Narrator: In fact, this story was spread throughout the hilly countryside of Judea. People were certain that God's hand was on this child, and they wondered what sort of person John would turn out to be when he became a man. When Zacharias's voice was restored to him, he sang from the fullness of the Spirit a prophetic blessing.

MESSAGE
HYMN: People, Look East VU #9

WE RESPOND

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
I believe there are angels among us sent down to us from somewhere up above they come to you and me in our toughest hours to show us how to live, to teach us how to give, to guide us with a light of love. In this moment we pray for all those who are in need of hope. We name before you….
Response: "We hear the message of God, **do not be afraid."**
In this moment we give thanks for all the ways we have experienced God's presence among us, in the words and actions that bring hope in the midst of despair.
Response: "For all who proclaim your reign on earth, we join their refrain, **do not be afraid."**

We believe there are angels among us called within us, not just from up above. You give us peace enough in these times of trial. You show us how to live, You teach us how to give. You call us to be light and love.
LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING
Doxology: Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow ***Tune VU #1***
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all Spirit messengers below.
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
Prayer of Dedication: God of peace and possibility, we offer these gifts so that they may be transformed into your good news for the sake of the world. Amen.

WE GO FORTH

CLOSING HYMN: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing VU #48



WATERFORD UNITED CHURCH
ADVENT 1 - ANGELS AMONG US
November 29, 2026
Worship Leader: Rev. Kellie McComb
Music: Chris Savory



WE GATHER

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

One: The angels that appear in the story of Jesus' birth would have been very comfortable in our world of tweets and hashtags. Their messages were often short and to the point–their favorite line being #DoNotBeAfraid. As we look at the stories of these winged messengers to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds, we will contemplate what messages we can offer that will fly in the face of a culture of fear and bring more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love to the world.
All: Today we light the first candle in our wreath. May we bring more hope into a hurting and broken world.
1st CANDLE IS LIT Marilyn Antkiw & Carol Goff
SING: Hope is a Star (vs 1) VU #7
We begin with an angelic visit to Zechariah. It was just another day at the temple for Zechariah. It was his priestly turn to make sure everything was done properly and in good order. But it turned into something quite different when an angel showed up at the altar.
There are angels among us that may not meet the eye. There are messages of hope coming from a choir on high, but don't just look up; for the way God works is to plant more hope right here on earth just like it was with Jesus birth.
There are angels among us,
there are angels among us, there are angels among us, bringing hope on earth.
Do not be afraid
Do not be afraid, Do not be afraid!

OPENING PRAYER
Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of hope this day.
Grant us openness to hear your message.
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world, creating more hope in the midst of fear.
Do not be afraid
Do not be afraid! Amen.

CHOIR: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

PASSING THE PEACE
I invite you to pass the hope of Christ with your neighbors,
for each time we connect with one another, hope grows.

WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

YOUNG AT HEART

Surely the presence of God is in this place. I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace. I can hear the brush of angel's wings, I see glory on each face; surely the presence of God is in this place.

SCRIPTURE READING
Luke 1: 5 – 25, 57 – 80 adapted from The Voice translation

Narrator: To understand the life of Jesus, I must first give you some background history, events that occurred when Herod ruled Judea for the Roman Empire.
Zacharias was serving as a priest in the temple in Jerusalem those days as his fathers had before him. He was a member of the priestly division of Abijah (a grandson of Aaron who innovated temple practices), and his wife, Elizabeth, was of the priestly lineage of Aaron, Moses 'brother. They were good and just people in God's sight, walking with integrity in the Lord's ways and laws. Yet they had this sadness. Due to Elizabeth's infertility, they were childless, and at this time, they were both quite old—well past normal childbearing years.
One day Zacharias was chosen to perform his priestly duties in God's presence, according to the temple's normal schedule and routine. He had been selected from all the priests by the customary procedure of casting lots for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enter the sacred precincts of the temple. There he burned sweet incense, while outside a large crowd of people prayed.

Congregation: Praying, praying, praying!

Narrator: Suddenly Zacharias realized he was not alone: a messenger of the Lord was there with him. The messenger stood just to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was shocked and afraid, but the messenger reassured him.

Messenger: Zacharias, calm down! Don't be afraid! Zacharias, your prayers have been heard. Your wife is going to have a son, and you will name him John. He will bring you great joy and happiness—and many will share your joy at John's birth. This son of yours will be a great man in God's sight. He will not drink alcohol in any form; instead of alcoholic spirits, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is in his mother's womb. Here is his mission: he will turn many of the children of Israel around to follow the path to the Lord their God. Do you remember the prophecy about someone to come in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah; someone who will turn the hearts of the parents back to their children; someone who will turn the hearts of the disobedient to the mind-set of the just and good? Your son is the one who will fulfill this prophecy: he will be the Lord's forerunner, the one who will prepare the people and make them ready for God.

Zacharias: How can I be sure of what you're telling me? I am an old man, and my wife is far past the normal age for women to bear children. This is hard to believe!

Messenger: I am Gabriel, the messenger who inhabits God's presence. I was sent here to talk with you and bring you this good news. Because you didn't believe my message, you will not be able to talk—not another word—until you experience the fulfillment of my words.

Narrator: Meanwhile the crowd at the temple wondered why Zacharias hadn't come out of the sanctuary yet.

Congregation: I wonder why Zacharias hasn't come out of the sanctuary yet?!

Narrator: It wasn't normal for the priest to be delayed so long. When at last he came out, he was making signs with his hands to give the blessing, but he couldn't speak. They realized he had seen some sort of vision. When his time on duty at the temple came to an end, he went back home to his wife. Shortly after his return, Elizabeth became pregnant. She avoided public contact for the next five months.

Elizabeth: I have lived with the disgrace of being barren for all these years. Now God has looked on me with favor. When I go out in public with my baby, I will not be disgraced any longer.

Narrator: When the time was right, Elizabeth gave birth to a son. News about the Lord's special kindness to her had spread through her extended family and the community. Everyone shared her joy, for after all these years of infertility, she had a son! As was customary, eight days after the baby's birth the time came for his circumcision and naming. Everyone assumed he would be named Zacharias, like his father.

Elizabeth: No. We will name him John.

Congregation: That name is found nowhere in your family. Zacharias, what do YOU want the baby's name to be?

Narrator: He motioned for a tablet, and he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was shocked by this breach of family custom. They were even more surprised when, at that moment, Zacharias was able to talk again, and he shouted out praises to God. A sense of reverence spread through the whole community.

People: Wow!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHITE GIFT SUNDAY TODAY – Your contributions are welcome by cheque or cash (preferred), along with any of these: canned goods such as vegetable soup, corn, pasta sauce, mixed fruit, peaches or pears. Gift cards from Walmart, Food Basics, Giant Tiger, Foodland, Dollarama are all appreciated. The White Gift cart is at the back of the sanctuary for your donations. Thank You!

OUR PRAYERS go to our church neighbour, Liz, and all the family of Steve Suprun who passed away peacefully at home on November 25 at the age of 87. He was seen many times on the roof painting or repairing windows on the 3rd level of his home and also keeping watch over our church building.

TRUSTEES TURKEY DINNER will be held **this Friday, December 4** from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tickets at the door are $25 adults, $10 ages 6 to 12, free under age 6, $60 family group of 4. Come, bring your friends, and enjoy a complete turkey dinner including homestyle pie!

COFFEE HOUR REMINDER – volunteers are encouraged to prepare and cleanup for Sunday coffee hour following services. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Carol Chadwick! A celebration of her 95th birthday is planned at an Open House on Sunday, December 6 at her Long Term Care Residence (formerly Fox Ridge) 389 West Street, Brantford from 1 to 3 p.m. and all are welcome! "Your presence is her present"

MITTEN TREE – the tree is up and ready for your knitted donations of hats, scarves, mittens, etc. Your gifts will be donated to those in need of warm items this winter.

GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER – as presented last Sunday, gift card orders will be sent in early next week. A separate e-mail is being sent to out with information and an order form. Please contact Ted at robinsonted51@gmail.com or phone/text at 289-981-1735 with any questions.

LYNN VALLEY VOICES – Advent Concert, Sunday, November 29 at 3:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Simcoe.

ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH is hosting "Carols of Christmas" a Dickens Reading on Saturday, December 5 at 7 p.m. Freewill offering.

WATERFORD UNITED CHURCH

135 Main Street S., Waterford

ANNUAL TURKEY DINNER

Friday, December 4, 2026
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

TICKETS AT THE DOOR
$25 for Adults
$10 for children 6 to 12
Free for children under 6
$60 Family Group of 4



Turkey, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Cranberries
Butternut Squash, Coleslaw, Homestyle Pie

WATERFORD UNITED CHURCH
MEMORIAL FUNDRAISING EVENT

The Official Board is now offering Memorial Plaques to be installed on a Tree of Life which will be mounted on the memorial wall at the front of our church. The plaque chosen by the congregation is the small brass 1" X 3" plaque as shown.

The price is $35.00

In Loving Memory of
TOBI LYNN WOLOSHYN
July 4, 1969 – March 21, 2026

Send your request to Rick Woloshyn at thegoodlife@nor-del.com or phone 519-443-0628