



◆ Melrose Vision ◆

To respond to God's call by being a people of faith who open our hearts and minds to the true power and love of Jesus Christ. To live our faith by providing within our changing community a welcoming environment which encourages all people to care for and accept one another.

◆ Worship Next Week ◆

Today begins a new church year with this, the first Sunday in Advent. We also move into Year B of the three year cycle (A,B,C). Advent is a time of expectant waiting. The Gathering offers the image of patiently waiting while handing out sunflower seeds to chickadees, as opposed to a passive waiting where we throw the seeds on the ground. In other words, we take part in it as opposed to standing apart.

We too, are in a period of waiting – waiting for the Pandemic to release us from our limited lives. While we wait, we wait expectantly, rather than passively. We learn to use our talents in different ways, we catch up on our reading and we try to grow in every way that will prepare us for the time when life begins anew. As you move through this Advent season, think about how this time of waiting can be a productive and contemplative experience that enhances your quality and understanding of life.

Our Isaiah reading is a call out to God to overlook our transgressions, to “throw open the heavens and come down.” This lament lays out the gracious deeds that God has done, the deliverance of the Israelites, then he reminds the listener that God cannot be controlled. It also symbolizes a withdrawal of protection so that the Israelites will be aware of the consequences of their sin. This hidden God refuses to act powerfully and dramatically to rescue the people from their distress. Oh, that during this time of anxiety and isolation, God would come out of hiding and visibly act in the world to ease our suffering!



The Psalm is also a call to be rescued and restored from God's anger. Moving into the Gospel of Mark, we have a glimpse of the second aspect of Advent, (the first being, the arrival of the Christ child), the waiting for the Second Coming of Christ. My reflection will look at distractions that rob us of serious thought and preparation. The early Christians and writers expected Christ's return in their lifetime. It did not happen. It still has not happened two thousand years later. We have become complacent and wonder if this prophecy bears any weight. Does the idea of a return of Christ coming "in the clouds" form part of your belief system? And if so, how does your life reflect it?

◆ Ordering is now live! ◆

Check out www.melroseunited.ca/bazaar to put your order in for the Mistletoe Bazaar! Once your order is confirmed payment options and a pickup time will be assigned. If needed delivery arrangements can be made.

◆ Light in the December Darkness Service - December 9 ◆

We invite you to set aside an hour on the evening of Wednesday, December 9 at 7.30 to join our virtual service for a time of recognition of the losses that have attached themselves to you during this past year. Some of you have lost loved ones through a very trying time of COVID-19. But for many of you, the isolation, loss of income, health concerns and changed routines for family, have shaken your emotional well being. Join us for a time of prayer, rest and renewal. We would like to offer you the opportunity to request a candle to be lighted during this service in memory of a loved one, or in prayer of request or thanksgiving. Please let Michelle in our office know of your wishes and whether you want the names spoken or just your name and a quiet prayer when the candle is lit.



◆ Wesley's Christmas Program ◆

NEW for 2020- Holiday Hampers!

Due to COVID-19, Wesley's Christmas & Holiday program will not operate like a store this year. Instead, we will provide hampers for people who participate in Wesley programs and through some of our community partners. This includes families, seniors and the homeless.

Donations and pre-packed hampers can be dropped off at 1974 King Street East in December, where volunteers will sort and pack hampers.

There will be no public access of the program or Pioneer Church this year. Community members looking for assistance can contact a Food Bank at: <https://www.hamiltonfoodshare.org/contact-2/food/>

Here are four ways to get involved this year!

[Donate online](#) to help us purchase gifts & food in bulk

[Purchase an Amazon online gift card](#) and email us the details at info@wesley.ca

NEW [Purchase a digital gift for a young person!](#)

Purchase donations and do a curbside drop off at 1975 King St E (Pioneer Church). See this year's [calendar](#) for drop off times. Donors are asked to stay in their cars and wait for instructions from volunteers. Only scheduled and screened volunteers are allowed inside the building this year. For more information, please read our [Pandemic Protocols](#) document.

Donation Wish List:

Plastic or re-usable bags

Any non-perishable food in individual or family sizes

New gifts: toys, hygiene items, small kitchen appliances, towel & linens

Gift Certificates for Walmart, Giant Tiger, Canadian Tire, Toys 'R' Us

New or gently used hats, mitts, socks, winter boots and coats (No clothing)

[Digital gifts for young people](#)



*To make a pre-packed hamper for a single adult, pack \$25 worth of food and \$25 worth of gifts.

For general inquiries about this year's Holiday Assistance Program, please contact raj.matharu@wesley.ca

◆ Envelopes ◆

We are beginning 2021 envelope distribution early this year to give people an opportunity to safely drop by over the next 7 weeks. If you have envelopes to pick up you can stop by during the church operating hours to pick up. Masks are required to be worn at all times when in the building. If you are not feeling well please plan to stop by another time. If you want to double check your plan to stop by send a note to the office: melrose@melroseunited.ca. The office recommends ordering from the bazaar and picking up at the same time!

You do not need to pick up your envelopes to continue donating with the same donation number. Donations made through e-transfer, PAR or mailed in by cheque will still be tracked.

◆ Donations ◆

The Melrose staff team (and volunteer base) continues to do work behind the scenes even though we cannot use the building to worship together. If you are looking to support the ongoing work of the church you can:

1. Sign up for P.A.R. (preauthorized remittance) through the office.
2. Make a one time or ongoing donation through Canada Helps.Org
3. Send a donation through e-transfer to donations@melroseunited.ca.