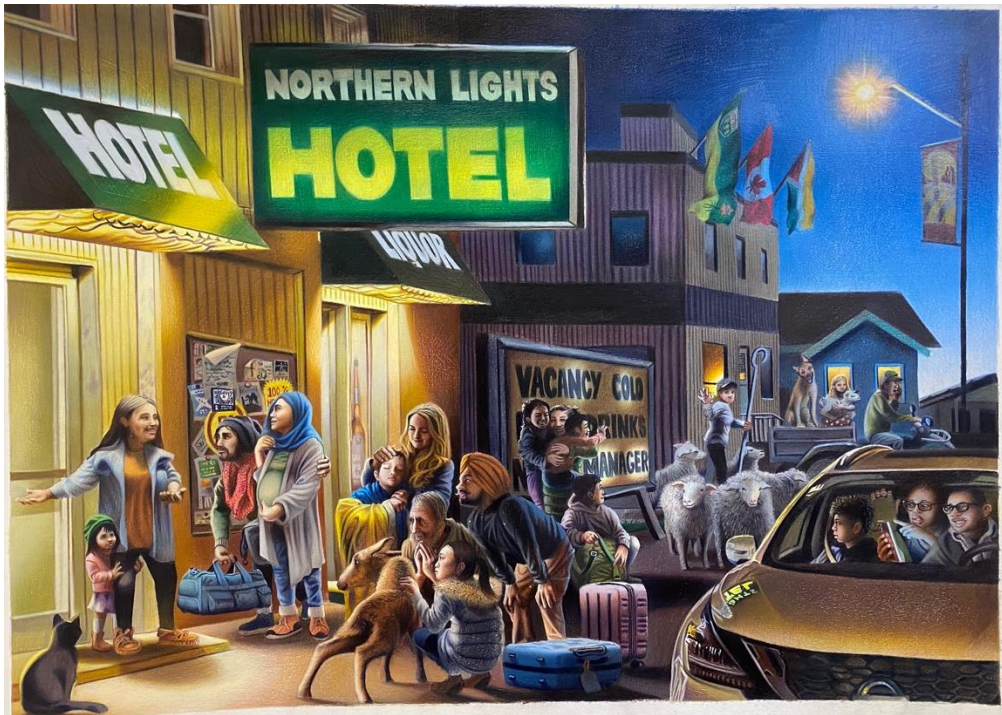


First United Church

December 17, 2023

10:30 a.m.



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

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Bulletin Art: "Prairie Nativity" (2023) by Rey Tatad

- **Is a request to stand in body or in spirit**

Prelude Aria "Schläfe, mein Liebster" from Christmas Oratorio
Chorale Prelude on "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland", BWV 659
(Saviour of the Nations, Come)

J. S. Bach
J. S. Bach

Listening as we Gather

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

ONE: Let us pause for a moment and consider our role in reconciliation.

ALL: First United Church resides on treaty lands known as the Haldimand Tract, which straddle either side of the Grand River, from Lake Erie all the way to north of Shelburne, and upon the traditional territory of *Chonnonton*, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee people. We recognize this gathering place where we worship and serve is home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. May our honouring of the land and worship of Creator this day plant a seed that will grow into relationships of justice and healing between settlers and Indigenous peoples in our midst.

ONE: We aspire 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.

Opportunities for Ministry and Fellowship

- **Introit/Candle Liturgy**

The first two candles are lit.

ONE: On this third Sunday of Advent, we light this candle symbolizing joy—acknowledging the reality that joy often bursts out of pain, hardship, and failure.

The third pink candle is lit.

ALL: Joy often comes to us unexpected, especially when we have given up on life. Joy reminds us that nothing is impossible—even in weakness. In our joy, we are powerfully reminded that God is always near.

ONE: Therefore, let us rejoice! Let us sing as we celebrate the good news in this divinely newborn baby.

All sing: Hope Is a Star (vs 3) "Joy"

VU 7

ONE: Rejoice! And again, I say, rejoice!

ALL: Our joy erupts from the assurance that God is with us in our here and now.

ONE: Let us join prayerfully in thanksgiving and through divine conversation to discover peace and strength for our living and our loving:

ALL: Open our understanding, O God, rooted in coming home to your loving. Free our perceptions from the chains of judgment and of polarization. Equip us to perceive the good in one another while sharing right relations. Inspire us for new life and new vision in all we think and do, that we might dance joyfully in Jesus' name. Amen.

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.

- **Call to Worship**

- **Opening Hymn** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

VU 35

Prayer of Approach

ONE: Emmanuel, come to us in this Advent season.

ALL: We rejoice, O God, that you are with us.

ONE: Come to us, O Holy Wisdom.

ALL: Show us the path of knowledge and teach us your ways.

ONE: Come to us, O Dayspring from on high.

ALL: Disperse the shadows of night and lead us into the light of dawn.

ONE: Come to us, Desire of Nations.

ALL: Bind us together with one heart and mind.

ONE: O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Catherine Elsdon, Sydenham Street U.C. and Faith U.C., Kingston, Ont.

Ministry of Music Family Choir:

Light of Hope, Light of Peace

M. Patterson

Christ was Born on Christmas Day

P. Messick

Listening For God's Word

Hymn Jesus Came Bringing Us Joy

MV 33

The Story for the Young at Heart

(by Greg Case)

Video Reflection Away in a Manger

Scripture Readings

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

(Reader: Joanne MacPhail)

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks Be To God.

John 1:9-14

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks Be To God.

- Ministry of Music - Gallery Choir:** Veni Emmanuel T. Fettke & T. Grassi
- Reflection** Don't Hesitate and Give in to Joy Rev. Hoeun Lee
- **Hymn** Joy Is Now in Every Place VU 45

Responding to God's Word

Moderator's Christmas Message

Time of Offering

Offertory People, Look East arr. Dale Wood

- **Dedication of Offering** In the Bleak Midwinter (vs 4) VU 55
- **Prayer of Dedication**

Call to prayer: Come Now, O God of Joy VU 34

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

- **Sending Hymn** Joy to the World VU 59

Sending Forth and Benediction

- **Benediction Response** Joy Shines as the Solitary Star MV 220

Recession of the Light and Word

Postlude: Chorale Prelude on "In Dulci Jubilo", BWV 729 J. S. Bach