

# First United Church

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December 11, 2022

10:30 a.m.

Third Sunday in Advent



Purpose: Building Relationships,  
Living God's Transforming Love.

***A Christian response to  
Ableism and Social Prejudice***

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*A Christian response to Ableism and Social Prejudice*

- Congregation is invited to participate as you wish

**Handbell Prelude:** O Come, O Come Emmanuel  
O Come, All Ye Faithful

arr. Susan E. Geschke  
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

## *Listening as we Gather*

### **Acknowledgement of the Land**

Lee

We open with a lament and an acknowledgement:

We have forgotten the web of life of which we are a part. We have not listened to the warming Earth. We lament the loss of life and pain of all our relations and confess our careless use of this beautiful planet.

We give thanks for the Haudensaunee, Anishinaabe, and Neutral peoples who cared for the traditional territory on which we gather. We acknowledge our indifference and lack of action toward right relations with Indigenous peoples in our own time.

We grieve the loss of hope for those persecuted for faith or gender or sexual orientation, race, or disability, and the loss to the Body of Christ when the church sustains exclusionary practices

We aspire to live out our purpose of Building Relationships, Living God's Transforming Love and in so doing seek to create a safer space for everyone. We welcome you and the gifts you bring as part of your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, cultural background, or abilities.

### **Welcome and Opportunities for Ministry and Fellowship**

Conversation after Church in Hilliard Hall  
Christmas Party Dec 17

- **Introit** Beneath the Tree of Life

Come and gather beneath the tree of life.

Come and gather beneath the tree of life.

Root of wisdom, branch of peace, fruit of healing and release.

Come and gather beneath the tree of life.

## Lighting the Candle of Peace:

**One:** O come all you joyous and all you grieving:

**All: we are here to feel a blaze or even a flicker of joy.**

**Another:** As we light the candle of joy, we remember all the blessings of this time, the memories, the traditions we treasure and recreate each year; the feasting, the sharing, the laughter.

**One:** We also pray for all who struggle with sadness during this season; we pray for all who have lost loved ones and are grieving; we pray for fractured family relationships and friendships that are often mourned at this time of year. We pray for wholeness and joy for all God's people.

*The third candle is lit.*

**All: "Hope Is a Star" (vs 3) VU 7**  
3 Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,  
telling the world that the Saviour is born. R  
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.

*Written by Laura Rousseau, Winnipeg Manitoba. **Gathering**, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2020/21, page 35. Used with Permission.*

### • Call to Worship

Dr. Laura MacGregor

One: We gather together to accept the cost and joy of discipleship:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to be servants in the service of others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope

**ALL: Holy God, Send your Holy Spirit to bind us in full communion  
so that we may be a uniting church  
embodying your love for the world.**

One: As one, we proclaim:  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
you are with us, we are not alone,  
all glory and power be unto you. Amen

### **Beneath the Tree of Life**

#### ***Refrain:***

***ALL: Come and gather beneath the tree of life.  
Come and gather beneath the tree of life.  
Root of wisdom, branch of peace,  
Fruit of healing and release.  
Come and gather beneath the tree of life.***

**Prayer of Approach:** Let us pray: (Dr. Laura MacGregor)

O God, light our way so we can join  
your world-changing mission.  
Cast before us a beacon of hope.  
Illumine the pathways to peace.  
God of joy and light, shine into our darkness and bring  
joy to our souls. Remind us again of the wonderful ways  
you have cared for us when we were lost. Open our hearts  
to receive your loving spirit. We offer this prayer in Christ's name.  
Amen.

• **Opening Hymn** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus VU 2

Moment for Children and Young at Heart  
[The Giving Tree \(video\)](#)

**Ministry of Music:** The First Nowell arr. Michael Helman  
Handbell Choir

# *Listening For God's Word*

**Old Testament Reading:** Isaiah 35: 1-10 (Reader: Rick Chambers)

One: Herein is wisdom.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 146: 5-10 (Rick Chambers) VU 868

**The Gospel Revelation 22:1-6** (Reader: Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson)

**One:** This is the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Ministry of Music:** Gabriel's Message Basque carol, arr. Carl Schalk  
Gallery Choir

**Sermon** Beneath the Tree of Life Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson

• **Hymn** May This Church Be like a Tree Dr. Debbie Lou Ludolph

# *Responding to God's Word*

**Time of Offering**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**ALL: *Let us Pray:***

One: O God, you sent Jesus  
so that we might have life and have it abundantly.  
May that abundance come alive as joy.

**ALL: Help us to know that life is good  
and that you are good, O God.**

**May the gifts of responding be acts that represent the joy of your  
presence in us, our witness to the world  
Amen.**

**Call to Prayer:** Come now, O God of Joy

VU 34

Come now, O God of Joy,\*  
we are your people;  
pour out your spirit  
that we be one body.

**Prayers of Confession, Intercession, and Thanksgiving**

**Prayers of the People**

(Rev. Dr. Kristine Lund)

*dapted from a prayer by the Right Rev. Richard Bott. Originally posted on Facebook. Moderator Bott encourages the sharing of prayers he posts throughout his term.*

One: God is creating new paths and possibilities,  
as we prepare for where we are going.

**ALL: Christ is freeing us with newfound love and grace,  
as we learn from where we have been.**

One: The Spirit is revealing new dreams to guide us,  
as we start our journey home on a new path.

**ALL: We take courage in the assurance that God goes with us;  
we affirm our call to go where Christ leads; and  
we trust the Spirit to guide us through the challenging space between,  
where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.  
Surely, we are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.**

Please join in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples and friends:

**The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father (and Mother), who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kin(g)dom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,  
for thine is the kin(g)dom, the power and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen

• **Closing Hymn** Joy to the World

VU 59

**Grace Before our Lunch and Learn Session:**

**ALL: For food in a world where many are in hunger;  
For faith in a world where many are in fear;  
For friends in a world where many are alone,  
We give you humble thanks, O Lord.**

• **A Joyful Benediction:**

(Lee Willingham)

• **Sung Benediction:** Joy shines as the solitary star

MV 220

**Recession of the Light and Word**

**Handbell Postlude:** Ding Dong! Merrily on High

arr. Douglas E. Wagner

## Guest Biographies

### **Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson**

A PhD in theology from St. Michael's University College at the University of Toronto was conferred in 2003. Allen joined Martin Luther University College (formerly Waterloo Lutheran Seminary) in 2005. Prior to that, he taught at Luther in an adjunct capacity and served as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada for 14 years.

Allen's research interests include studies in the theology of Martin Luther, the famed church reformer of the sixteenth century, and the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the nineteenth-century theologian sometimes called the Father of Modern Theology. Additionally, he explores disability theologies, how contemporary theology can be informed by Indigenous worldviews, and the manner in which religious pluralism informs modern theology.

### **Dr. Debbie Lou Ludolph**

Dean of Keffer Chapel; Director, Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song; Instructor, Practical Theology. She states: "I successfully defended my doctoral dissertation — as part of Martin Luther University College's PhD in Human Relationships program, field of Pastoral Leadership — in January 2021. I received my Master of Arts in Theology degree from Luther in 2009, when the school was known as Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, and my bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from Wilfrid Laurier University in 1982. Prior to working full-time at Luther, I performed in the musical theatre industry; taught vocal pedagogy, musical skills and voice at Laurier and in the community; and led music and worship at conferences and retreats. In addition to teaching, I co-ordinate worship in Luther's Keffer Memorial Chapel."

### **Rev. Dr. Kristine Lund**

Principal-Dean; Professor, Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy, Martin Luther University College

Kristine's PhD dissertation title was, "The Pastoral Counselling Students' Experience Of Learning To Be Present With Their Clients." Kristine also holds MDiv and BSc degrees.

Prior to coming to Martin Luther University College (formerly Waterloo Lutheran Seminary) Kristine was the program co-ordinator for the Master of Arts in Pastoral Psychology and Psychotherapy at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton, AB (1998-2005) while conducting a private psychotherapy practice and supervised pastoral counselling students.

Kristine is an ordained Lutheran pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and a registered psychotherapist (RP) with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO), and is certified as a specialist and teaching supervisor in pastoral counselling education with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC).

### **Dr. Laura MacGregor**

Laura successfully defended her PhD dissertation in Human Relationships at Martin Luther University College-Wilfrid Laurier University in 2019. She completed an MA in Christian Theology at Luther in 2011, when it was known as Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Laura's research, emerging from her own experience of mothering a child with disabilities, focuses on mothers and parents of complex-care children. Her MA work explored the spiritual journeys of parents of medically fragile children, with a particular emphasis on the theological challenges and parental need for pastoral care.