

Stettler United Church



BESTOGETHER

We are United Churches at Big Valley, Erskine and Stettler.

Date: December 14, 2025

Advent 3

Theme: True Joy

Worship Leaders: Rev. Dr. OhWang Kwon

Musician: Barbara-Lynn & Dave Goodwin

Audio/Visual: Holly McKenzie

(*: Please, stand if you are able.)

Musical Prelude

Greetings

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

Response: And also with you

Welcome & Announcements (Care & Concerns)

- **Michele is away** on holiday December 15 ~ January 04 2026
- **Sing A Long** with Rev. Kwon at the **Big Valley** Drop in Center Tuesday December 16 @ 7:00 pm
- **Christmas Sing Along** with Rev. Kwon **(Stettler United)** Friday December 19 @ 1:00 pm Everyone is welcome!
- **December 21 ~** (Advent 4): Regular Worship Service
- **December 23 ~** Christmas Eve service at Erskine 7:00 pm
- **December 24 ~** Christmas Eve service at Big Valley 4:00 pm and Stettler 7:00 pm
- **No Service ~** December 28th
- **Regular service ~** January 04

Acknowledgement of Territory

ALL: God calls us to live with respect and care for all our relations in creation. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples of this area have tended the earth, and we give thanks for such diligence. We covenant to live and work together, sharing this land in peace and respect as long as

the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows.*Peter*

Chynoweth, Cochrane AB

Call to Worship

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.

George Allan, Chatham, Ont. Gathering, Advent Christmas Epiphany 2025-2026, 27. Used with Permission.

Light the Christ Candle

Two candles on the Advent wreath are lit prior to beginning worship.

Joy is a star. Sparkling, dancing, never quite the same.

Stars are there in daylight, but only appear in the rich depths of night.

Always, in our waiting, joy is there.

Joy is a waiting star.

All sing: *Hope Is a Star* VU#7 verse 3 (being seated)

Gwen Bevan, Tanna Edwards, Paul Kneebone, and Nancy Payne, East Central Ontario Region. Gathering, Advent Christmas Epiphany 2025-2026, 65. Used with Permission.

***Hymn *Herald, Sound the Note of Gladness* VU#28**

Words: © 1968 Moir A. J. Waters. Used by permission of Margaret Waters, 134 St. Lawrence Blvd., London, ON N6J 2X1. Music: Adapted from Joachim Neander. Words: Moir A. J. Waters. Used by permission of Margaret Waters. Music: Public Domain. N/A

Opening Prayer

Prayer of Confession

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*)

Words of Assurance

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!

Gord Dunbar, while at Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont. Gathering, Advent Christmas Epiphany 2025-2026, 29. Used with Permission.

***Hymn *My Soul Cries Out* MV#120**

Words: Rory Cooney, 1990 Music: traditional melody, Ireland; arr. Rory Cooney, 1990 Words and arrangement copyright © 1990 by GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800-442-1358. OneLicense.net

Prayer of Illumination

Illuminating God, set us on fire with your good news.

If we are afraid of the radicalness, let us take time to experience your truth from a unique vantage point.

Let us welcome into our hearts Mary's daring song.

May your timeless truth be shining within and around us, so that we may encounter it in myriad ways.

Kindle within us the delight of gospel joy.

We pray, giving thanks to Jesus. Amen.

Laura J. Turnbull, Penticton, B.C. Gathering, Advent Christmas Epiphany 2025-2026, 30. Used with Permission.

Scripture Readings: Malcolm Fischer

***Isaiah 35:1–10:* The desert blooms and rejoices.**

***James 5:7–10:* Wait patiently for the coming of the Lord.**

***Luke 1:46b–55:* Mary's song of justice.**

Hymn *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus* VU#357 (verse 1) (being seated)

Words: William H. Parker 1885 Music: Fredrick Arthur Challinor 1903 © 1904 National Christian Education Council, 1020 Bristol Rd., Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LB, England. Reproduced with permission. Words, Music: National Christian Education Council. CCLI.

Congregational Theme/Story Time

Message Rev. Dr. OhWang Kwon

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* VU#480

Words, Music: African-American spiritual. Harmony: © 1971 F.R.C. Clarke. Words, Music: Public Domain. Harmony: F.R.C. Clarke. N/A

Call to Give Thanks

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 246.

The Great Thanksgiving

**ALL: Blessed are you, gracious God, Creator of light,
Giver of all life, Source of love. Your song of wisdom rang
out before the world began; your ancient love still touches
us and stirs within us. Even when we turn away from you,
you keep faith with us. You send your messengers to
prepare the way through the wilderness of our living, to
guide us in the path of wholeness, to call us to repent. In
Mary, woman of your promise, you showed us courage and
faith; in the fullness of time, you sent us your greatest gift,
Jesus, the Christ, our prince of peace and herald of hope.
So it is that we join in the Advent prayer of all your people,**

"O come, Emmanuel." And as we wait and watch for your coming, we proclaim your goodness.

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 275-276.

Song of Creation (*Sanctus-Benedictus*)

ALL: Holy, holy, holy God,

Power of life and love!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna through the ages!

Blest is the One who comes to bring your justice to earth!

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 285.

Institution Narrative

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to those who sat with him, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 286.

Prayer of Self-Giving

God of majesty, with reverent hearts we name you also
God of self-giving love. We give thanks, blessing above blessing,
for Jesus Christ, son of Mary, Word of life.

**We remember Jesus, faithful friend and living hope:
attesting truth before the powers; seeking the forgotten
and abused; setting the prodigal and the righteous at the
one feast of forgiveness. We remember Jesus, risen and
eternal One, Christ who comes to meet us.**

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 290.

Affirmation of Memory and Hope (*Memorial Acclamation*)

By sharing in this loaf and cup we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

Amen. Come, Christ Jesus!

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 291.

Prayer for Transformation (*Epiclesis*)

ALL: Send your Holy Spirit, O God, on us and what we do, that as we break bread and drink wine, we may be united with Christ, he in us and we in him, that we who are many may be one in him. Make us strong in faith and love, that we may become truly human, as Christ was truly human.

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 293.

Concluding Praise (*Doxology*)

ALL: Holy God, Holy One, Holy Three. Praise now! Praise tomorrow! Praise forever!

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 296.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray together saying:

ALL: 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. 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.

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup (*Fraction and Pouring*)

The body of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the bread of life.

The blood of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the cup of blessing.

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 299.

Distribution

Prayer after Communion

ALL: Eternal God, we thank you that you have called your people from east and west, and north and south, to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. Keep us faithful to your will. Go with us to the streets, to our homes, and to our places of labour and leisure—that whether we are gathered or scattered, we may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, Ont. The United Church Publishing House, 2000, 303.

Invitation for Offering

Offering Hymn *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

VU#541 Words: Thomas Ken ca. 1674. Music: Genevan Psalter 1551. Public Domain. N/A

Offering Prayer

God, our strength and salvation, we glorify your name.

With acts of joyous delight, we show others your timeless grace.

Our offerings are presented, knowing that those who are grieving, those who are hungry, and those who are hopeful will be served.

May all that we are and all that we give reflect your great joy! Amen.

Laura J. Turnbull, Penticton, B.C. Gathering, Advent Christmas Epiphany 2025-2026, 30. Used with Permission.

Prayers of the Gathered Community

***Hymn *O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts* VU#472**

Words: 12th Century, translated by Ray Palmer. Music: Henry Percy Smith. Public Domain. N/A

***Commissioning and Benediction**

***Threefold Amen (Unison) VU#967**

Postlude