



## FIRST UNITED CHURCH

Swift Current, SK  
Sunday, December 17, 2023

### Advent Three - Joy

Leading Worship: Rev. Annette Taylor

Music Director: James McLaughlan

Pianist: Mary Anderson

Organist: Patti McCleary

Reader: Ila Wilms



## GATHERING

### Moment for Reflection

*You said to lean on Your arm  
And I'm leaning  
You said to trust in Your love  
And I'm trusting  
You said to call on Your name  
And I'm calling  
I'm stepping out on Your word.  
— Maya Angelou*

### Land Acknowledgement & Announcements

**Lighting the Advent Candles** – Kim and Elynn Bilanski

**Advent Hymn: *We wait for God*** (verse 3 – sung twice)

– Words by William S. Kervin, Music by Deborah Park and Tom Reynolds  
(please remain seated)

### Call to Worship

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, we are in the place of birth and new life.**

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, we are listening for the voice of God.**

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, God is with us even in the darkness.**

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, God is in the storm and the calm.**

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, we see clearly where we are through our tears.**

Children: Are we there yet?

**All: Yes, we are at home with the holy.**

Children: We are home! Yeah!

Written by: *Naramata Centre, Summer Community Worship*, August 21, 2002, Naramata, B.C.

**Opening Hymn: VU #1 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel***  
– Words written by Richard Bott  
(please stand as you are able)

**Opening Prayer**  
**Holy Mystery,**  
**Ground of our Being,**  
**your vision of justice and wholeness**  
**comes to us in sweeping revelations**  
**and in tiny signs of joy.**  
**Kindle our hearts**  
**that we might be a joyful people.**  
**Keep us from growing weary of waiting,**  
**lest we miss the wonder of your appearing.**  
**Even so, come quickly. Amen.**  
Adapted from *Celebrate God's Presence*, page 82.

**The Lord's Prayer**

## **WORD**

**Hymn: VU #820 *Psalm 100 Make a Joyful Noise*** (verses 1 & 2)  
(please remain seated)

**Community Learning Time** - Melanie Davis

**Hymn: VU #820 *Psalm 100 Make a Joyful Noise*** (verse 3)

**Scripture Readings: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24** (The Inclusive Bible)

**ONE:** We read this text so that in it we may find wisdom for life.

**ALL:** May we be open to the Wisdom we understand and hear.

**Poem: *Just Like Job*** by Maya Angelou

**Reflection: *Joy, Joy Your Word***

**Choral Offering: *Joyful is the Dark***  
– Arranged by: Fred Bock  
Words by Brian Wren; Music by Ron Klusmeier

## **RESPONSE**

**Minute for Mission: *Gifts with Vision: Transforming Lives***

**Offering Invitation**

### **Prayer of Dedication:**

**Take the gifts we offer,  
not as a means to rescue others,  
but as a means for relationship and for connection,  
as a means to build bridges between strangers,  
as a means to embody the good news. Amen**

Adapted from: Gord Dunbar, *Gathering*, Pentecost 2 2015, page 40.

### **Prayers of the People** (306-750-8925)

**Closing Hymn: VU #62 *Once in Royal David's City***  
(please stand as you are able)

### **Commissioning & Benediction**

**Choral Closing: MV #221 *I Am Walking a Path of Joy***

### **Postlude**

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### **Prayer Cycles**

#### Ministerial

Hospital Chaplaincy

#### Living Skies Regional Council

Unity, Evesham

White Cap – Dakota

Wolseley

### **Lectionary Readings for December 24, 2023**

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96 (VU p. 816)

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

### **Worship Schedule**

Dec 24      *Advent Four – Love*      - Rev. Annette Taylor

Dec 24      *Christmas Eve* (7 p.m.) - Rev. Annette Taylor

Dec 31      *1<sup>st</sup> after Christmas*      - Norma Hain

Jan 7      *Epiphany Sunday*      - Rev. Annette Taylor

Jan 14      *God Calls*      - Rev. Annette Taylor

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# An Advent Message from Moderator Carmen Lansdowne

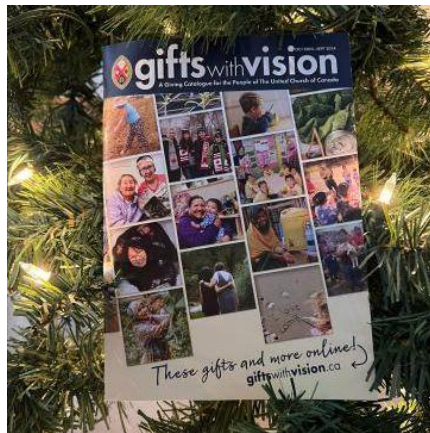


The Right Rev. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, shares her [Advent message for 2023](#). Advent is a time of expectant waiting for the Christmas miracle—a story of hope, bravery, and the willingness to have faith in God. It is also a story of generosity and of humans caring for each other.

[Video still credit: The United Church of Canada]

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## Gifts with Vision: Transforming Lives



Instead of searching “gifts for someone who is hard to buy for,” why not give [Gifts with Vision](#) from the comfort of home, with no packaging or wrapping needed? Instead of gadgets and fleeting trends, Gifts with Vision is full of gifts that will help transform people’s lives throughout Canada and across the world.

[Photo credit: The United Church of Canada]