

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

86 Homewood Avenue ◆ Hamilton, Ontario ◆ L8P 2M4

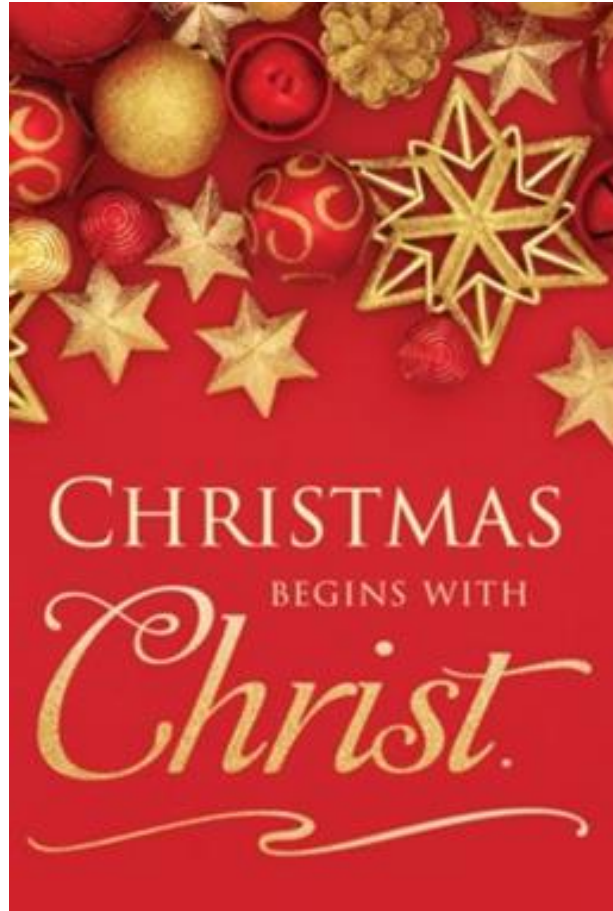
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Minister:

Music Director:

Family Ministries Coordinator:

Custodian:

Office Administrator:

Rev. Sonia Ireson

Alexander Cann

Meg Chalmers

Kevin Geluch

Michelle Millson

◆ Tuesday, December 24, 2019 ◆

Christmas Eve, 7pm

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

◆ December 24th, 2019 - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 7 P.M. ◆

* indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

◆ **GATHERING** ◆

CAROLS IN THE GALLERY

The Holly and the Ivy

Angels We Have Heard on High

Rocking

* OPENING HYMN - *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

VU 60

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: This is it! Tonight is the night!

All: The night we gather to share in the Christmas story!

One: The night we relive the marvel and excitement of a newly born child.

**All: We come together as one in worship and to adore
Emmanuel, the child of God.**

One: We come tonight to experience God born anew within us all.

All: This is a holy night.

One: This is a night of wonder. Come, let us worship!

PRAYER OF APPROACH

One: God of Innocence and Love, you came on a cold, deep night to lonely shepherds watching their flock.

All: Thank you, God of the starlit night!

One: Angels' voices rang out over the hills with a story of a precious birth and a hymn of rejoicing.

All: Thank you, God of angelic voices!

One: You were wrapped in swaddling cloth, laid in an animal manger. Your first visitors were animals and shepherds.

All: Thank you, God of the welcoming stable!

One: You brought with you new hope for tomorrow; love and peace for the earth.

All: Thank you, God of new hope! On this night, with all the earth, we are rejoicing. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE NATIVITY CANDLE

candles lit by Shari Saunders

(Three blue candles and pink candle are lit)

One: We bring praise to our Creator God, who comes – in human skin – to a despairing world and brings hope and light.

All: Hope has come to us in the form of this special baby boy.

One: We bring praise to our God, who comes – in the stillness of night – to a warring world and brings peace and calm.

All: Peace has come to us, the peace that passes all understanding.

One: We bring praise to our God, who comes – in the angel's song – to a shadowed world and brings the joy of a new morning.

All: Joy has come to us, an everlasting well of joy.

One: We bring praise to our God, who comes – in a mother's arms – to a selfish world and brings a new fire of love to willing hearts.

All: Christ has come to us in Love. We welcome Emmanuel, Hallelujah!

(the white candle is lit)

Song: "Hope is a Star

VU7 (Verse 5)

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** ◆

★ HYMN – *Joy to the World*

VU 59

Reader: Imogen and Jonathan Clase

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL READING: Luke 2: 1-20

★ HYMN – *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

VU 48

STORYTIME with Meg - Noel

CHOIR ANTHEM - Angel's Carol

J. Rutter

◆ **RESPONSE** ◆

INVITATION TO OFFERING

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR OFFERING

OFFERING SOLO - On Christmas Night

arr. R. Vaughan Williams

Allana Stevenson, soprano

- * OFFERING HYMN – *What Child is This?* VU 74 verse 3
*So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels
sings.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (said all together)

Take our offerings, Gracious God - what we offer here, what we offer with our time and energy - and make them holy. May such light shine from us and from these gifts that all may know of the peace of your kingdom. Amen.

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS (concluding with the Prayer of Jesus)

**All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now for for ever. Amen.**

* COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

* SHARING THE LIGHT

A LULLABY FOR THE CHRIST CHILD – *Silent Night*

VU 67

(please remain seated)

Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright

Round yon virgin mother and child.

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight:

Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,

Christ, the Saviour, is born! Christ, the Saviour, is born!

Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from thy holy face,

With the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Please blow out your candle before leaving the pew.

A special thank you to the Windhorst family for ushering at tonight's service.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM YOUR MINISTER 2019

I bring you joyful Christmas Greetings from myself and the exceptional and dedicated staff and host of volunteer workers at Melrose United Church. This has been a transitional year for them as they have said goodbye to Rev. Philip Garner, who was with them until the end of June. After their search for a new minister, I was warmly welcomed by all to begin our ministry together on October 1. I thank you for the kindness and support you have shown to me and look forward to the year 2020 in ministry together.

Here in Melrose we try to provide a sanctuary of safety and rest to all who enter our doors. In this chaotic and bewildering world, we face increased violence, a bombardment of untruths, fearful response to desperate people seeking asylum, racial tensions, and a polarizing of differing political viewpoints. It is difficult to remain a faithful follower of Christ's Way in our secular world which demands putting self first.

I encourage you to help each other find the simplicity in the Blessed Christmas season, to expand your kindness and forgiveness to others, and to choose love over hate. May God richly bless you and keep you safe and healthy throughout this time.

Yours in the Service of Jesus Christ, Rev. Sonia Ireson