. Love feels like the solid ground beneath you. Love feels like a raging river carrying you away. Love feels like God.

What is it like to live in love?

Love never stops caring, no matter what. Love hangs on and hangs in; love is tenacious. Love gives itself away, even to those we struggle to like and value. Love is born in a stable; love dies on a cross; love overcomes death. Today we light the candle named Love. May its light help us find our way.

Light the last purple candle.

Hymn # 7 **Hope is a Star** – verse 4 only

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.

Memorial Candle Lighting

Grace

Jean Bernice	Crawford	5	December	2020
William	Jaques	1	December	2018
David Murray	Kilpatrick	13	December	2018
Betty	McKenzie	12	December	2017
Robert David	Morrison	30	December	2016
Ruth	Ramp	4	December	2019
William	Ramp	10	December	2018
Esther Elizabeth Caroline	Stephens	26	December	2018
John Calvin	Varey	2	December	2020
Wayne	Wilson	21	December	2019

Woodhouse

Bertram Blain	Douglas	3	2019
Mary Elenor Ruth	Malccomson	24	December
Willie David	Moore	24	December
Cheryl Anne	PPineo	30	December
George Ernest	Shoff	26	December
Marlene	Simpson	24	December
David Scott	Stephens	29	December

Although death has separated us physically,

faith and love have bound us eternally.

Though we cannot see you,

we know you are here.

Though we cannot touch you,

we feel the warmth of your smile

as we continue our own journeys.

As you were, you will always be,

treasured forever in our memory.

Opening Prayer

Holy One, as the days grow shorter and the nights lengthen, be our inner light, we pray.

Keep glowing in our hearts—

so that what we think and say and do comes from a place of calm and compassion.

When so much distracts and disturbs, anchor us in your deep love.

Remind us that even while we live in this world, you are our everlasting home.

Bless our gathering together,

that our minds may be calm and alert and our hearts open to your grace.

Juanita Austin, Salmon Arm, B.C.

We Listen for God's Word

Time for the Young at Heart – How does a snowstorm remind you of God?

Hymn - VU #1 **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, great God of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Dayspring, from on high,
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us the Prince of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayer for Illumination

We come to you this day, O God,
seeking to be the place of Jesus' new birth;
seeking to be the peace, hope, love, and joy of God.
We come with hearts open,
ready to receive once again
the good news: Emmanuel will come.
Let us shout with joy; let us sing!
Gracious God, let us prepare our lives
to be a home for your child. Amen.

Beth W Johnston, Hantsport P.C., Hantsport, N.S.

Scripture:

Psalm 80:1-7

Can't you hear us knocking on your door?

You stand inside, laughing into the firelight with your family;

you toy with your tinsel and your ornaments.

Can't you hear us?

We are the lost and the lonely, out in the cold.

We long for something to celebrate too.

How long can you ignore us?

How long can you close your eyes and ears to our crisis?

Hunger gnaws on our bones;

we sip the salt of our tears.

We are an embarrassment.

People turn away from us.

They laugh and joke; they don't even see us.

We are invisible.

Let us live too. Please, let us live.

Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

⁷ Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'"

⁸ First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. ⁹ Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Luke 1:39-55

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted

Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

Anthem

Message

Love! My favorite theme. Yes, we must have hope. However hope and peace and joy are easier to attain if we have love. God knows that. God loves us...unconditionally. God might not always be pleased with our thoughts or behaviour, but God always loves us. God loves us so much that we were given Jesus to show us the way. As you heard in Paul's letter to the Hebrews, people thought that the only way to earn God's approval or forgiveness was to present burnt offerings. When I think of a God that has that kind of relationship with people, I picture some humourless old man,

sitting on a throne, looking only for our faults and doling out punishments. Jesus introduced people to what God is really like... hopeful, peaceful, joyful, loving. He introduced us to a God who created those same attributes in us (God created humankind in his own image).

A little trivia for you...in the New International translation of the bible, the word love occurs 686 times. Included in that is Jesus teaching to love the Lord, our God with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind; to love our neighbour as ourselves; to love each other as Jesus has loved us. What is it like to love? It is to have compassion, concern, care, empathy, fondness, tenderness, warmth, forgiveness. It is to wish for another what you wish for yourself.

We have been taught of Jesus' love for us our whole lives. For most of us it began with "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the bible tells me so." Yes, our bible tells us many stories of Jesus' love for us. Of course, the ultimate act of his love was when he gave his life for us. He knew what that trip into Jerusalem meant. He knew that if he kept teaching his message there would be an extreme price to pay. But he loved us so much he would not run away from it.

I know that I shared a message about love fairly recently but it is worth talking about again. I believe that Jesus was God's love incarnate and to follow his teachings is to live in a state of love...God's love.

Whom do we love? And how much do we love? Do we wish for others what we wish for ourselves?

Love... we throw the word around quite easily. We say it, but do we live it? How much do we live it? Is our love conditional?

We are called to love. That doesn't mean we have to like. We are not saints after all and, even if we were, I'm sure that there are lots of thoughts and behaviours that the saints would not approve of. I guess that may be a better word than like. Instead of thinking that I don't like someone I should realize that it is that I don't approve of their words or actions. What might that look like?

Say you're driving down the road, doing the speed limit of course, and some guy comes speeding past you. You might say, "It would serve that guy right if he ended up in the ditch." It's understandable to disapprove of his behaviour. Do you *hope* he ends up in the ditch? No, because you wouldn't want that for

yourself. However, to acknowledge that ending up in the ditch is a common consequence of erratic driving, is a reasonable thought. But then we think it through a little further. If he ends up in the ditch, a possible or probable consequence of his action, might he or someone else be killed or injured? To love is to care. In this case it is loving to pray that this guy's bad behaviour doesn't result in injury to himself or others.

What if you've been scammed and lost \$2,000. The scammer has been caught but doesn't have the money to pay you back. She has scammed others too. Now the case is going to court. You might say, "I *hope* they throw the book at her. She deserves time in jail for what she's done."

Would you want to be sent to jail? A sentence can be a consequence to her actions. To love is to be compassionate. In this case it is loving to pray that no harm comes to her during her incarceration.

Okay, here's another one. You know someone who is refusing Covid vaccination. He's doing this because he had a bad reaction to the flu shot once. He believes that he would have the same reaction and that vaccines don't do anything anyway. Would you say, "It'll serve him right if he gets Covid"? Yes, without the vaccine he is at greater risk. But are you *hoping* that he will get Covid? Would you want that for yourself? Yes, contracting the virus is a greater risk for the unvaccinated and then they spread it to others. To love is to have empathy. This person has concerns, whether valid or not. It is loving to pray that he doesn't get the virus.

One last scenario.

There is a person in the congregation that just rubs you the wrong way. He or she is usually bossy or loud or negative or demanding or picky...or any number of attributes that irritate you. You might think, "I just wish someone would tell him or her to let someone else express their opinion or I wish someone would tell them to be quiet or to be positive or accept the input of others, etc. Would you want someone to tell you that your way is irritating others? To love is to show tenderness. It is loving to pray that you will be accepting of all personalities and have the grace to work with them without getting annoyed.

In the words of a song from the 70's - All you need is love. Amen.

Hymn - VU #8 **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming**

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, as seers of old have sung.
It came a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Saviour when half spent was the night.

We Respond to God's Word

Offering

Chorus – VU# 537 Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands

Your work, O God, needs many hands to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve unless our gifts we share.

Because we love you and your work, our offering now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own, we ask for Jesus' sake.

Prayer of Dedication

Abundant God, sustain in us a willing spirit to serve your
purpose in the world.

Inspire us to share peace where there is discontent, to bring
healing in the place of hurt, to shine your love into the
overlooked corners of our world.

Remind us of the joy of reaching out to you even as you
already draw us near.

Bless all that we offer today. Amen.

Gill Le Fevre, Walton Memorial U.C., Oakville, Ont.

Minute for Mission

David shares what your support means to him

Christmas is one of the loneliest times of year for David. In a series of tragic accidents, David lost his wife and children. And when it seemed things couldn't get any worse, life got even more painful.



Christmas is a hard time for David without his family.

Credit: Bissell Centre

"Ten years ago, my wife and I were living our dream, running a successful catering business in Vancouver. But that was before a drunk driver took my wife's life," says David.

And that was just the beginning.

"The heartbreak was still fresh for me when, six weeks later, a work accident claimed the life of my 23-year-old son. In the blink of an eye, he was gone. A few months later, I got a call that my daughter's car had veered from the road. By the time she was found, she'd frozen to death."

In five months, David's entire family was gone, and he turned to substances to numb the pain.

"My rock-bottom came when I was arrested for carrying drugs. In jail, I had a lot of time to think about the man I wanted to become. I knew I needed to make some huge changes if I wanted to be happy again and become the man my beloved wife and kids knew me to be."

The Bissell Centre—supported through your Mission & Service gifts—was the first place David went to when he was released.

"The staff greeted me with kindness. Instead of judging me,

they welcomed me and handed me a warm plate of food. The staff told me about their mental health and housing support programs, and I was blown away. For the first time, I realized that I didn't have to rebuild my life alone," he says.

*Please **make a special gift this Christmas.** Your support lets people who suffer unimaginable loss know they aren't alone.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Concern

Lord's Prayer

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 Take Christ's Message Into the World

Hymn VU #75 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
'glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and humankind.

'To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find

to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace!
Good will to all from highest heaven
begin, and never cease.'

Benediction and Commissioning

And now may the brightness of joy, peace, faith,
and love be our gifts as we leave this time and place of worship.
May we go out strengthened because we have been
together in this place and touched by God's Spirit.
May we continue to be a light to the world,
that everyone might see the kindness of God.

Bob Root, Peterborough, Ont.

Closing of Bible and Extinguishing of Candle

Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace, never be afraid. God will go with you each
hour of ev'ry day
Go now in faith, steadfast strong and true. Know He will guide
you in all you do
Go now in love, and show you believe; Reach out to others, so
all the world can see
God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in
faith and in love.

Amen, Amen, Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFICE IS OPEN

Office Hours Monday-Thursday

9:00 am-11:30 am

Feel free to call and leave a message or send an email at any time and we will respond during office hours.

519-583-0342

graceunitedportdover@gmail.com

For Pastoral Care, please contact

Rev. Kathryn Vance

519-717-7426

kathrynvance55@yahoo.ca

Announcement reminder

Please submit announcements by end of day Tuesday for inclusion in the weekly bulletin. Thank you!

Stewardship Seconds

December 19, Fourth Sunday in Advent

Blessings have many faces; so do the needs of those around us. Let us rejoice in what we have been given and look for others with whom we can share it.