



# FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church  
Tuesday, December 24, 2024 4:00pm  
Christmas Eve Family Service**

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts  
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music

Carol Leaders:  
Kevin Doe,  
Andrea Huibrechtse-Berndorff,  
Don Smith and Nathalie Smith

Readers:  
Jessica Bagniet,  
Abby Lang, Mason Lang  
and Bennett Lang

2.

## Welcome and Acknowledgement

Come closer.  
Come closer to the manger.  
Come closer to each other.

Come with your joy and your uncertainty.  
Come with your peace and your stress.  
Come with your hopes and your fears.

Bring who you are,  
All of who you are.  
You in your health or dis-ease,  
your age, your sexual identity,  
your wealth or poverty.  
Come.  
You are bid welcome by the One who came to be our guest in this world.

Jesus, whose birth we celebrate  
bids us all to come together.  
We need each other.  
The ways of this world may leave us lonely, alone: we are not.

We celebrate the coming of the Light of the World  
who is not hidden by our long nights,  
but revealed in them.

As those who live in the light,  
we choose to see  
that the land on which our building stands,  
and the lands our homes and businesses occupy in Toronto,  
were once the home of the Huron People, Anishnaabe People, Haudenosaunee  
People, and the People of the Mississauga of the New Credit.

We commit ourselves to seeing their descendants  
as neighbours and partners  
in being and living in community.  
We need each other.  
The ways of this world may leave us lonely, alone: we are not.  
Come.  
Together.

**\*Carol**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

VU #60 (verses 1, 3 and 5)

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:  
 come and behold him, born the King of angels,  
 O come, let us adore him,  
 O come, let us adore him,  
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**God of God, light of light,  
 lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb,  
 very God, begotten, not created: R**

**Yes, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
 Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
 word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: R**

**The Story****Scripture**

Luke 2:1-7a (New Century Version)

Reader: Mason Lang

At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order that all people in the countries under Roman rule must list their names in a register. This was the first registration; it was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to their own towns to be registered.

So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was now pregnant. While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby, and she gave birth to her first son.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Jessica Bagniet, Abby Lang, Mason Lang and Bennett Lang

It's an old story of a holy family,  
 a young couple having an unexpected child  
 knowing they will have new burdens  
 as they try to live up to the name given him—  
 Immanuel—  
 God is with us,

4.

All families are holy,  
they belong to the heart of God  
when they refuse to give in to despair  
or try to keep someone else from giving up  
All families are holy when they open themselves to God's Imagination  
and allow themselves to see possibility.  
We light the Christ Candle in the spirit of  
hope and peace and joy and love  
That all families would discover  
They are holy.

***All families are holy  
unique, special, cherished by God.  
All families are holy:  
the family that nurtures us  
the family that knows they don't have to be shaped by the past  
that adopts  
that sees a less than perfect child as a gift from God  
cares for an impossible grandparent  
sticks together through disaster  
or a disastrous illness.  
All families who wait in patience for things to be made right so  
that there is a homecoming are holy.***

All families are holy,  
the family that trusts a child to be on their own in a wilderness  
and shadows but does not overhang that child  
in case she needs help  
the family that waits in patience for a child to come to his senses  
and offers a fresh start.

***All families are holy  
the families that welcome a stranger into their home  
who provide a hiding place for those who are pursued by their past  
even after all their children have grown up and left,  
the families who become pilgrims  
that move to a new home for the sake of a new start***

All families can be unholy  
using their children or parents to cover their own sense of inadequacy  
but even the unholy teach us holiness  
if only by comparison.

***All families are holy,  
they belong to the heart of God  
when they refuse to give in to despair  
or try to keep someone else from giving up  
All families are holy when they open themselves to God's  
Imagination  
and allow themselves to see possibility  
even in the midst of feeling like they no longer belong  
and are aliens in their own community.***

It's an old story,  
a family packing their belongings in the night  
to travel to an unknown future.  
Knowing only that the Holy One has the strength and desire  
to see them living in hope and peace and joy and love.

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

Lighting of the center white Christ candle in the Advent Wreath

#### **\*Carol**

Away in a Manger

VU #69

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

#### **Scripture**

Luke 2:7b-20 (New Century Version)

Reader: Mason Lang

Because there were no rooms left in the inn, Mary wrapped the baby with pieces of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough.

6.

That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and they became very frightened.

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news that will be a great joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in the town of David. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a feeding trough."

Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel, praising God and saying: "Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace among the people who please God."

When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about."

So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a feeding trough. When they had seen him, they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything they had seen and heard. It had been just as the angel had told them.

## Reading[1]

An Awkward Explanation

Reader: Kevin Doe

It's kind of difficult to explain. Mr. Cohen.  
And I can well understand why you are angry.  
I mean to say,  
I would be angry too if I were in your position.

I know I've only been working for you for a week.  
But I need this job so please,  
let me assure you it's not something I've ever done before.  
I always stay on the job.

But, but, what I said is true.  
Ask Sam, ask Jude, they'll tell you.  
I admit it's incredible, almost unbelievable.  
But we all saw.

And heard: there were noises in the sky,  
and music, and we, we, we left.  
Not for long.  
We went straight to the village.  
And there was a baby, a boy.

We weren't drunk.  
Not much anyway.  
We were emotional.

I'm sorry, that doesn't explain where the sheep got to.  
And I know it's highly unusual for the butcher to be selling lamb  
at bargain prices.  
But.  
Mr. Cohen.  
There are some things in life more important than sheep.  
Aren't there?

**Carol**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

VU #64 (verses 1 and 2)

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in then tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.**

**Reflection**

Checked Baggage for Bethlehem

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

**Carol**

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

VU #48

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King,  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

8.

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Book Reading** Sounding Joy

Reader: Jessica Baugniet

Written by Ellie Holcomb, Illustrated by Laura Ramos

**Carol** Joy to the World

VU # 59 (verses 1 and 2)

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns:  
let all their songs employ.  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**An Early Visitor**

**Christmas Confession**[2] They Have Heard it on the Hills

They have heard it on the hills,  
they have heard it in the streets;  
the rumour prevails,  
and none can contradict it.

***Some are looking up the Prophets,  
some are studying the skies,  
others speculate, calculate,  
but how to deny?***

Some are dancing back to sheepfolds,  
 some are traveling foreign roads,  
 some await more information,  
 others celebrate the news.

***In a foreign place,  
 a ruler has imposed a new tax;  
 In a hilly place,  
 an old woman suckles her new son,  
 in a royal place,  
 an old ruler senses a new threat,  
 in a busy place,  
 a young couple cope with their new child.***

***At what seems the wrong time,  
 in what seems the wrong place,  
 among those who seem the wrong people,  
 The Holy One has decided  
 to bless,  
 disturb,  
 and visit us.***

**\*Carol**

Joy to the World

VU # 59 (verse 4)

**He rules the earth with truth and grace,  
 and makes the nations prove  
 the glories of his righteousness  
 and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
 and wonders, wonders of his love.**

**\*Sending Out**

Arise! Shine! For your light has come,  
 and the glory of the Holy One is risen upon you!

**Freewill Offering**

We will not take time to pass a plate for an offering this afternoon. Should you wish to use this moment to continue your support of the work Fairlawn does in the community or simply as an expression of your gratitude for all the gifts you have received from The Holy One, thank you. Please use the envelope in your bulletin and place it in the plate on the table at the back of the sanctuary.



Fairlawn Avenue United Church offices will be closed  
Wednesday, December 25, 2024 to Friday, January 3, 2025,  
and will re-open on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 9:00am.

**Join us for worship service:**

Sunday, December 29 at 10:30am with Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

Sunday, January 5 at 10:30am with Rev. Rob Metcalf

For emergency pastoral care during the holiday, please email:  
pastoralcare@fairlawnavenueunited.ca or call: 647-823-2366



[1] Adapted, *Cloth for the Cradle*, Wild Goose Publications, with permission.

[2] Adapted, *Cloth for the Cradle*, Wild Goose Publications, with permission.

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**Fairlawn Website**  
<https://www.fairlawnchurch.ca/>

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<https://www.fairlawnchurch.ca/events/>

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