



**FAIRLAWN**

Connect with what matters in life.

**Hope Peace Joy Love**



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church  
Sunday, December 17, 2023 10:30am  
Third Sunday of Advent**

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

Rev. Jean Ward

Eleanor Daley, Director of Music

Fairlawn Avenue Senior Choir

Guest Pianists:

Anne Fraser, Doreen Uren Simmons

## Welcome and Acknowledgement

There is much in life that brings us joy. A recent study by the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, suggests a tiny little thing that brings joy to a person, that they might do each day, has the potential to increase their overall happiness in life.

Welcome to an hour of something beyond a tiny little thing. An hour with people who care about you. An hour of words and music and visuals to lift your spirit. Above all, an hour in the Presence of the Holy One who sanctified and sanctifies our existence. An hour to know you, just as you are, exactly as you are, are unique and worthy and part of a community that celebrates life in the Presence of One who delights in us.

We have not always been wise enough to include everyone in our circle of joy. Some we created great pain and suffering for because we decided that although they rejoiced in this land they did not deserve to stay on it. We acknowledge the people whom we have set aside and their place in the story of this land, the Wendat, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and the Mississauga of the New Credit. We acknowledge our call to give their descendants fair access to this land and to be reconciled to them, seeking justice while we repent of the way we have denied them joy.

**\*Opening Hymn** Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

VU #8

***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.***

## Lighting of the Advent Candle – Joy

Because of sadness, because of despair in our communities,  
because there is still so much longing in our hearts,

***Let us light a candle of joy.***

Because apathy is still so strong, because so many words  
have been used to induce marginalisation,  
Because we are called to counter the prevalence of fractiousness  
And be beacons of celebration and delight in this world

***Let us light a candle of joy.***

We light the Third Advent Candle as we sing together:

***O gentle love, caressing those in sorrow;  
O tender love, that comforts those forlorn;  
O hopeful love that promises tomorrow:  
O living Love, within our hearts be born,  
O living Love, within our hearts be borne.***

(Michael Joncas, b. 1951)

May the light from this candle  
***overwhelm the world.***

May the light from this candle say to all  
***Our joy knows no bounds  
In the Presence of the Incarnate One.***

Friends, be not afraid.  
***We live in joy.***

## “Grant Me Your Sense of Timing”<sup>1</sup>

O God of all seasons and senses,  
Grant me your sense of timing  
to submit gracefully  
and rejoice quietly  
in the turn of the seasons.

In this season of short days and long nights,  
of gray and white and cold,

4.

***teach me the lessons of waiting;  
of the snow joining the mystery  
of the hunkered down seeds  
growing in their sleep  
watched over by gnarled-limbed,  
grandparent trees  
resting from Autumn's  
staggering energy  
of the silent, whirling earth  
circling to race back home to the sun.***

O God, grant me your sense of timing.  
In this season of short days and long nights,  
of gray and white and cold,

***teach me the lessons of endings;  
children growing, friends leaving,  
jobs concluding,  
stages finishing,  
grieving over,  
grudges over,  
blaming over,  
excuses over.***

O God, grant me your sense of timing.  
In this season of short days and long nights,  
of gray and white and cold,

***teach me the lessons of beginnings:  
that such waitings and endings  
may be a starting place,  
a planting of seeds  
which bring to birth  
what is ready to be born  
something right and just and different,  
a new song,  
a deeper relationship,  
a fuller love  
In the fullness of your  
time.***

O God, grant me your sense of timing.

## Scripture Reading Isaiah 61 (The Inclusive Bible)

The spirit of Exalted YHWH is upon me,  
 for YHWH has anointed me;  
 God has sent me to bring good news to those who are poor,  
 to heal broken hearts;  
 to proclaim release to those held captive,  
 and liberation to those who are in prison;  
 to announce a year of favour from YHWH,  
 and the day of God's vindication;

to comfort all who mourn;  
 to provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
 to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
 the oil of gladness instead of tears,  
 a cloak of praise instead of despair.

They will be known as oaks of righteousness,  
 planted by YHWH to display God's glory.  
 They will restore the ancient ruins,  
 and rebuild sites long devastated;  
 they will repair the ruined cities,  
 neglected for generations.  
 Strangers will tend your flocks,  
 foreigners will till your fields and dress your vineyards;  
 but you will be called priests of YHWH,  
 and ministers of our God;  
 you shall enjoy the richness of nations,  
 and inherit their wealth.

Because your shame was double,  
 insults and abuses were your lot,  
 now you will receive a double share in your land;  
 and everlasting joy shall be yours.  
 For I, YHWH, love justice,  
 I hate robbery and sin;  
 So I will faithfully compensate you,  
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.

Your descendants will be renowned among the nations,  
 and your offspring among the people;

6.

all who see you will acknowledge  
that you are a people blessed by YHWH.

I will joyfully exult in YHWH,  
who is the joy of my soul!  
My God clothed me with a robe of deliverance,  
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,  
the way a bridegroom puts on a garland,  
and a bride bedecks herself with jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and a garden brings its seed to blossom,  
so will Exalted YHWH make justice sprout,  
and praise spring up before all nations.

**\*Introit**

My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord

E. Daley

My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
(Luke 1: 46-47)

**Scripture Reading** Luke 1:46-55 (The Inclusive Bible)

Mary said,

'My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,  
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Saviour.  
For you have looked with favour upon your lowly servant.  
and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed;  
For You, the Almighty, have done great things for me,  
and holy is your name.

Your mercy reaches from age to age  
for those who fear you.  
You have shown strength with your arm;  
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;

You have deposed the mighty from their thrones,  
and raised the lowly to high places.  
You have filled the hungry with good things,  
while you have sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,  
mindful of your mercy—  
the promise you made to our ancestors—  
to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.

### Anthem

Ding! Dong! Merrily on High  
Piano – Anne Fraser, Doreen Uren Simmons

16<sup>th</sup> c. French melody  
arr. Howard Helvey (b. 1968)

Ding dong! merrily on high in heav'n the bells are ringing;  
Ding dong! verily the sky is riv'n with angel singing.  
*Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!*

E'en so here below, below, let steeple bells be swungen,  
And io, io, io, by priest and people sungen. *R*

Pray you, dutifully prime your matin chime, ye ringers;  
May you beautifully rime your eve-time song, ye singers. *R*  
(G. R. Woodward 1848-1934)

### Reflection

The End of Our Rope

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

### \*Hymn

My Soul Cries Out (Canticle of the Turning)

***My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west shall my name be blest.  
Could the world be about to turn?***

***Though I am small, my God, my all,  
you work great things in me,  
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be.***

***Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,  
for the world is about to turn.***

8.

*From the halls of power to the fortress tower,  
not a stone will be left on stone,  
Let the king be aware for your justice tears  
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,  
for the world is about to turn.*

*Though the nations rage from age to age,  
we remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us  
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving world that our fore-bears heard  
is the promise which holds us bound,  
'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,  
who is turning the world around.*

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn!*

## Passing the Peace

## Introduction of Offering

## Offertory Anthem Christmas Lullaby

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem:  
Angels are singing, their sound fills the air.  
Wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah;  
But only a mother and baby lie there.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria': hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria, maiden, and mother of Jesus our King'.

Where are his courtiers, and who are his people?  
Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown?  
Shepherds his courtiers, the poor for his people,  
With peace as his sceptre and love for his crown. R



What though your treasures are not gold or incense?  
 Lay them before him with hearts full of love.  
 Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother  
 Who bore us a Saviour by grace from above. *R.*  
 (John Rutter)

**\*Presentation of the Offering**

E. Daley

(The choir will sing through once, and then the congregation is invited to join in.)

***Come, Light of lights, come shine upon us,  
 Come, touch our hearts, we long for you.  
 Come, touch our lives, come and renew us,  
 Come to us, Emmanuel.***

**\*Sending Out<sup>2</sup>**

Just when it seems that all is lost,  
 that our brokenness, our failure, has gone too far,  
***You call a new day to dawn.***

Just when it feels like hope is foolish,  
 that darkness and despair are the only true realities,  
***You call the sun to rise.***

Just when we think we're alone and abandoned,  
 that life is nothing but pain and emptiness and meaninglessness,  
***You arrive among us again.***

***God of Advent and of Restoration,  
 we praise you for every new day  
 that absorbs the darkness;  
 for every rising sun  
 that calls the night to end;  
 for every messenger of hope and joy  
 that baptises us with your love.***

**\*Choral Commissioning**

E. Daley

(The choir will sing through once, and then the congregation is invited to join in.)

***Redeemer, come! We open wide our hearts to you; here Lord, abide.  
 Let us your inner presence feel, your grace and love in us reveal.***  
 (Georg Weissel 1642, trans. Catherine Winkworth 1855, alt.)

## Postlude

<sup>1</sup> Guerillas of Grace, with permission

<sup>2</sup> John van der Laar, with permission

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Thank you, Anne and Doreen, for sharing your talent with us today!

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YOU ARE INVITED TO

# LESSONS & CAROLS



Director of Music, Eleanor Daley  
Fairlawn Avenue Senior Choir

Sunday, December 17  
7:00pm.

# Christmas

at

# Fairlawn



Sunday, Dec. 17	7:00pm	Lessons & Carols
Thursday, Dec. 21	7:00pm	The Longest Night ~ A Service of Hope & Healing
Sunday, Dec. 24	10:30am	Advent IV Worship Service
Sunday, Dec. 24	4:00pm	Christmas Eve ~ Family Service
Sunday, Dec. 24	10:00pm	Christmas Eve ~ Candlelight Communion Service