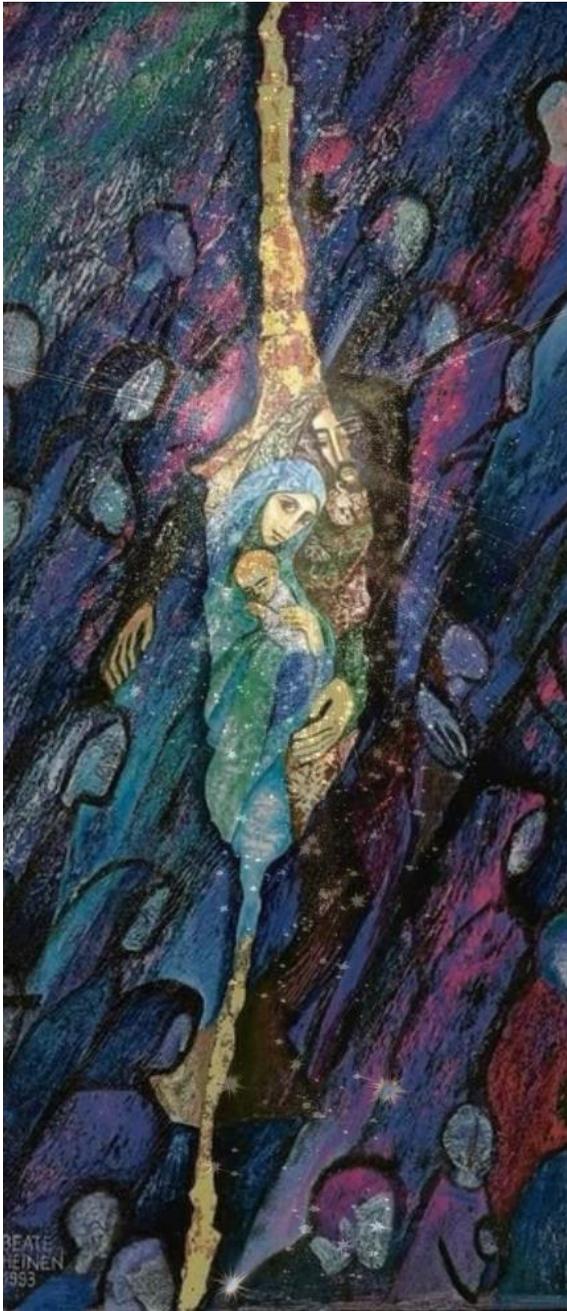




# FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church  
Advent IV  
Sunday, December 21, 2025  
10:30am**

**Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts  
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music  
Fairlawn Avenue  
Senior Choir**

2.

\*Indicates when the congregation is to stand, as able.

Congregational responses, singing and readings in unison are indicated in bold text.

## Welcome and Acknowledgements

**Advent IV Candle** Resurrection

Reader: Ola Erinle

"God does all her best work in the dark."

So said one of our Black United Church ministers.

At this time of year, in the Northern Hemisphere,  
we are more aware of darkness.

The time of light is short and will dwindle more until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December.

As we light our Advent Candles this year,  
we have focused on the work God does in the darkness:  
Creation, the Exodus, Nativity.

Today we celebrate the power of Resurrection,  
the wonder of new life.

The followers of Jesus went to properly honour his body  
after he was put to death.

After 2 long nights,

early in the morning they found an empty tomb ...

... and the fear and wonder of the possibility of new life.

In the darkness of a Saturday night, resurrection!

As a modern Canadian poet has written,

"Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in."

When you wonder whether you can hope,  
when you feel the encroaching darkness,  
sit with it, in the sure knowledge that the Creator,  
the Holy One,  
works miracles of hope  
fully revealed in the light of day.

For us, this year, the fourth Advent Candle is the Resurrection Candle.  
We light a fourth Advent Candle not just to dispel the dark  
but to acknowledge we live each day in the midst of new life.

We light this candle with the prayer that all who know despair  
will find new hope.

### **Lighting the Advent Candle**

Lighting of the final 3rd purple candle in the Advent Wreath

**\*Opening Carol** It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

VU #44

**\*Invitation to Worship**[1]

Now is the moment of magic,  
when an eastern star  
beckons the ignorant toward an unknown goal.  
So, here's a blessing:  
they find nothing in the end but an ordinary baby,  
born at midnight,  
born in poverty,  
and the baby's cry, like bells ringing, makes people wonder  
as they wander through their lives, what human love  
might really look like, sound like, feel like.

Here's another blessing:  
we already possess all the gifts we need,  
we've already received our presents:  
ears to hear music,  
eyes to behold lights,  
hands to build true peace on earth  
and to hold each other tight in love.

**Introit**

Gloria in excelsis Deo

E. Daley

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
*(Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace, goodwill towards all people.)*

4.

**Scripture** Matthew 1

New Revised Standard Version

## **The Passing of the Peace**

**Anthem** Mid-winter

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

In the bleak mid-winter,  
frosty wind made moan;  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
snow on snow,  
in the bleak mid-winter  
long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him,  
nor earth sustain,  
heaven and earth shall flee away  
when He comes to reign:  
in the bleak mid-winter  
a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God Almighty  
Jesus Christ.

Angels and Archangels  
may have gathered there,  
cherubim and seraphim  
thronged the air;  
but only His Mother  
in her maiden bliss  
worshipped the Belovèd  
with a kiss.

What can I give Him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a Shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part,  
yet what I can I give Him,  
give my heart.  
(Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894)

**Reflection** Evelyn's Bible

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

## **Introduction of Offering**

**Offertory Anthem** Love Came Down at Christmas

Mark Sirett (b. 1952)

Love came down at Christmas,  
love all lovely, love divine;  
love was born at Christmas,  
star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
love incarnate, love divine;  
worship we our Jesus:  
but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
love be yours and love be mine,  
love to God and love to all,  
love for plea and gift and sign.  
(Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894)

## **\*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.**

**Presentation** Lillian Lucas – Ann Sanders Student Assistance Awards

<b>Recipients:</b>	Ola Erinle	Jana Shehape
	Abigail Lang	Judy Shehape
	Mason Lang	Margaret Wishart
	Malcolm LaPrairie	Peter Ziliotto
	Thomas McCarthy	Zach Ziliotto

**\*Closing Carol** O Little Town of Bethlehem

VU #64

**\*Sending Out** [2]

We praise you, O God,  
that we do not need

***to search the earth***

***to find you;***

***we do not need to engage in elaborate spiritual gymnastics***

***to bring you close;***

***we do not need to hide ourselves from the world***

***to be found by you.***

No, in your immense love,

***you have taken the initiative,***

***you have made yourself known,***

***you have filled every moment and every space***

***with your presence;***

***The advent we celebrate, the incarnation we remember,  
are simply your gift to us,***

***your reminder,***

***your proclamation,***

***that you are, ever and always,***

***God with us.***

We praise you, O God,

***for being our Emmanuel,***

***our God with us,***

***and for the love we find in you.***

***Amen.***

**\*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

[1] V Safford/adapted, with permission

[2] John van der Laar, with permission

**JOIN US TONIGHT! Messiah/Complex ~ Sunday, December 21 at 7:00pm**



**MESSIAH/COMPLEX**  
 Sunday, December 21 at 7:00pm  
 Fairlawn Avenue United Church  
 An Advent Encore Presentation  
 on the Longest Night

Filmed against iconic Canadian landscapes, Messiah/Complex features twelve soloists and four choirs representing every province and territory across the country.

*A joyful screen adaptation of Handel's holiday staple* 

Lift your spirits with the music of Handel's *Messiah* on the longest night of the year. Fairlawn's Embrace Action Council invites you to gather in the sanctuary for some hot apple cider and tasty Christmas treats as we watch a presentation of ***Against the Grain's Messiah /Complex***. This daring, 78-minute filmed performance features multilingual translations and a diverse cast of soloists and choirs from every Province and Territory across Canada, accompanied by the exceptional sounds of the TSO and conducted by Johannes Debus (Canadian Opera Company).

Admission is free, but please consider bringing a donation of a non-perishable food item to support a local indigenous men's shelter.

# Christmas Eve at Fairlawn

Wed., Dec. 24 4:00pm Christmas Eve ~ Family Service

Wed., Dec. 24 10:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Communion Service

28 Fairlawn Avenue, Toronto  
[www.fairlawchurch.ca](http://www.fairlawchurch.ca)



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**Website**  
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<https://www.fairlawchurch.ca/events/>

**Online Worship**  
<https://www.fairlawchurch.ca/spirituality/sermons/>

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