



# FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church  
Wednesday, December 24, 2025 10:00pm**

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

Soprano - Carrie Loring

Alto - Andrea Ludwig

Tenor - Mark Wood-Salomon

Bass - Giles Tomkins

Readers:

Bennett Lang and Mason Lang

2.

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

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

## Pre-Service Music

### 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.

**\*Opening Carol** O Come, All Ye Faithful

VU #60 (verses 1, 2, 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**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,**

**sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;**

**glory to God in the highest: 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**

**Welcome, continued**

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 Wendat People, Anishnaabe People, Haudenosaunee  
 People, and the People of the Mississauga of the New Credit.

We commit ourselves to see 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.

**Introit**

O Holy Night of Wonder

E. Daley

O holy night of wonder,  
 the night of Jesus' birth,  
 in heav'n the angels are singing  
 good will to all, and peace on earth.  
 (E. D.)

4.

## The Story

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

Reader: Bennett Lang

## Lighting of the Christ Candle

Lighter: Bennett Lang

## Responsive Prayer All Families Are Holy

It's an old story of a holy family,  
Your 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,

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***

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.  
***Holy One, give us hope and peace and joy and love.***

**Anthem****Anthem** On Christmas Night

E. Daley

On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
 To hear the news the angels bring;  
 News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
 News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be sad,  
 Since our Redeemer made us glad?  
 When from our sin you set us free,  
 All for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before God's grace,  
 Then life and health come in its place;  
 Angels and earth with joy may sing,  
 All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,  
 Which made the angels sing this night;  
 "Glory to God and peace to men,  
 Now and forevermore. Amen."  
 (Traditional English, altered)

**The Story Continues****Scripture**

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

Reader: Mason Lang

**Anthem**

Shepherds' Nowell

James K. Wright (b. 1959)

Three angels came on Christmas night to shepherd fields of old;  
 The first with lantern shining bright, the next with harp of gold.  
 Yet 'twas the third, who without a word, her sweet melody began:

*Nowell, Nowell, glad news we've come to tell,  
 For near today in a manger lay Emmanuel.*

The shepherds listened to the song of joy first sung to them.  
 Then left their sheep and made their way to nearby Bethlehem,  
 On bended knee, they came to see the Messiah born for all. *R*

And now today, at Christmas time, we echo their refrain.  
For peace and light came to the world to vanquish sin and pain.  
Sing loud and clear, good news is here; Jesus Christ is born today. *R*  
(James K. Wright and Graham Hitchens)

7.

**Reflection**      Trying to Get the Story Right

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

## **Holy Communion**

### **Responsive Confession[1]**

At Christmas time we again thrill  
to hear the story of the journey to Bethlehem,  
the song of the angels,  
the surprise of the shepherds  
***and their joy as they found the new born Jesus.***

But life for him and his family  
was not one of ease and comfort and luxury,  
***and on this night we remember the deprived  
the lonely and the unhoused.***

Jesus started as a refugee and alien in a foreign land,  
***and on this night we remember the outcast  
and the dispossessed.***

Jesus felt the pain of life and the pain of death,  
and on this night we remember those who suffer injustice  
imprisonment and torture,  
the ill, the anxious, the bereaved.

But,  
***Jesus offers care and compassion and new beginnings***

He invites us to shed our tears, to mourn,  
***and make room for the possibility of thanksgiving,  
even joy.***

In heart and mind we return to Bethlehem  
And an upper room in Jerusalem,  
***To hear the message of the angels  
and the words of a Brother and Teacher.  
And learn again the words of new life***

8.

## **Invitation to the Table of Jesus[2]**

### **Responsive Prayer to End the Meal[3]**

We thank and praise You, O Holy One  
for You are not distant and uninvolved  
in our lives and our world.  
You have come to us, humbly and gently,  
challengingly and irresistibly,  
***that whoever receives You,  
whoever believes in You  
discovers they are a child of God,  
born of the Spirit.  
Amen.***

### **Introduction of the Offering**

#### **Offertory Anthem** Christmas Grace

David and Charis Bean Duke

Dark was the night, darker the sky where shone a holy light.  
Shepherds seeking, looking afar for Grace that blessed night.  
*Let us all remember now how humbly to earth Grace came.  
Let us go into the world, imparting to all the same.*

Dark are our hearts, darker the world where hope holds up its light.  
Wise men are seeking, looking afar for Grace to give them sight. *R*

Bright is the morn, brighter the Son who brings forth truth and light.  
Nations kneeling, bowing down for Grace, in all its might. *R*  
(David and Charis Bean Duke)

#### **\*Presentation of the Offering**

VU #55 (verse 4)

**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.**

**\*Closing Carol** Joy to the World

VU # 59

**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.**

**No more let sin and sorrows grow,  
 nor thorns infest the ground:  
 he comes to make his blessings flow  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
 far as, far as the curse is found.**

**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!

The text for *Shepherds' Nowell* is reprinted under onelicense.net #A-717945, © 1993 Gordon V. Thompson Music. All rights reserved.

[1] Rex A. E Hunt, adapted, with permission

[2] Michael Morwood, adapted, with permission

[3] John van der Laar, adapted, with permission



Fairlawn Avenue United Church offices will be  
closed Thursday, December 25, 2025  
and re-open Monday, January 5, 2026

**Join us for worship service:**

Sunday, December 28 at 10:30am with Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts  
Sunday, January 4 at 10:30am Epiphany with Rev. Dr. Ambury Stuart

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



# Merry Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**Fairlawn Avenue  
United Church**  
28 Fairlawn Avenue  
Toronto, ON M5M 1S7  
T: 416-481-6848



[www.fairlawnchurch.ca](http://www.fairlawnchurch.ca)

[churchoffice@fairlawnavenueunited.ca](mailto:churchoffice@fairlawnavenueunited.ca)