Image by Aneta Esz from Pixabay

# Merging Waters United Church

## Sunday Morning Worship December 22, 2024

## Advent IV

## Joint Service with Wyman Memorial & Cote St. Charles

## United Churches - Hudson Pastoral Charge

# 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 OF THE CHURCH/ LIFE AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

## GATHERING

## LIGHTING OF THE PRAYER CANDLE / OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

## ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

## CENTERING MUSIC MV#138 My Love Colours Outside the Lines

1. My love colours outside the lines,
exploring paths that few could ever find;
and takes me into places
where I've never been before,
and opens doors, to worlds outside the lines.

2. My Lord colours outside the lines,
turns wounds to blessings, water into wine;
and takes me into places
where I've never been before
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

Refrain:
We'll never walk on water
if we're not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking
from time to time.
And we'll never move the gravestones
if we're not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.

3. My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the boundaries
where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines. R

4. My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the boundaries
where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

Words: Gordon Light, 1995

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## CALL TO WORSHIP/ SPIRITUAL FOCUS- A BODY PRAYER FOR LOVE

*Source: Advent Unwrapped 2024*

## OPENING PRAYER

O Lord of our hearts,
you are coming
to share in the conflict, turmoil, and terror of our world.
O Lord of our minds,
as we prepare for your arrival,
still our anxiety and fear
for you come to do God's will.
O Holy one of hope, peace, and joy,
Shepherd us in the strength of your love.
Ready us to receive your love and to be love in the world.
Amen.

*Source: Advent Unwrapped 2024*

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Judy Cooper, Margie Chesney, Jack Brown

The fourth Sunday of Advent has arrived.
**We join the dance of dark and light.**
Imagine the night sky, a velvety deep black, surrounding and cradling the earth.
As the sky darkens, stars appear, one by one.
**Darkness cradles the light.**
Starlight twinkles in the beauty of the darkness.
**And the wonder of dark and light dancing astounds us.**
Light and dark, friends and companions.
**One cannot exist without the other.**
And out of the dance of night and stars bursts forth love: the love of God revealed.
**May love dance among us, the love we know through Jesus.**

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

## ADVENT HYMN

**Give me oil in my lamp,**
**let the dark and light dance.**
**Give me oil in my lamp, I pray.**
**Give me oil in my lamp,**
**let the dark and light dance,**
**let the dark and light dance today.**
**Love is coming. Love is coming.**
**Love is coming on Christmas Day.**
**Christ is coming. Christ is coming.**
**Christ is coming, shout "Hooray!"**

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

## SCRIPTURE READING/THE WORD Luke 1:39-55 The Voice

39 Mary immediately got up and hurried to the hill country, in the province of Judah, 40-41 where her cousins Zacharias and Elizabeth lived. When Mary entered their home and greeted Elizabeth, who felt her baby leap in her womb, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Elizabeth** *(shouting)*: 42 You are blessed, *Mary*, blessed among all women, and the child you bear is blessed! 43 And blessed I am as well, that the mother of my Lord has come to me! 44 As soon as I heard your voice greet me, my baby leaped for joy within me. 45 How fortunate you are, Mary, for you believed that what the Lord told you would be fulfilled.

Mary is deeply moved by these amazing encounters—first with the messenger and then with her cousin, Elizabeth. Mary's response can't be contained in normal prose; her noble soul overflows in poetry. And this poetry isn't simply religious; it has powerful social and political overtones. It speaks of a great reversal—what might be called a social, economic, and political revolution. To people in Mary's day, there is little question as to what she is talking about. The Jewish people are oppressed by the Roman Empire, and to speak of a King who will demote the powerful and rich and elevate the poor and humble means one thing: God is moving toward setting them free! Soon Zacharias will overflow in poetry of his own.

46 **Mary:** My soul lifts up the Lord!
47 My spirit celebrates God, my Liberator!
48 For though I'm God's humble servant,
God has noticed me.
Now and forever,
I will be considered blessed by all generations.
49 For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
holy is God's name!
50 From generation to generation,
God's lovingkindness endures
for those who revere Him.
51 God's arm has accomplished mighty deeds.
The proud in mind and heart,
God has sent away in disarray.
52 The rulers from their high positions of power,
God has brought down low.
And those who were humble and lowly,
God has elevated with dignity.
53 The hungry—God has filled with fine food.
The rich—God has dismissed with nothing in their hands.
54 To Israel, God's servant,
God has given help,
55 As promised to our ancestors,
remembering Abraham and his descendants in mercy forever.

[56] Mary stayed with Elizabeth *in Judea* for the next three months and then returned to her home *in Galilee*.

SONG: Magnum Mysterium

*Words and Music by Michael Woytiuk*

## REFLECTION/FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## HYMN: VU #14 (Verses 1,2,3 & 6) To A Maid Whose Name Was Mary

1 To a maid whose name was Mary,
the angel Gabriel came.
"Fear not," the angel told her,
"I come to bring good news,
good news I come to tell you,
good news, I say, good news.

2 "For you are highly favoured
by God the Lord of all,
who even now is with you.
You are on earth most blest,
you are most blest, most blessed,
God chose you, you are blest!"

3 But Mary was most troubled
to hear the angel's word.
What was the angel saying?
It troubled her to hear,
to hear the angel's message,
it troubled her to hear.

6 As Mary heard the angel,
she wondered at his words.
"Behold, I am your handmaid,"
she said unto her God.
"So be it, I am ready
according to your word."

## WE RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS

## OFFERING

OFFERING SONG: Love Came Down at Christmas

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## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We depend on you, O God, and whether we give or receive, help us to share in your bounty with glad hearts. May these gifts help to make space for the grace of love in the world. Amen.

*Source: Advent Unwrapped 2024*

## PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY / PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

Prayerfully, Loving God we bring ourselves before you with praise and thanksgiving for the many ways you have shown love to us. We pray for ourselves and for others in those times when we do not feel your love. We pray that you will draw close in those moments, reminding us that you remain steadfast in your love.
Thank you, Loving God for providing for us in so many ways.
(*Name things appropriate to your context and your people or allow silence for people to offer their own thanks.*)

We pray for all who are living in war zones, all who are in unsafe living conditions, and all who are displaced and homeless. Provide for their needs. Provide safe passage to all who are escaping the terror of war. Bring to the table the right people who can make a difference and who can negotiate a peaceful end to war and conflict. Show us the ways that we too can be part of the peace-making.
Thank you, Loving God for receiving our prayers this morning, including the silent prayers we now offer for those we hold dear and whose needs are great.
(*a time of silent prayer*)

We pray also, Loving God for those who have no one to pray for them today. Show us how we can come alongside with our love, our compassion and care.

*Source: Sandi Irving, St. David's U.C., Port Hastings, N.S.*

We join our hearts together with all our siblings, sisters, and brothers who are praying this day the universal prayer that Jesus taught us…

## 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**

## SONG: Rise Up Shepherd and Follow

## WE GO FORTH WITH GOD / SENDING
## COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION / BLESSING AND SENDING

May you go forth
to carry God's love, as Mary did.
A love that is radical, powerful, and life-affirming;
a love that honours the unique and different ways each of us bear God's image

*Source: Advent Unwrapped 2024*

## SENDING HYMN MV # 220 — Hope Shines as a Solitary Star

Hope* shines as the solitary star.
Faith is the inner light.
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumine the pathway home.

*Peace, Love, Joy

*Words: Catherine Faith MacLean*
*Words copyright © Catherine Faith MacLean*

## Thank you to Rev. Kent Chown and all the members of Wyman Memorial & Cote St. Charles United Churches - Hudson Pastoral Charge for joining with us in worship today ♡

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### MERGING WATERS UNITED CHURCH

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**UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.**

**MERGING WATERS**

**Advent Worship: Join us on Sunday to hear more about our theme and our weekly focus!**

**FROM SPARK TO STAR!**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24-Dec | Christmas Eve! | Families Welcome! 7pm |

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

**WYMAN MEMORIAL & COTE ST. CHARLES UNITED CHURCHES - HUDSON PASTORAL CHARGE**

This evening, Wyman joins together with the Anglican Parish of Vaudreuil for a service of Carols and Lessons at 8:00 p.m. at St-Mary's Church

Hudson Christmas Eve Services:

- 7:00 p.m. Service for All Ages, in person and on-line St-James Anglican Church Hall
- 11:00 p.m. Communion Service, on-line only

December 29, the Wyman congregation has options:

- Annual Ecumenical Worship 10:30 AM @ Merging Waters UC
- St Mary's Anglican Church, 10:30 am Sung Eucharist
- or join with our summer worship partners from Trinity-Anjou or Mount Royal - Zoom links in your e-mail