Merging Waters United Church

Advent III- *Unexpected Joy*

Baptism Sunday

Sunday Morning Worship December 14, 2025

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 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 AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

GATHERING

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

GATHERING SONG: VU# 14 To A Maid Whose Name Was Mary

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

We gather together in this place:
prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,
we who dare to imagine a world renewed;
we who dare to dream God's dream.
We sing with Elizabeth and Mary.
Our spirits rejoice in God, our hope!
We bless the God of justice and joy,
who lifts up the lowly and vulnerable.
God's mercy is upon us all,
from generation to generation.
Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.
We have come to wonder and praise.

Adapted: The Will to Dream Advent

GATHERING PRAYER

God of surprises, you interrupt our world with joy and hope beyond our wildest dreams. When we feel forgotten or despair, bless us with your holy joy. When our world feels barren, bless us with the gift of possibility. We pray as people of deep faith, entrusting ourselves and our world to the holy unknown, brought to birth in Jesus, our light and life. Amen.

The Will to Dream Advent

GATHERING HYMN MV 120 My Soul Cries Out (Canticle of the Turning)

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.
Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it.

We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

Light the first candle.

We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.

Light the second candle.

Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine two cousins embracing and sharing life-changing news with one another. One, an older woman, who knew the physical risks of bearing a child late in life. The other, a not-yet-married woman, who was aware of the social stigmas in her society. Yet each chose joy over fear. Imagine the pure joy of this wonderful occasion.

(wait a full ten seconds before speaking resumes)

Open your eyes. When Elizabeth shares her surprising news with Mary, her joy doubles upon hearing that Mary is also pregnant. The two women sing of joy as they sense, literally, in their bodies that change is coming.

A joy of defiance that good news perseveres even in the most difficult of circumstances. From Isaiah to Mary and Elizabeth, from biblical times to the present, joy can be found. Joy is not a denial of harm that is happening; it is a refusal to let injustice define all reality.

A joy that moves from personal experience to communal transformation in the song that Elizabeth and Mary proclaimed, and we proclaim today.

A joy our world needs to experience this season, not to hide from what is wrong, but to strengthen God's people to bear a world that is not right.

Today, we also light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN TLUS #55 We Light This Candle

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

THE WORD Luke 1:39–55

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill
country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When
Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled
with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the
mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting,
the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there
would be[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary's Song of Praise

46 And Mary[b] said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
50 indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

ELIZABETH

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SONG

The Will to Dream

Words & music by Nathan Evand fox, Andrea Hamilton, and Amanda Meisenheimer

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Statement of Purpose

Scripture: *1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 NRSV*

One Body with Many Members

For just as the body is one and has many members,

and all the members of the body, though many,

are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized

into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—

and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Presentation of Candidates:

Rylie Patricia Hlga Smith

Charlie Lindsay Ryan Smith

Profession Of Faith and Promises

Promises of Parents
Participation of Godparents
Congregational Promise

As a baptized and baptizing church, do you commit yourselves to support and nurture these persons within a community which worships God, loves and serves others, seeks justice and resists evil?

We do.

Affirmation of Faith –

New Creed

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Thanksgiving- Pouring of the Water

The Act of Baptism/Marking with the Sign of the Cross

Presentation of the Baptismal Candle

Declaration & Congregational Welcome

Baptismal Blessing Song On The Day You Were Born

OFFERING INVITATION

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kin-dom of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. Amen.

OFFERING HYMN MV # 183 I'm Gonna Shout, Shout

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE-

Response: **may we be bearers of joy, carrying good news,**
blessing one another for this journey we share.

JESUS' PRAYER/THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN VU# 73 The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

BLESSING & SENDING

There is joy in centering the voices of those typically unheard.
So go forth from this place with ears to hear,
and believe the cries of women, immigrants, elders, and all who are vulnerable and silenced.
May we be strengthened not just to hear and believe, but to act,
for there is no greater joy than ensuring that all God's children need not cry out any longer.

Go out into the world embracing the will to dream,
and may joy wash over you, bringing renewed strength for the days ahead!

SENDING SONG God Rest Ye Merry People Here

xx

Thank you for joining in worship today ❤️

MERGING WATERS UNITED CHURCH

A community of caring within the United Church of Canada
24 Maple, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
Lisa Byer-de-Wever, Pastor
Michael Woytiuk, Ministry of Music
Jo-Anne Windover, Office Administrator
office@mergingwaters.ca
(514) 457-5819
www.mergingwaters.ca

Merging Waters
United Church
Welcome Grace Service Love
Community

UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.

14-Dec	Advent 3: Prophetically Defiant Joy Celebration of Baptism
16-Dec	Blue Christmas Service For those experiencing grief during this season At Cedar Park United, 7 pm
21-Dec	Advent 4: Courageous, Liberating Love Communion
24-Dec (Wednesday)	Christmas Eve: Embodied Love Service at 7 pm