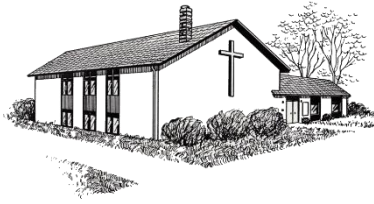


North Kildonan United Church  
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Minister: *Rev. Susan Reed*  
Pianist/Choir Director: *Joanne Diplock*  
Office Administrator: *Wilma Fehr*  
Property Manager: *Heinz Goetz*

*Our Mission...*

*to be an accepting Christian community dedicated to living, sharing and teaching the Word of God.*

*We respect all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, mental wellness, and ability.*

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## **Blue Christmas**

*\*The asterisk invites all to stand, if they are able, and the double asterisk; **Bold** print indicates a congregational response.*

### WE GATHER

#### PRELUDE

#### WORDS of WELCOME and INTRODUCTION

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND

*We acknowledge that we meet in Treaty 1 land, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Metis nation. We are thankful for these first inhabitants, and we commit to working together towards justice, truth and reconciliation.*

#### LIGHTING of the PEACE CANDLE

*As we light this candle, we pray for peace:*

**peace in our hearts,  
peace in our homes,  
peace in our world.**

*As we await the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,*

**O God, we pray for peace. Amen.**

#### CALL to WORSHIP (Based on John 1:1-5)

*In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*All things were made by God,  
and without God nothing came to be.*

*What came to be through God was life,  
and this life was the light of the world.*

**The Light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness will not overcome it.**

*In the darkness of this night,  
and in the light of God's presence,*

*and the light of Christ's love,  
we gather for worship.*

**\*HYMN: #64 VU – "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

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*(Brooks/Redner)*

*~Joanne Diplock*

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.**
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary;  
and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all on earth.**
- 3 How silently, how silently  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessed gift of heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.**
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in;  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

*(Adapted from Linda Wheeler and Mark Aitchison; from *Gathering ACE 2001-2002.*)*

*Loving and gracious God,*

*in the quiet of this evening, we come to you,*

*trusting that you hear our prayers.*

**We gather in this place with friends and strangers,**

**seeking your peace and comfort.  
We come with many different feelings.  
Remind us that your love is deep enough and strong enough  
to accept our feelings, our fears,  
and our longings that go beyond words.**

*Just as candles break through the darkness of a room,  
let your light, O God, break through our darkness.*

**Give us the courage to open our eyes and our hearts  
to your healing love.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus, our Christ. Amen.**

## WE REFLECT

### **CHOIR ANTHEM: #71 MV – “When the Wind of Winter Blows”**

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*(Duck/True)*

*~Joanne Diplock*

### **Scripture Readings:** *Gay Todd*

#### **Luke 1: 26-32a**

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.*

#### **Matthew 1:18-24**

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:  
'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel',  
which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.*

## **Luke 2: 1-12**

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'*

## **REFLECTION**

*~Rev. Susan Reed*

## **PIANO SOLO: "In the Bleak Midwinter"**

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*~Joanne Diplock*

## **WE RESPOND**

## **CANDLE-LIGHTING**

*Everyone who wishes to is invited forward to light a candle.*

## **Scripture Reading:** *Rev. Susan Reed*

### **Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6**

*The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For a child has been born for us,*

*a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

## CANDLE-LIGHTING LITANY

(Adapted from John L. Bell and the WGRG – Iona Community; from *Celebrate God's Presence*.)

*...God says, "Let there be light..."*

**And there is light.**

## \*HYMN OF RESPONSE: VU #6 – "A Candle is Burning"

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(Dean/Murray)

~Joanne Diplock

- 1 A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
a candle of hope in December's dark night.  
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,  
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**
- 2 A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:  
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;  
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.**
- 3 A candle is burning, a candle of joy,  
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.  
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow  
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.**
- 4 A candle is burning, a candle of love,  
a candle to point us to heaven above.  
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,  
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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,  
the power and the glory forever and ever.      Amen.**

## WE GO FORTH

### **\*CLOSING HYMN: #69 VU – “Away in a Manger”**

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*(Kirkpatrick)  
Joanne Diplock*

- 1    Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
         the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
         the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**
- 2    The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
         but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
         and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**
- 3    Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
         close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
         and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

### **\*COMMISSIONING**

*(Written by Paul Peters Derry; from Celebrate God's Presence.)*

**We return to the world from which we came:  
a world of pain, a world of promise;  
the world which God so loved that the Bethlehem baby was born.  
May we listen to the voice of the angel who says, “Fear not.”  
May we be filled with the Good News of God,  
through the child of Mary and Joseph,  
God's gift of new life for all. Amen.**

### **\*BLESSING**

*(Written by Peter Wyatt; from Celebrate God's Presence.)*

### **\*CHORAL BENEDICTION**

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*~Joanne Diplock*

**May the Lord go with you,  
let him take your hand.  
Keep his love within you,  
until we meet again. Amen.**

### **POSTLUDE**

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*~Joanne Diplock*