

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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Family Ministries Coordinator:

Custodian:

Office Administrator:

Rev. Sonia Ireson

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Meg Chalmers

Kevin Geluch

Michelle Millson

◆ Sunday, December 22, 2019 ◆

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Candle of Love

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019
ADVENT IV - CANDLE OF LOVE

* indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**
All are welcome for coffee and conversation in the
parlour after worship

◆ **GATHERING** ◆

PRELUDE

INTROIT -O Radix Jesse, *from the Springfield Antiphonal, 13th C.*

Translation of Latin text:

*O root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations;
kings will keep silence before you for whom the nations long;
come and save us and delay no longer.*

*OPENING HYMN - *People Look East*

VU 9

* LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Our wait is almost over.

**All: Soon we will see the Christ Child, the long awaited light of
the world.**

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: What a day of excitement. Just 3 days until we celebrate
Christ's birth!

**All: We cannot help but ponder. The child of love and the
companion of grace is about to break forth into our lives.**

One: Holy is the Promised One! We gather to bless this great gift.

All: With anticipation and wonder we praise God!

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE (LOVE)

candle lit by Sandra, Robert, Matthew and Elora Winner

One: In this season of expectant waiting, we hold our breath.

All: We yearn for love that makes us whole.

One: When we feel lonely, when we feel alone, when we feel abandoned, when we don't feel lovely, when we know not where to turn, when we despair,

All: God settles into our hearts, loving,

One: On that foundation, on that potential, on that created reality within.

All: We trust with growing confidence.

One: Into the vacuum of loneliness, love seeps;
Into the ugliness of abandonment, love caresses and coaxes;
into the depths of despair, divine love fills to overflowing,

All: As the flame of love is gifted from the One who transforms.

(The first, second, third and fourth candle are lit)

Song: *Hope is a Star*

VU 7, verse 4

Love is a flame that burns in our heart,

Jesus has come and will never depart.

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.

WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

◆ **SERVICE OF THE WORD** ◆

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHAM

all readings are taken from the Family Story Bible by Ralph Milton

I. MARY LEARNS SHE IS TO HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY

Reader: Luke 1: 26-38 and Matthew 1: 18-25

Choir: The Cherry Tree Carol

arr. C. Wilson

II. MARY VISITS HER COUSIN ELIZABETH

Reader: Luke 1: 5-25, 39-80

Solo: Ave Maria

Bach/Gounod

Allana Stevenson, Soprano

III. JESUS IS BORN

Reader: Luke 2: 1-7

★ HYMN – *Away in a Manger*

VU 69

IV. THE SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS

Reader: Luke 2:8-20

Choir: Angels From the Realms of Glory

arr. R. Jacques

V. JESUS IS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE

Reader: Luke 2: 22-38

★ HYMN – *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

VU 48

VI. THE MAGI VISIT JESUS

Reader: Matthew 3: 1-23

★ HYMN – *The First Nowell*

VU 91 – Verses 1, 2, 3 & 6

REFLECTION: The Innkeeper's Monologue

◆ RESPONSE ◆

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As the organ plays, those in the congregation are invited to bring their offerings forward to be placed at the manger.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

concluded by the Prayer of Jesus

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

★ HMYN – *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

VU 43

★ COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE -- Amen, Amen, Amen

VU 967

POSTLUDE

◆ Christmas Eve at Melrose ◆

Come join us this Christmas Eve for our Family Service as we celebrate the birth of the long-awaited Jesus. We begin with travel plans of Joseph and Mary as they are required to return to their hometown, Bethlehem to register for a census. Mary's time for delivery is due and upon arrival there is no room at the inn. The new born King is made comfortable in a humble manger while the animals look on.

The shepherds tending their flocks in the nearby hills are dazzled by a host of angels joyously singing and announcing the birth. They hurry to the side of the new parents to honour the holy baby boy.

Join in with our choir singing the beautiful traditional carols as we close with Silent Night by candle light. Experience the true meaning of Christmas as we light the final candle - the Christ Candle - which follows the Advent Candle days of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Later on in the evening join us for our Candlelight Communion service at 10:30pm. Only 90 minutes from the beginning of this service until we will experience Christmas Day. The long awaited moment is arriving.

Tradition has us remembering and reliving this blessed occasion for over two thousand years. One never gets tired and it never gets old or worn for this incredible event ushered in the news that God chose to come among us, as a child, vulnerable, humble and poor, to experience first hand what we feel, so that God might "know" our temptations and feel our emotions and our heartache.

Feel the power of the scripture and the joy of the carols in the warmth of community as you take in the breath-taking stained glass and the lighted candles. Join us for communion to commemorate this holy evening as we go out by candlelight singing Silent Night.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Power of the Holy Spirit be with you as we move towards closure of this year and go with you into the new year 2020.

May your homes be filled with laughter, family time, and good food, and all the things that you need to make you comfortable.

Merry Christmas to all! And peace and goodwill on earth.

Blessings from Your Minister – Rev. Sonia

◆ **Thank you...** ◆

Thank you to coffee hosts today – Cheryl Evans, Patti Varey & Pam and Ken Holden.

◆ **2020 Offering Envelopes Now Available!** ◆

2020 Offering envelopes are now available for pickup in the church office. They will also be out in the parlour after church today. If you would like envelopes but do not currently have a number assigned please contact the office. Also, if you would like to switch from envelopes to PAR the church office can assist with the process.

◆ **A special thank you....** ◆

To the ushers and candlelighters from the candlelight Carol Service on December 15th: Cheryl Evans, Graeme Luke, Kathy Ross, Bob Ross, Megan Webb, and Richard Feenstra

◆ **Help Needed** ◆

A few ushers are still needed for both the early and late Christmas Eve Services. Candlelighters are also needed for the late service. Often these at these services we welcome many guests from the community to worship with us. Help everyone feel welcome! If you are available please connect with Libby Cook.

MELROSE WEEKLY CALENDAR

Monday – December 23

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Tuesday – December 24

Reduced Building and Office Hours	9am-1pm	
Christmas Eve Family Service	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary
Candlelight Communion Service	10:30 p.m.	Sanctuary

Wednesday – December 25

Merry Christmas! Melrose Closed		
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Thursday – December 26

Happy Boxing Day! Melrose Closed		
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Friday – December 27

Reduced Building and Office Hours	9am-1pm	
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Saturday – December 28

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Sunday – December 29

Melrose Worship	10:30 a.m.	Chapel
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