



**Sunday December 24, 2023**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent - Love**  
**St. Paul's Anglican Church, Uxbridge**



**THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY**

**Prelude**

***In Dulci Jubilo***

**Bach**

**Welcome & Opening Greeting**

**Advent Candle Lighting**

**One:** When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth,

**All:** **My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name (Luke 1:46-49).**

**One:** We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, "How can this be? I am only..." Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

**All:** **We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.**

**One:** We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives.

**All:** **[May it be so. May it be so.]**

([https://](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2023)

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**Lighting of four outer candles of the Advent Wreath**

## **A Candle Is Burning**

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.

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.

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.

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.

*Tune: Cradle Song (Common Praise 1998 #126)*  
*Text by Sandra Dean*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.   **And also with you.**

**Processional Hymn**

***He Came Down***

**CP 368**

### **Land Acknowledgement**

Together we say

**The Township of Uxbridge is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Mississauga, and Chippewa (Anishinaabe) people. We acknowledge that these lands are covered under the Williams Treaties and are home to many Indigenous communities. We honour, recognize, and respect this nation and Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we now live, work, and play.**   (Township of Uxbridge)

### **Litany for Advent 4**

**One:** The prophets call and the psalmists sing to announce that God is love.

**All:**   **“For the mountain may depart and the hills may be moved, but my steadfast**

**love shall never depart from you...and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you.” (Isaiah 54)**

**One:** “Give thanks to the LORD, who is good...give thanks to the Lord of lords, whose steadfast love endures forever.” (Psalm 136)

**All:** **From the mystery of God’s love came our creation and we are nurtured daily by it. The power of God’s love is transformative; because we have received God’s love, we cannot remain the same. Love means seeking the best for others. Love is compassion for all creation. Love speaks the truth with kindness. Love is the way of seeing others as God sees them.**

**One:** Holy are you, Source of all new life among us.

**All:** **Jesus Christ is the love of God come into the world. We join with all creation and lift our hearts in joyful praise.** (presbyterian.ca)

### **Collect of the Day**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** (Churchofengland.org)

### **THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD**

#### **First Reading - A poem by Madeleine L’engle**

##### **First Coming**

He did not wait till the world was ready, till men and nations were at peace.

He came when the Heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.

He came when the need was deep and great. He dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.

In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

To a world like ours, of anguished shame he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

In the mystery of the Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.

cannot wait ‘til the world is right to raise our songs with joyful voice, for to share our grief, to touch our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

I  
We

**Ring Christmas Bells**

Robin Dhillon

**Gradual Alleluia**

**CP 712**

*“Speak O Lord, your servant is listening,*

*you have the words of everlasting life.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!"*

**Holy Gospel      Luke 1:46-55**

**Reader:** The Lord be with you

**People:** **And also with you**

**Reader:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**People:** **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’ (NRSVA)

**Reader:** The Gospel of Christ

**People:** **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

**Gradual Alleluia**

**CP 712**

*“Speak O Lord, your servant is listening,  
you have the words of everlasting life.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”*

**Reflection**

**Contemplative Pause**

**People:** **God we hear and receive your words of hope and encouragement and with thoughtful gladness we sing.**

***Lord, We Hear Your Word with Gladness (vs 1)***

**CP 447**

*“Lord we hear your word with gladness: you have spoken – we rejoice:  
Words of love and life and freedom – help us make their truth our choice!  
Now in holy celebration for your Word we worship you;  
Spoken, written, known in Jesus, ours today to prove anew.”*

**Affirmation of Faith for Advent**

We believe in God,  
creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—

God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn—  
who emerges as the herald of hope,  
God's laughter in the face of despair.  
Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way  
to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ,  
and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God.  
Announced by the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus,  
and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven,  
when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow  
will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness,  
and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.

For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray:  
Come, Lord Jesus, Come!  
(By Nathan Nettleton, re-worship.blogspot.com)

**Choir Anthem**

*Advent Fanfare*

Shackley

## **Prayers of the People**

### **Confession and Absolution**

Friends in Christ, let us confess to God the faults and shortcomings of our world; its pride  
its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is  
wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for all humanity.  
**Merciful God, we confess that we have not given you the things that are yours. We  
quibble over technicalities and argue over questions that do not lead us to love you,  
ourselves, or our neighbors well. We ignore your goodness that is all around us, and  
we do not allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit who empowers us to live as  
people who glorify you. We do not recognize your holy touch in the world around us,  
and we neglect our responsibility to treat all things and all people as sacred. Forgive  
us, we pray, and free us to live in love and peace with you, with ourselves, with our  
neighbors, and with all creation. Amen.**

(Dr. Lisa

Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2023)

Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm  
and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Peace**

May the peace of the risen Christ be with you!      **And also with you!**

## **THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST**

### **Offertory Hymn**

*Tell Out, My Soul*

**CP 362**

### **Prayer over the Gifts**

Gracious God, by power of the Spirit who sanctified the mother of your Son, make holy all we offer you this day. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Eucharistic Prayer**

**One:** Our God is here.

**All: God's Spirit is with us.**

**One:** Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to our God.**

**One:** Let us give thanks to our God.

**All: it is right to give thanks and praise.**

Living God, Parent of light, hope of nations, friend of sinners, builder of the city that is to come. Your love is made visible in Jesus Christ. You restore the lost and give dignity [to the marginalised] and despised. In the face of Jesus Christ your light shines out, flooding lives with goodness and truth, gathering into one a divided and broken humanity. With people from every race and nation, with the Church of all the ages, with the apostles, evangelists, and martyrs, we join the angels of heaven in their unending song:

### **Sanctus**

**CP 722**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness. Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

On the night he gave himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you

and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

**Therefore, we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb. We rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.**

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption God, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kin-dom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Parent, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us join in prayer with confidence.

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting [Parent], Prince of Peace—hallowed be your name.**

**Immanuel, God with us—hallowed be your name.**

**In us, through us, and around us, your kin-dom come,  
where the wolf will live with the lamb and the lion will feed with the calf.**

**Bread of life, feed us with your truth.**

**For our indifference to the wonder of your coming, forgive us.**

**Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day.**

**Word who became flesh and lived among us,  
we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth.**

**As You come to us now, and You will come to us again in glory,  
when we will join all heaven and earth in giving you blessing  
and honor and glory and might forever! Amen.**

*(www.minnesotaumc.org)*

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

**Celebrant:** God promise, you prepare a banquet for us in your kin-dom.

**All:** **Happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

**Agnus Dei**

**CP 685**

**Communion**

**Prayer after Communion**

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.** (AdventUnwrapped.ca)

**The Doxology**

**Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Sending forth & Blessing****A Loving Blessing**

**One:** Be people of love.

Let love live in your heart and share the love of Christ with all you meet.

Share love by loving those you see regularly. Start by loving your community.

Share love by loving those you do not know. How do your actions affect the rest of God's creation?

Share love by praying for our world.

**All:** **In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share love.**

**As we go out into the wonder of God's creations, we will share love, joy, peace, and hope with those we meet. Amen.** (liturgylink.net)

**Announcements****Recessional Hymn***Once in Royal David's City***CP 123****The Dismissal**

Go with and in love and serve Christ who is our eternal love.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude***Dulci Jubilo*

## Bach