

**Welcome to
The Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge
Woodhouse United Church and
Grace United Church
Worship From Home Service
Sunday, December 26, 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)

1st Sunday after Christmas

We Gather to Worship

Land Acknowledgement

Welcome and Announcements

Joke – While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign..."Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: do not step in exhaust."

The Bible is Opened and Christ Candle Lit

Call to Worship

Holidays bring hopeful anticipation of special times. Holidays bring work: baking, fundraising, festive meals, shopping, and house-cleaning sprees.

Holidays bring fun: parties, feasts, and gifts with family and friends.

Holidays bring grief and loneliness, yearning for those from whom we are parted.

On this first Sunday after Christmas, right in the middle of it all, we pause to come on bended knee before the Holy One who came bringing gifts of hope, joy, peace, and love for all.

Elizabeth Henderson, Emmanuel U.C., North Bay, Ont.

Hymn – VU #299 **Teach Me, God, to Wonder**

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see;
let your world of beauty capture me.

Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Let me, God, be open, let me loving be;
let your world of people speak to me.

Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Let me, God, be ready, let me be awake,
in your world of loving my place take.

Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak,
see you in my neighbour when we meet.

Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Opening Prayer

Loving and faithful God, as we once again celebrate the
Christmas season, we are reminded that you gave us a gift:

A gift that lets your light in.

A gift that encourages us to depend on you.

A gift that offers us hope for your kingdom.

A gift that sustains our faith.

A gift that tests our call to say “yes” to you.

A gift that we are allowed to regift freely.

A gift that abides with us eternally.

A gift of love.

The gift of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Kerry Parsons, Milford-Lantz U.C., Milford, N.S.

We Listen for God's Word

Time for the Young at Heart – How does hand sanitizer remind you of
God?

Hymn - VU #357 **Tell Me the Stories of Jesus**

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
all in the lovelight of Jesus' face.

Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee!
And how the Master, ready and kind,
chided the billows and hushed the wind.

Into the city I'd follow the children's band,
waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing
loudest hosannas! Jesus is king!

Show me that scene in the garden of bitter pain;
and of the cross where my Saviour for me was slain.
Sad ones or bright ones, so that they be
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

Prayer for Illumination

As we approach the beginning of a new year, we ask that these words of scripture will reveal to us your light, love, and salvation, all that we need for the year to come. Amen.

Fraser Williamson, Loring P.C., Port Loring/Golden Valley, Ont.

Scripture:

Psalm 148 Profligate generosity

Jubilation, exaltation, celebration, one and all!

**Within the womb of the heavens,
the earth leaps to praise its Creator.**

As the pearl necklace of planets swings around the sun,
as the shining oceans embrace the continents,
so do all living things praise the giver of life.

For God expressed a thought, and the thought took life.

God wanted to speak,
and the Word became flesh and lived among us.

**In that Word was holiness,
the spirit that makes every life
more than the sum of its chemicals.**

From the tiniest plankton in the sea to the great whales,
from the ants that burrow in the dust
to the eagle that soars in the heavens –
all owe their existence to God.

**Fire and hail, snow and frost,
sun and drought, wind and rain –
in God, all things work together for good.**

Mighty mountains compost into rich soil;
fruit trees and cedars aerate the atmosphere.

The dung beetle depends on the wastes of cattle;
birds and currents carry seeds to new orchards.

No one is cut off from God's energy,
**Neither presidents throned in offices
nor derelicts huddled under bridges.**

For in God there is neither male nor female,
old nor young, black nor white.

All have been equally created by God;
their lives all witness to God's grace.
**With profligate generosity,
God scatters new life among weeds and thistles.**

And all of creation responds with rejoicing.

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 2:41-52

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." ⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Anthem

Message

Merry Christmas. I hope that for all of you it was, despite the restrictions of Covid. I know that some of you were planning to see family this year that you haven't seen for 2 years and yet, because of this new strain of the virus, had to cancel those plans. Hopefully you were still able to connect by phone or computer. I know it's not the same as in-person visiting and hugs but thank God we have the means to get together somehow. For those of us who were able to surround themselves with family, we must be thankful.

We all need to be thankful for the food that dressed our tables, recognizing our place of privilege, as we remember those who hunger, even at Christmas.

We all need to be thankful for the gifts we exchanged, recognizing that for many in our world, there could be no gifts to give or receive.

The Colossians reading makes me think of Christmas gatherings. Let me read it again. Listen for instructions that seem important not only every day but are especially applicable to Christmas get-togethers.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

I know that in families there are sometimes strained relationships. In those cases, following these instructions may help heal the conflict. If things did not go as you had hoped yesterday, it is not too late to reach

out again. Don't give up. After all, Christ has not given up on us. As we head into a new year, many of us make New Year's resolutions. Here's a few, in case you haven't thought of any:

I will find joy in every situation no matter how difficult

I will look for the positive and overlook the negative

wherever possible

I will do an act of kindness each day

I will be patient with others

I will be gentle with my criticisms

I will forgive 70 times 7 times this year

I will have compassion for those going through difficult times

Maybe one or all of those will help to make 2022 a grand year for you. I know that with the uncertainty of the course of the pandemic, it's hard to think of the new year with any sense of excitement. We might not be able to have what we would call a "Happy" New Year but, because of Christ, we can have a "Joy-filled" New Year and "Joy" is greater and deeper than "Happy".

Happy would be in-person visits with loved ones who live away. Joy comes with any kind of contact.

Happy would be no masks. Joy comes with staying healthy.

Happy would be no illness. Joy comes with readily available treatment.

Happy would be no conflict. Joy comes with reconciliation.

Happy would be no one in need. Joy comes with helping to make a difference.

Those are just a few examples. Of course the greatest source of joy is God. There is joy in knowing that God loves us, truly loves us, unconditionally. There is joy in God's creation of what we call the "natural world". There is joy in the peace of God.

And so I wish you all a Joy-filled New Year. Amen.

Hymn - VU #509 **Here I Am, Lord**

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

We Respond to God's Word

Offering

Chorus – VU# 549 For All Your Goodness God

For all your goodness, God, we give you thanks.
Thanks for the food we eat, and for the friends we meet;
for each new day we greet, we give you thanks.

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, it is fun to give. The look of delight from the recipient is a great gift. May our offerings be just as pleasing to you. Let them bring hope to those in need, ministry within this community, and love to all who are hurting. With these gifts, we commit ourselves to the way of love. Amen.

Laura Turnbull, Penticton, B.C.

Minute for Mission

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 #716 **My Life Flows On**

My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the sweet, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear the music ringing:
It finds an echo in my soul -
how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
My Saviour still is living.
What though the shadows gather 'round?
A new song Christ is giving.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,
while to that Rock I'm clinging:
since Love commands both heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear,
and hear their death knells ringing:
when friends rejoice both far and near,
how can I keep from singing?

In prison cell and dungeon vile
our thoughts to them are winging:
when friends by shame are undefiled,
how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
and day by day this pathway smooths,

since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing:
all things are mine since I am Christ's -
how can I keep from singing?

Blessing and Sending Forth

May the gifts of Christmas extend all through the year. May
we share the gifts of Christmas in how we live and be with
others.

May God bless you and keep you.

Go in the peace of Christ, always travelling in the light.

*Follow with the singing of VU 87 "I am the light of the world,"
refrain only.*

Mary Parsons, Munn's U.C., Oakville, 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