



Thornbury, Ontario
Grace United Church
Bold. Nurturing. Liberal. Christian.

December 5, 2025

Second Sunday in Advent

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

Worship Leader: Phyllis Fleming

Music Director: Dr. Christopher Burton

Lay Leader: Debby Weale

Leader: regular font ~ All: bold font ~ Sung words: bold italics

Asterisk * Indicates when the congregation may stand if able.

We Gather Together in Community

PRELUDE:

"...des pas sur la neige" - C. Debussy

A Stewardship Second:

The path to peace has many routes. Giving generously is one of them.

GREETING: (2 Cor. 13:13)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!

And also with you!

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

A SONG TO BEGIN:

VU #2 - "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" v.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.*

**OUR COMMITMENT to SAFE SPACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
of the LAND:**

We believe all people are made in the image of God and are entitled to dignity and respect. At Grace United Church we try to offer a safer, inclusive and generous space for all who are seeking a faith community. We offer full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, all races, ages and abilities in the life and work of the ministry.

Grace United Church is situated on the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. We acknowledge that they are the first stewards of this land and we respect their histories and past and present cultures. We will work to recognize and remove barriers to reconciliation.

CALL to WORSHIP: (GA)

We are called into worship and fellowship by the words of
John the Baptist:

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

We bring our wishes for the world and its people:

**Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill
shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made
straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh
shall encounter the salvation of God.**

Come, let us worship.

***OPENING HYMN: VU #18 -**

"There's a Voice in the Wilderness"

**1 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
 a call from the ways untrod:
 prepare in the desert a highway,
 a highway for our God!
 The valleys shall be exalted,
 the lofty hills brought low;
 make straight all the crooked places**

where God, our God, may go!

**2 O Zion, that bringest good tidings,
get thee up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people
the coming of their King.
Like the flowers of the field they perish,
like grass our works decay;
the power and pomp of nations
shall pass, like a dream, away.**

**3 But the word of our God endureth,
whose arm is ever strong;
God stands in the midst of nations,
and soon will right the wrong.
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
the lambs so gently hold;
to pastures of peace will lead them,
and bring them safe to fold.**

**4 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway,
a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted,
the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places
where God, our God, may go!**

OPENING PRAYER: (WM)

Come, Emmanuel, into this heart we share as your people,
as your body in Christ, your church.

**Come, Emmanuel, meet us in the frailty of our human
flesh.**

Come, Emmanuel, find us in our longing and desire for
serenity and peace.

Come, Emmanuel, dance with us.

Come, Emmanuel, light up our hearts.

Come, Emmanuel, use us to prepare the way for a new day, where we recognize you and cherish your earth: star and soil, breath and light, this moment and every moment, your gift to each of us in life itself.

Come, Emmanuel, our hope is in you. Amen.

We Listen Together

ANTHEM:

“Longing for Light We Wait in Darkness”

Words and Music by Bernadette Farrell

Theme Conversation: Peace

Advent Candle Lighting (DS)

(The candle of hope is lit.)

Today we kindle the Advent candle of peace.

(The second purple candle is lit.)

We welcome the glow that causes us to pause, the glow that entices us to gather together, the glow that shines in hearts of goodwill.

Come, Holy Stranger, sharer of peace on this Advent journey: welcome us as we welcome you.

We receive the light of peace.

HYMN: VU #7 – “Hope is a Star”, v.2

**2 Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth.**

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.**

Lighting of Children's Lantern

PRAYER of CONFESSION and WORDS of ASSURANCE: *(GD)*

God, you call us to freedom and possibility, but
sometimes we feel like we are held for ransom by our
own decisions, by our own circumstances in life.
**Sometimes we just don't know what to do or who to turn to
for help.**

Sometimes we fear trusting you, O God, afraid that
opening our souls to you will result in punishment.
**Yet, in this season of waiting, you wait for us, your arms
reaching out with loving invitation. In hopeful response,
we open ourselves to your healing embrace.**

(a time of silent prayer)

Like the unconditional love of a little infant holding its arms
out for a hug, so Jesus holds out arms of forgiving
welcome to us.

In that embrace, we find ourselves once again made
whole and fulfilled - never alone but always
accompanied by a spirited companion, Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God!

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION:

As we prepare to listen for what the Bible is saying to us,
let us pray:

Advent is a time of waiting.

**We acknowledge that sometimes we find it hard to wait, O
God.**

Advent is a time of preparation.

**Open our hearts and minds, O God, so that we may
prepare for the Christ-child to be born in us.**

Help us to receive your word to us, O God,
**Your word of Peace for today, in words written long ago.
Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Isaiah 11:1-10 – reading from the Contemporary English
Version (CEV)

Like a branch that sprouts from a stump, someone from David's family will someday be king.

The Spirit of the Lord will be with him to give him understanding, wisdom, and insight.

He will be powerful, and he will know and honor the Lord. His greatest joy will be to obey the Lord. This king won't judge by appearances or listen to rumors.

The poor and the needy will be treated with fairness and with justice.

His word will be law everywhere in the land, and criminals will be put to death.

Honesty and fairness will be his royal robes.

Leopards will lie down with young goats, and wolves will rest with lambs.

Calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by little children.

Cows and bears will share the same pasture; their young will rest side by side.

Lions and oxen will both eat straw. Little children will play near snake holes. They will stick their hands into dens of poisonous snakes and never be hurt.

Nothing harmful will take place on the Lord's holy mountain. Just as water fills the sea, the land will be filled with people who know and honor the Lord.

The time is coming when one of David's descendants will be the signal for the people of all nations to come together. They will follow his advice, and his own nation will become famous.

Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19 VU #790, (Parts 1&3)

Refrain:

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

Give the ruler your justice, O God,
 and your righteousness to the royal heir,
**for judging your people rightly,
 and upholding the poor with justice;**
 that the mountains may bring forth peace for the people,
and the hills, prosperity with justice.

Refrain:

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

May your anointed defend the cause of the poor
 among the people,
 save the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

**May your anointed live as long as the sun endures,
 as long as the moon from age to age.**

May your anointed be like rain falling upon the grass,
 like showers that water the earth;

**may your anointed be one in whose days
 justice shall flourish and peace abound
 till the moon is no more.**

Refrain:

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

Blessed are you, O God, the God of Israel,
 who alone does marvellous things.

**Blessed is your glorious name for ever.
 May the whole earth be filled with your glory.**

Refrain:

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

Matthew 3:1-12 - reading from the Contemporary English
 Version (CEV)

Years later, John the Baptist started preaching in the
 desert of Judea. He said, "Turn back to God! The
 kingdom of heaven will soon be here."

John was the one the prophet Isaiah was talking about,
 when he said,

"In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.' "

John wore clothes made of camel's hair. He had a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

From Jerusalem and all Judea and from the Jordan River Valley crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptized them in the river.

Many Pharisees and Sadducees also came to be baptized. But John said to them:

You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? Do something to show you have really given up your sins. And don't start telling yourselves that you belong to Abraham's family. I tell you that God can turn these stones into children for Abraham. An ax is ready to cut the trees down at their roots. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into a fire.

I baptize you with water so you will give up your sins. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His threshing fork is in his hand, and he is ready to separate the wheat from the husks. He will store the wheat in a barn and burn the husks in a fire that never goes out.

RESPONSE:

These words from scripture are meant to guide us, nurture us, and teach us.

Thanks be to God!

SUNG RESPONSE: VU #10 - "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Prepare the way of the Lord!

***Make a straight path for him, make a straight path;
prepare the way of the Lord!***

MESSAGE:

We Respond to God's Word

***HYMN: VU #8 – “Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”**

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath
 sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, as seers of old have sung.
 It came a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.**
- 2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
 with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
 To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Saviour when half spent was the night.**

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The Peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**
Those online may share the peace of Christ by typing in the
chat box.

You may also think of one person with whom you would like to
share the peace of Christ.

INVITATION to the OFFERING:

In God's Kin(g)dom there is peace. You help God's
peace to emerge in the world when you share your gifts in
this church and with the Mission and Service of the United
Church of Canada. Please share generously.

Hymn of Dedication: VU #542

“We Give You But Your Own”

**We give you but your own,
 whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone,**

we give it gratefully.

PRAYER of DEDICATION for OUR OFFERINGS

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR [or on-line, or by e-transfer] help to build peace: peace across the world, peace within our homes, and peace within ourselves. Amen.

Donate online: www.graceunitedthornbury.ca, select "DONATE"
or contact the office by **email**: accounting@graceunitedthornbury.ca or
phone: 519-599-2438 to arrange a **cheque** pick-up, or an **e-transfer**
Mail: Grace UC, 140 Bruce St. S. PO Box 219, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
or **Offering Plate at the back of the sanctuary.**

Tap your debit card at the door of the church, and Donate to Grace United Church through **CanadaHelps.org**. Our account is set up with them now and it is easy to register. Tax receipts are given automatically at the time of giving.
Care, Prayer, Share

MEMORIES and BLESSINGS TREE

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE & the LORD'S PRAYER (VU 910)

WHAT'S UP AT GRACE?

We Go Out to Serve

***HYMN: VU 44 - "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"**

1 *It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold,
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.*

2 *Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.*

3 *Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the love song which they bring.
O hush the noise, and cease your strife,
to hear the angels sing.*

4 *For, lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.*

***COMMISSIONING and BENEDICTION:**

***SUNG BLESSING: VU #424**

"May the God of Hope Go With Us" v. 1

1 *May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,*

**bringing light and hope to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace,
singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.**

POSTLUDE:

“2 Two-part Inventions” - J.S. Bach

LITURGY SOURCES: The following are used with permission:

Stewardship Second, invitation to the Offering, and Prayer of Dedication of our

Offerings: © 2025 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include this notice.

Call to Worship: written by George Allan (GA), Gathering, A/C/E 2025/26, page 27, alt.

Opening Prayer: written by Wendy MacLean (WM), Gathering, A/C/E 2025/26, page 28, alt.

Advent Candle Lighting: written by Don Stiles, from gatheringworship.ca.

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance: written by Gord Dunbar (GD), Gathering, A/C/E 2025/26, page 29.

Scripture Response: written by Rev. Dr. John G. Smith.

Prayer for Illumination, Prayers of the People, Commissioning and Benediction: written by Phyllis Fleming

HYMNS and SUNG VERSES (all copyrighted music by permission One License #608577)

- **“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”** Words by Charles Wesley 1744; music from *Psalmody Sacra* 1715; both Public Domain.
- **“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”** Words by James Lewis Milligan 1925, alt.; music by Henry Hugh Bancroft, used by permission of Eldred Bancroft; words Public Domain, music copyright © 1938 Henry Hugh Bancroft.
- **“Hope Is a Star”** Words by Brian Wren 1985, music by Joan Collier Fogg 1987; words and music copyright © 1989 Hope Publishing Company.
- **Psalm 72 response:** written by Johann Crueger 1640; Public Domain.
- **“Prepare the Way of the Lord”** Words from Isaiah 40:3, adapted by Michael Burkhardt 1990; music by Michael Burkhardt 1990; words and music copyright © 1992 Morningstar Music Publishers
- **“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”:** Words German carol first published in 1599, English translation is by Theodore Baker 1894; German traditional melody harmonized by Michael Praetorius 1609; both Public Domain.
- **“We Give You But Your Own”** Words by William Walsham How 1858, alt.; music by Johann Balthasar Koenig 17389, adapted by William Henry Havergal 1847; both Public Domain
- **“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”** Words by Edmund Hamilton Sears 1849, alt.; music by Richard Storrs Willis 1850; both Public Domain.
- **“May the God of Hope Go With Us”** Words by Alvin Schutmaat 1984; music Argentine folk melody; both Public Domain.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Scripture Passages from Contemporary English Version (CEV), copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society.

Prelude: "...des pas sur la neige" - C. Debussy

Anthem: "Longing for Light We Wait in Darkness." Words and Music by Bernadette. Words and Music copyright © 1993 Bernadette Farrell published by Oregon Catholic Press. CCLI # 11203479

Postlude: "2 Two-part Inventions" - J.S. Bach