

Come, Christ Jesus, be our hope in the uncertain times in which we find ourselves. Touch us with your healing and grace. We remember before you those we know and those known to you alone who are living with loss or illness this season, those who face depression or discouragement, and any who will find it hard to be merry this year. **Keep silence**

Shine the light of your courage and comfort into their lives so that we may sing together in your love:

Response: Jesus, Lord of love, we open our hearts to you.

Come, Christ Jesus, be our king and claim your rightful place in our hearts. Our world is struggling and yearning for the justice and mercy you bring. Draw near to all leaders and all citizens working for peace and justice. Encourage honourable action and co-operation on all sides. Give hope to people under oppression and those who live with fear or hunger day by day. Hasten the day when the world's peoples will live as neighbours, reconciled in your truth and freedom so that all may know the joy we sing:

Response: Jesus, Lord of love, we open our hearts to you.

With voices united in love and loyalty, we offer the prayer you taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SONG: 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime VU #71

BENEDICTION:

Go in love this day, to greet friend or enemy, neighbour or stranger with the warmth and wonder of Christ Jesus in your smile,

And may the all-forgiving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the all-inspiring love of God, and the all-embracing communion of the Holy Spirit be yours this day and in each day to come, now and evermore. Amen.

CHORAL BLESSING: Hope is a star (vs 4) VU #7



WATERFORD UNITED CHURCH
Advent Four – Love Candle
December 21, 2025
Worship Leader: Rev. Gary Patterson
Music: Azrael Hackshaw



WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOIR INTROIT: Soon and Very Soon We're Goin' to See the King
Soon and very soon we're goin' to see the King
Soon and very soon we're goin' to see the King
Soon and very soon we're goin' to see the King.
We are waiting, we are waiting. We're goin' to see the King.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: The light shines in the darkness,

All: **We come to worship, seeking the love born among us in Christ Jesus.**

One: Shine into our lives and your world this Advent.

All: **Renew our trust in your undying love.**

ADVENT CANDLELIGHTING – LOVE Andrea Borsy and Margot Fournier

Reader One: When I look around, I see shadows of too many people wandering in the wilderness, and too many people sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, so we light candles...

Reader Two: Because people all over the world are suffering and we are too busy to notice, we light candles...

Reader One: Today we stop everything and light these candles: one for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and one for love...
(Light the fourth candle)

Reader Two: May the light from these candles overwhelm the world.

Reader One: May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.

Reader Two: May the light and the fire from these candles burn away everything that is preventing God's love from being born among us.

Reader One: Brother and sisters, be not afraid, even now - even now – God's love is overwhelming the world!

HYMN: A Candle is Burning(vs.4)

VU #6

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Emmanuel, God with us, we praise you for your presence throughout the amazing universe you have made. The shining stars sing your praise, which echoes in the depths of space. The smallest snowflake and a baby's tiny fingers reflect your intricate love for the details of every life. In Jesus Christ, you were born among us, one of a kind, yet one with a kind, to show us how your great love is lived out day by day. Inspire us with your loving Spirit as we move through Advent toward Christmas Day, so that our celebrations of love made flesh in Jesus will share the presence of your love with those who need it most. So may we live the praise we offer to you, Emmanuel, God with us, now and evermore. Amen

OPENING HYMN: Hark the Glad Sound VU #29

CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION:

We believe in God,
the creator and giver of life, who brought all creation to birth,
who mothers us and fathers us, protecting, nurturing,
and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ:
God born among us as a fragile baby, embodying both love and the need for love, and
calling us to rest in God
as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, breathed into us at our birth,
always drawing us on to be born again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting,
nourishing our growth and inspiring our living.

We believe in the reconciliation
of the world to God, through Christ. Hunted at birth
and humiliated at death, Christ entered our fearful darkness
so that we might enter his glorious light
and share the life of his resurrection.

And we believe that each new child
is a glimpse of the face of God, a sign of the life to come,
and a call to live in peace
and celebrate living together.
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.
Amen.

SONG: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear VU #44

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

God of life and love, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, your Love Incarnate.

SCRIPTURES:

- Isaiah 7:10 - 11
- Matthew 1:18 – 25

MUSIC MINISTRY Azrael Hackshaw

MESSAGE: Into the Mess

SONG: Angels We Have Heard On High VU #38

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING: This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Love, embracing us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that love which we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake.

Offertory: In Gratitude and Humble Trust VU #544

Offering Prayer: God, our Love and our Life, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that love will embrace people who feel lost and alone in this season, and places fearing they will be overlooked amid so much need. Be their love and their life, through Christ our Lord. Amen

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Come, Christ Jesus, be a guest in our hearts and our homes this Christmas. Enter our lives today with your blessing. We are grateful for the wonder you bring into a world so full of anger and criticism. Draw near to us in friendship and faithfulness, so that in this season of celebration, we may know your presence and can sing with all your people:

Response: Jesus, Lord of love, we open our hearts to you.

Come, Christ Jesus, be our guide through the darkening days and the chill of winter. Show us the way to wisdom and gratitude. We are thankful for the kindness we know in friends and good neighbours, in warm houses and warm smiles. Encourage us to reach out to those who need your embrace and ours, so that together we may sing of your presence:

Response: Jesus, Lord of love, we open our hearts to you.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

We want to thank **REV. GARY PATTERSON** for this month's pastoral care and ministry. Rev Gary will conduct today's service as well as Christmas Eve.

Also a warm welcome to **REV KELLIE MC COMB** who will start her ministry January 1, 2026 for a 2 year commitment. We look forward to working with Kellie.

Please hold **REV. GRACE LEE**, our former minister, in your prayers after the sudden death of her mother. She is in South Korea for the funeral, and appreciates our prayers.

OFFERING ENVELOPES for 2026 are at the back of the sanctuary. Please remember to take yours! Thank you to those who continue to make donations through PAR.

GENEROUS GIFTS FROM WHITE GIFT SUNDAY and additional donations have contributed to Waterford United Church being able to provide Christmas Baskets for 15 local people: 9 adults, 3 teens and 3 children under the age of 10. Thank-you to all who have donated and volunteered their time and efforts to help others in our community.

OUTREACH – A big thank you to all who have been contributing to our **Little Food Pantry**. Your continued support is much appreciated. As a reminder, there is a donation bin in the auditorium.

MITTEN TREE – Up and ready for your donations!

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES:

Wed., December 24	Christmas Eve Service - 5 p.m. led by Rev. Gary Patterson
Sunday, December 28	led by Rev. Lynn Workman

HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT is offering training for the **FOOD HANDLER COURSE** in the new year. If you are interested in taking the course, please contact Marilyn Antkiw.

SUPPORT THE NORFOLK HALDIMAND HOSPICE by participating in their events. See the bulletin board for information.

COLBORNE VILLAGE UNITED CHURCH is selling pies for Christmas on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings in the church office from 9 – noon (apple, cherry and elderberry).



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