

# ◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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Minister:

Music Director:

Family Ministries Coordinator:

Custodian:

Office Administrator:

Rev. Sonia Ireson

Alexander Cann

Meg Chalmers

Kevin Geluch

Lorraine Lowry

◆ Sunday, November 27 2022 ◆

**First Sunday of Advent**

## MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

\* indicates a time to stand, if you are able  
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

### ◆ GATHERING ◆

PRELUDE: Chorale Fantasia on "Wie schön leuchtet der  
Morgenstern",

Verse 1, D. Buxtehude

CHORAL INTROIT - Came He Not in Fire

VU 15

\* OPENING HYMN -- *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

VU 2

*1 Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.*

*2 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.*

WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT (Jessica Knoyle)

One: We acknowledge that we at Melrose United Church live, work, worship, and play on the unceded lands of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe who are covered under the Upper Canada Treaty.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus once again, we remember everything this birth means for our whole world and all people: hope, peace, joy, and love. May we live our lives moving gently in creation, listening, learning, and striving to be people of reconciliation.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

One: Today is the Advent of hope. We light this candle to bring hope into shadows of despair.

**All: We live in hope for the light at the end of the tunnel and the end of the pandemic.**

One: We light this candle as our commitment to bringing healing into the world.

**All: We are the hope for a better future.**

One: We light this candle to reveal the Way of Jesus, the Hope of the World.

*The first candle is lit.*

HYMN VU 7 Hope is a Star – verse 1

*Hope is a star that shines in the night,*

*Leading us on till the morning is bright.*

*When God is a child there's joy in our song.*

*The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,*

*And none shall be afraid.*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Tammy Fergusson)

One: Grace to you, and peace from God Almighty.

**All: We wait for Jesus' birth.**

One: Receive the gifts of love offered here to strengthen your journey.

**All: Here we are, hoping and waiting to answer God's call.**

PRAYER OF APPROACH – said together (Roxanne Williams)

**All: The earth has turned once more, Creator God. The season of hope, peace, joy, and love returns as a reminder of how we should live the whole year through. You have called us to be your people, asking us to take your light out into the world. Help us in our times of worship throughout this season of Advent to find the words to share the message of hope, peace, joy and love. Show us how to be fully aware of your presence, so that we might share your presence with others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

A TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US

Big Question: (Advent #1) Journey to the Manger: Why did God choose Mary?

★ HYMN – *A Candle is Burning*

VU 506

*1 A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
A candle of hope in December's dark night  
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,  
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh*

*2 A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
A candle to signal that conflict must cease  
For Jesus is coming to show us the way  
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay*

*3 A candle is burning, a candle of joy,*

*A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy  
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow  
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow*

*4 A candle is burning, a candle of love,  
A candle to point us to heaven above  
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth  
For Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.*

*5 We honor Messiah with Christ's candle flame  
Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim  
O Come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night  
As God comes among us, the Christian's true light.*

## ◆ SERVICE OF THE WORD ◆

Reader: Ian Brisbin

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Holy God, you challenge us to listen and pay attention in spite of familiarity of scriptural words. You ask us to give time for your Holy Spirit to touch us with new insights and meaning during different periods of our lives. May we hear, and respond.

Amen.

### WISDOM OF ISRAEL: ISAIAH 2:1-5

One: The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us

go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

One: The Word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God!**

Psalm 122

VU 845

*REFRAIN: WITH JOY WE GO TO GOD'S OWN HOUSE AND ENTER WITH A SONG.*

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 24:36-44

One: But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house

be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

One: Herein is Good News!

**ALL: Praise be to Jesus Christ!**

REFLECTION: HOPE IS A STAR

CHORAL ANTHEM - Zion, At Thy Shining Gates,

arr. G. Guest

INVITATION TO OFFERING:

One: As we enter this holy season, God of light and truth, we think about our commitments to our church in proclaiming your gospel of good news to all. May our offerings and the work of our hands sustain Melrose's ability to carry out the responsibilities of our church, as well as to reach those who are in need of comfort and financial help. We, at Melrose, are thankful for you, the people's, continued support. Bless all that we offer, Gracious God.

Thanks be to you. Amen.

★ OFFERTORY HYMN - *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*  
VU 541

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
God, all creatures high and low;  
give thanks to God in love made known:  
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.*

## SERVICE OF THE TABLE

(*Provided by - Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality, General Council Office*)

Invitation

One: As we come to this table,

we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone.

All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, are welcome here.

One: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift our hearts in prayer.**

One: Let us give thanks to God.

**All: It is good to give God thanks and praise.**

*Let us pray:*

*(The following prayer was inspired by “Blessed are you, gracious God...” by William Kervin and Lillian Perigoe in Celebrate God’s Presence, page 276. Used with permission.)*

One: Blessed are you, Breath of peace, Giver of all life,  
Source of love that knows no boundaries.  
Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began; throughout the ages, your song of liberation has impregnated us with your hope for a world where: those considered last and least are first and most; violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and, all siblings work together for peace.

**All: You bring our longings to birth,**

**and send prophets to awaken us  
to your approaching Advent among us.**

One: We thank you for those who, like Mary,  
have the strength and courage  
to give birth to your love in the world;  
for those who, like the shepherds,  
dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem;  
for those who, like the wise ones,  
actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

One: We praise you that your everlasting light is shown  
to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross,  
in tenderness and compassion.  
We join in the Advent prayer of all your people,

**All: “O come, Emmanuel.”**

One: And, as we wait and watch for your coming among  
us, we proclaim your goodness.

*All sing: Sanctus -- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (Voices*

*United 1) verse 1*

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,*

*And ransom captive Israel*

*That mourns in lowly exile here*

*Until the Son of God appear.*

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel***

*Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

One: At this time, we also remember  
all with whom you would have us share your feast.  
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...  
all who are ill or alone...  
all who are close to our hearts...  
all our sisters who live with fear, oppression, or hunger...  
all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or  
poverty...  
for all whom the world counts as last and least.

We pray for the church and its many ministries,  
for nations as they strive for peace and justice,  
for an end to violence against women.

God of hope, make this bread the means of our  
rebuilding,  
this wine the medium of our transformation,  
this table the foundation of our renewal,  
and this community the place of our rebirth.  
Amen.

One: At this time, we remember Jesus,  
Who on the night before he died,  
took a loaf of bread,  
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,  
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember  
me.”  
.... Bread is broken ...

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,  
“This is the new covenant; remember me.”  
...Chalice is lifted ...

One: Gracious God, Breath of peace,  
Source of love,  
we pray for your Spirit.

**All: Make us, while many, one.  
Make us, though broken, whole.  
Make us, despite death, alive.**

One: And so we pray:

**All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

One: And so, we join with our siblings around the world in the  
prayer of Jesus:

Our Lord's Prayer (Ecumenical Version)

**Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed be your name,**

**Your kingdom come,**

**Your will be done,**

**On earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**As we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial**

**And deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours**

**Now and forever. Amen**

## SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*Communion is served*

The body of Christ,  
**the Bread of life.**

The lifeblood of Christ,  
**the cup of blessing.**

Let us eat and drink together  
for our strengthening in the faith,  
and for the sake of the world.

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**ALL:** We thank you, God,  
for breaking into our world  
and pouring into our lives and our experiences.  
We thank you, God,  
for this meal of thanksgiving  
and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it  
tells. Amen.

★ CLOSING HYMN – *Hark the Glad Sound*

VU 29

*1 Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
the Savior promised long;  
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
and ev'ry voice a song.*

*2 He comes the pris'ners to release,  
in Satan's bondage held;  
the gates of brass before him burst,  
the iron fetters yield.*

*3 He comes the broken heart to bind,  
the bleeding soul to cure,  
and with the treasures of his grace,  
to enrich the humble poor.*

*4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
your welcome shall proclaim,  
and heav'n's eternal arches ring,  
with your beloved name.*

#### COMMISSIONING

One: Go into the world that God has provided as a loving and fit home for us. Be filled with the hope that this Advent will bring new meaning for you and a closer relationship with the one who cherishes and watches over you. May you pass on that sense of hope to all you meet. Amen.

#### CHORAL BENEDICTION -

VU 964

#### BENEDICTION

One: May God keep us in our going out and our coming in,  
In our lying down and our rising up,  
In our work and in our leisure,  
In our laughter, and in our tears.  
Until we meet again. Amen.

POSTLUDE – Chorale Fantasia on "Wie schön leuchtet der  
Morgenstern",

Verse 6, D. Buxtehude