



Forest Hill United Church
 'open doors, open hearts, open minds'
 4th Sunday in Advent
 Christmas Eve
 December 24, 2023 7:00 p.m.



WELCOME to worship!

Gathering

** Please rise in spirit or in body as you are able

Carol Singing

Welcome, Announcements & Acknowledgement:

Land Acknowledgement

At Forest Hill United Church, we acknowledge that our church is built on ancestral, traditional and unceded Wolastoqiyik (wolas-to-qiyik) land.

Declaration of a Safe Place

Forest Hill United Church is a safe place for people to gather, regardless of race, creed, age, cultural background, family status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Introit: Love is a Candle Linnea Good

**Love is a candle on our journey.
 Love is the holding and the flight.
 All round this aching earth of winter
 This tender flame of Love we'll light.
 For we are a people of a Story
 Of stars that sing and Love that cries,
 And though these nights are getting longer,
 The path is lit before our eyes.
 Love is a candle on our journey.
 Love is the holding and the flight.
 All round this aching earth of winter
 This tender flame of Love we'll light.**

Lighting the Advent Candles

The First Candle: Hope *Isaiah 42:1-3*

One: As this season of “sparkle and bright” unfolds before us, the glimmering promises of hope lie like boxed jewels awaiting an adoring light.

All: May we hold fast to hope’s patient possibilities.

One: May we lift them high that they might catch the light of our dreams and shine bright in our broken world.

All: And may we instill hope’s challenge in the hearts of our children that they, too, will live it into meaning; pouring their lives, as we do ours, into making it real: for themselves, for each other, for the world.
(Greta Vosper)

Sing: A Candle is Burning VU#6, verse 1

The Second Candle: Peace *Luke 1:78-79*

One: As this season of “sparkle and bright” unfolds around us, the silent prayers of peace lie like stars hidden in a clouded night,

All: May we inspire the world with peace.

One: May we touch it to our lives that in every place of stress, frustration, or fear, we might feel the presence of peace easing our hearts and transforming our lives.

All: And may we share its healing power with our children, that they might become the inspiration through which peace makes its way to a new, not-yet-dreamed-of world.
(Greta Vosper)

Sing: A Candle is Burning VU#6, verse 2

The Third Candle: Joy *Luke 1:46-50*

One: As this season of “sparkle and bright” unfolds around us, the transforming wonders of joy await discovery like shimmering sugar crystals on a favourite treat.

All: May we create joy in all our surroundings as we share gifts, meals, and simple pleasures with family and friends.

One: May the easy gift of a smile bring the power of joy’s touch to those we meet everyday.

All: And may we experience the joy of Christmas as though with the eyes and hearts of children, that we might be transfixed by the power of what could be. (Greta Vosper)

Sing: A Candle is Burning VU#6, verse 3

The Fourth Candle: Love *Mathew 22:37-40*

One: As this season of sparkle and bright unfolds around us the welcome beauty of love is found, woven into the simplicity of every moment.

All: May love flow from our hearts with abundance, filling every moment with the season's gifts of hope and peace and joy.

One: May it be shared truly and deeply that all who encounter it, charged with its message and become, themselves, agents of love.

All: And may our children, who love without reckoning, teach us the truth of this most precious gift: we are nothing without each other. Let us live, then, in the blessing of love. (Greta Vosper)

Sing: A Candle is Burning VU#6, verse 4

Exploring

Intergenerational Time: *What if Tomorrow Were Christmas*,
a poem by Dave Denholm

Prayer that Jesus Taught: Parker J. Palmer

**Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come.
We pray that your good will be done.
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need.
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us.
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence.
Beyond the evil of our days
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One.**

**Hymn of Praise: Away in the Manger

VU 69

Prayer of Self Reflection:

One: Sometimes we have ideas of how things should be and we do not want to know of other options.

All: God of wonders, help us to reveal your promise in our world.

One: Sometimes we think that God can only be found in certain places or in certain ways.

All: God of no limits, help us to reveal your promise in our world.

One: Sometimes we cannot believe the things that are asked of us and assume we must be misunderstanding.

All: God of surprises, help us to reveal your promise in our world.

One: Sometimes we hear God calling us and we let go of all of those things that hold us back and, like Mary, we say "nothing is impossible with God."

All: God of wonders, help us to reveal your promise in our world. May it be so. Amen

Special Music:

Words from the Scriptures:

John 1:1-5

Message: *The Light Has Come*, by Brian D. McLaren

Lighting the Christ Candle

Sing: A Candle is Burning

VU#6, verse 5

**Hymn: Go tell It on the Mountain

VU 43

Responding

Presentation and Dedication of our Gifts:

Sung Response: Creator God, You Gave Us Life

MV 27 vs 3

**When with our hearts, our hands our minds,
we share our gifts with all the world,
our spirits soar beyond the veil,
to touch the very face of God.**

Prayers of the Community:

Sung Response: Spirit God, Be Our Breath MV 150 vs 3
**Loving God: be our voice, be our prayer.
Reaching out, joining hands as we share,
we seek your guidance through friendship and care.
Loving God, be our prayer.**

Sharing the Light

**Closing Hymn Silent Night VU 67

Commissioning and Benediction:

Postlude: O Come All Ye Faithful VU 60

OFFICE
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Worship Leader – Heather Donnelly, LLWL
Pastoral Care – Diane Robinson 506-459-8779

Usher – Robert Christie
Tellers – Mary Grant
Hospitality – May Houston
Music Team – Alex Good, Brian Cassidy and Libby Cassidy

Administrative Assistant - Kris Yarych
Reduced Office hours last week of
December and first 2 weeks of January
