

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH
Second Sunday of Advent
December 7, 2025

Gathering in Community

Carol Singing

Prelude

Introit

Happy Birthday

Peace Greeting: “Welcome one another,” writes the apostle Paul, “just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” In this spirit, let us greet each other with a sign of hope and peace.

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Opening Hymn Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus VU: 2

Territorial Acknowledgement

Callie Archer

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the ancestral land of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Mississaugas of the Credit. For thousands of years, the First Peoples of this place have cared for the land, even as the land has cared for them.

Guided by the wisdom of their traditions and their ancestors, they have been taught that the circle of life is embraced and embracing. Let us carry on this wisdom. Let us live in right relations with love and respect.

Announcements

Reverend Jan

Morgan Perigo – Financial Challenge update, new pew envelope

Words of Welcome

Theme Introduction

Lighting of the Advent Candle Virginia Kroes & Carolyn Wilson

Candle Lighting Hymn Hope Is a Star (vs 1 & 2) VU: 7

Call to Worship

A voice cries out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

Make God's paths straight.

Every valley will be filled, and every mountain will be levelled.

The crooked will be made straight.

The rough and rocky ways will be smoothed.

All will see the salvation of God.

As we prepare to grow with God,

we nurture love and understanding.

As we prepare to grow with Christ,

we bring forth justice and peace.

As we prepare to grow in the Spirit,

we live the promises of Christmas---

promises of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Opening Prayer

Holy and Gracious God,

thank you for bringing us together on this second Sunday of Advent.

We know how exciting the season of Christmas is, how busy it can be,

how we can get caught up in the plans and to-do lists.

Please, help us to find opportunities to stop and listen, feel and notice.

Let us remember the hope that is in new life,
the quiet and stillness of peace that is a baby sleeping,
the joy that is a baby smiling,
and the love that surrounds this baby and this story, one more time.

Help us to bring all this and more to the people in our lives,
and in our world.

Amen

Advent Litany

Among the poor
among the proud
among the persecuted
among the privileged
Christ is coming
He is coming to make all things new!

In the private house
in the market place
in the wedding feast
in the judgement hall
Christ is coming
He is coming to make all things new!

With a gentle touch
with an angry word
with a clear conscience
with burning love
Christ is coming
He is coming to make all things new!

That the kingdom might come
that the world might believe
that the powerful might stumble
that the humble might be raised
Christ is coming
He is coming to make all things new!

Within us
without us
among us
before us
in this place
in every place
in this time
for all time
Christ is coming
He is coming to make all things new!

Hymn

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

VU: 18

Seeking to Grow Spiritually

Prayer for Illumination

Callie Archer

Let us pray:

God of Grace, stir within us a desire to hear the familiar story with new comprehension. Though the details now are commonplace, let them bring fresh insights.

Grant us wisdom; enlighten us, we pray, that your truth may shine forth from the words of scripture as they are read this day.

Amen

Hebrew Testament Reading

New Revised Standard Version

Isaiah 11: 1-10

The Peaceful Kingdom

11 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow^[a] out of his roots.

² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed^[b] together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's
den.

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Gospel Reading

New Revised Standard Version

Matthew 3: 1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”^[a] ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his^[b] baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our

ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with [\[c\]](#) water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with [\[d\]](#) the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

**May God bless this reading of the Holy Word to our insight
and our understanding. Thanks be to God. Amen**

Gift of Music Sam Vacca and East Plains Choir

Message Peace Reverend Jan

Hymn I've Got Peace Like a River VU: 577

Responding in Care

Invitation to the Offering Reverend Jan

Your financial gifts enable the various ministries and projects of East Plains United Church to continue to carry out the church's mission to commit ourselves to sharing the work of the Spirit with our families, our neighbours, and the world.

We are very grateful for all donations.

Thank you to everyone who continues to regularly contribute to the mission and programs at East Plains United Church.

Doxology Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving VU: 540

Offering Prayer

**We thank you, Holy One, for all your good gifts,
especially the gifts of prophecy, promise, and calls for
preparation.**

**God of Peace, we offer you our gifts,
that peace may come to our troubled world.**

**Help us to build peace with justice,
wherever our lives touch others.**

**In gratitude for all that you provide, God of peace,
we offer you our thanks and our praise.**

**Receive the gifts of our hands,
and use them to bring light into darkness
and hope to places of despair.**

Amen

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom 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 kingdom
and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

Reaching Out In Love

Closing Hymn Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands MV: 173

Commissioning

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

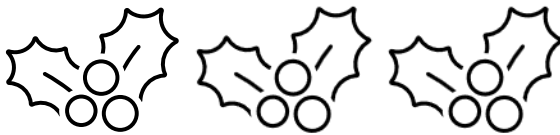
Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Postlude

Worship Resources: *Gathering Magazine*

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2025-2026 Year A (page 9, 27-31);
Abingdon Worship Annual 2025 (pages 279-282); *Feasting On the Word: Year A, Volume 1*, (pages 26-49); *Texts For Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year A* (pages 10-18);
Shine On, Star of Bethlehem: A Worship Resource For Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, compiled by Geoffrey Duncan. Used with Permission.



EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM STATEMENT

We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, ability, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work at East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us for refreshments after worship in The Gathering Place, served by the Fellowship and Pastoral Care Ministry team.



Wesley Open House— Sun, Dec 7 from 12:00-3:00pm at the 467 Main St E location. You may bring your donations at this time and there will also be some refreshments. On Sun, Dec 14 items will also be taken from the 'cart' to Wesley. Thank you!

TURN DEBT INTO HOPE, Development and Peace Caritas Canada. Please consider reading the brochure and signing the **Petition** in the Gathering Place. Thank you.

Jan's Journal



This Sunday is the second Sunday of Advent, the focus of which is "Peace."

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making "Casseroles and Carols" such a lovely evening event! Thank you also to those who have volunteered to light the Advent candles at upcoming worship services. There is still a

vacancy on Christmas Eve. If you plan to attend the Christmas Eve service, perhaps you would consider lighting the final candle, the Christ candle?

I am very disappointed to tell you that the response to my appeal for volunteers to play a role in the Christmas Eve skit has been very poor. We had a lot of fun preparing and presenting The Muddled Christmas Star in 2023 and Michael Mouse in 2024! Unfortunately, it is clear that I will need a different approach this year.

The process of de-cluttering the church in preparation for increasing the community's use of the church's space has begun. This will be a careful process, but it needs to move forward fairly quickly. Change can be difficult. Letting go of things can be difficult. However, it is necessary to let go of the past in order to make room for something new to take place.

Andy and I have recently gone through this process as we packed to move. We had three bins—Garbage, Recycle/Repurpose/Donate, Keep. As we went through our possessions, some items moved from one bin to another and back again! We also had the challenge of different opinions! Some things I felt ready to let go, Andy did not, and vice-versa!

We found that our emotional/sentimental connection to items made it difficult to let them go. A friend made a suggestion: if you haven't used it in the past year, you should let it go. If the emotional connection makes that difficult, create a "Book of Treasures." Take a photograph of the item and place it in a special album. You can look at the album and remember the item and all the treasured memories associated with it, which then makes giving away the physical item a lot easier. Perhaps that is an idea we

might consider as we make our way through this process at the church?

Quite a few years ago, I read a book titled "If You Always Do What You've Always Done, You'll Always Have What You've Always Had." We can relate that thought to the church. Statistics show that The United Church of Canada grew steadily between 1925 and 1968. The denomination reached peak membership in 1968. Church membership has been steadily decreasing since then. The only way that that trend can be halted, or perhaps reversed, is to do some things differently. Think of all the ways in which Canadian Society has changed since 1968! The church is called to meet the needs of the community in this time and in this place. How do we do that? That is what The Community Hub Ad Hoc Team (which has recently renamed itself the Community Connections Team) is working to discern. A good place to begin is to take a fresh look at our space. Try to see each room from the perspective of someone who has never been here before. How might they perceive the space? Does the space say: "I'm old and tired and out of date?" Or does our space say: "I belong to this time?"

Please get involved in the evaluation process!

On a similar vein, please plan to stay following worship this Sunday, to participate in the third and final discussion of the reflections you have received titled "The Theology of Place." We will be discussing questions pertaining to Reflections 7, 8, and 9.

Advent is flying by! Here is the current Calendar of upcoming events:

Advent and Christmas Calendar

Carol Singing – Please plan to arrive in time to be seated in the sanctuary by 10:20 a.m. and have your requests ready!

The Coffee and Conversation Group began an Advent Reflection Series last week. It is not too late to join in! Please let me know if you are interested, as we email the daily reflections to you and then meet for discussion together on Tuesday morning between 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Come to the Campbell room at 10 a.m. and bring your own coffee, tea, juice.

December 7th – Second Sunday in Advent
Refreshments following worship
Share your thoughts about the Theology of Place reflections 7, 8, and 9 in group discussion.

December 14th - Third Sunday in Advent

Christmas Comfort Service – This is a quiet, prayerful service of comfort for anyone who is finding Christmas difficult this year. The service will take place in the Gathering Place on Thursday, December 18th at 1:30 p.m.

December 21st – Fourth Sunday in Advent with Communion

December 24th – Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.

December 28th – First Sunday after Christmas

As always, I am available to discuss any of the information written in this "Journal."

You can reach me at: revjanmcc@gmail.com or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,
Pastor Jan

Jan's Chocolate Pie

Ingredients:

Crust: 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
½ cup butter (melted)
Pinch of sugar

Filling: 2 oz. unsweetened dark chocolate
1 tbsp. instant coffee
1 tbsp. brandy (or brandy flavouring)
1 cup butter
2/3 cup sugar
2 eggs
¾ cup ground almonds

Method:

- Mix graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter thoroughly. Press into a 9-inch pie plate. Fill the bottom and partway up the sides. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool completely. Chill.
- Blend softened butter, eggs and sugar (use a food processor for best results)
- Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Add the instant coffee and brandy and blend. Remove from heat.
- Pour the chocolate mixture into the egg mixture and blend thoroughly
- Add the ground almonds and mix thoroughly
- Pour the filling into the chilled pie crust. Spread evenly.
- Keep refrigerated until time to serve
- Garnish with sliced or slivered almonds.

Enjoy!