

North Kildonan United Church
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Minister: *Rev. Susan Reed*
Pianist/Choir Director: *Joanne Diplock*
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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 12th, 2024
Blue Christmas Service

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

GATHERING WORDS (Written by Bob Root; from *Gathering A/C/E 2011-2012*.)

All around us, lights are lit and carols play.

may we be warmed and welcomed.

In the joy of Jesus

may we be strengthened and be made whole.

And in the breath of the Spirit,

may we be comforted and blessed.

OPENING SCRIPTURE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND

We acknowledge that we meet on Treaty 1 land, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Red River Metis. We also acknowledge that the water we use here comes from the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation. We are grateful for these first inhabitants and their stewardship of the land and its resources through the ages, and we commit to working together towards justice, truth and reconciliation.

LIGHTING of the PEACE CANDLE ~Lit by Joan Knowles

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.

***OPENING HYMN: VU #374 – “Come and Find the Quiet Centre”**

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(Murray/White)

~Joanne Diplock

- 1 Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.**
- 2 Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.**
- 3 In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!**

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 **"Be a Gift to a World in Need"**

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~Joanne Diplock

Scripture Reading *Read by Peggy Latimer*

Isaiah 11: 1-5 (The Voice Translation)

On this humbled ground,

*a tiny shoot, hopeful and promising, will sprout from Jesse's stump
a branch will emerge from his roots to bear fruit.*

And on this child from David's line, the Spirit of the Eternal One will alight and rest.

By the Spirit of wisdom and discernment, He will shine like the dew.

By the Spirit of counsel and strength, He will judge fairly and act courageously.

By the Spirit of knowledge and reverence of the Eternal One,

He will take pleasure in honoring the Eternal.

He will determine fairness and equity;

*He will consider more than what meets the eye,
and weigh in more than what he's told.*

*So that even those who can't afford a good defense
will nevertheless get a fair and equitable judgment.*

With just a word, He will end wickedness and abolish oppression.

With nothing more than the breath of His mouth, He will destroy evil.

He will clothe himself with righteousness and truth

the impulse to right wrongs will be in his blood.

REFLECTION *~Rev. Susan Reed*

Scripture Reading *Read by Peggy Latimer*

Luke 1: 26-38 (NRSV)

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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For

nothing will be impossible with God.’ Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.

Words after Scripture:

*For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
thanks be to God!*

RESPONSE to the GOSPEL READING

(Adapted from the *Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum.)

SILENT PRAYER

REFLECTION

~Rev. Susan Reed

PIANO SOLO **"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"**

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~Joanne Diplock

WE RESPOND

CANDLE-LIGHTING

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

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6 (NRSV)

*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 Kim Falls; from *Gathering A/C/E 2018-2019*.)

***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