

The Glebe-St. James United Church

Third Sunday in Advent

December 14, 2025

Gathered by God

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

WELCOME

Wendy Bergeron

In the name of the Holy Mystery,
who is Wholly Love,
we welcome you to Creator's House.
Thanks be to God!

Good morning and welcome, everyone, to our worship service at Glebe-St. James United Church in downtown Ottawa on Sunday, December 14th.

My name is Wendy Bergeron and I am Chair of Council here at Glebe-St. James.

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time guest or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. This is a place of faith, love, and community. Glebe-St. James is an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

Friends, note who is seated near you, introduce yourself and invite them to join us for a time of fellowship in Fraser Hall after the service. If you are new or visiting and want more information about Glebe-St. James, green cards are available near the entrances and during coffee hour. Just fill one out and place it on the offering plate or give it to one of the greeters and they will pass it into the office.

Today's worship service bulletin can be found on the GSJ website, along with a link to this week's announcements and a "donate" button to make your offering. If you are here in person, you can share your offering in the service, either in the collection plate, by e-transfer, or through our website – the QR code, found on the back of the pews, will take you to the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is a busy community as you can see from the announcements of activities on our website and scrolling on the screens here in the sanctuary before and after our service. In the interests of time, I will highlight two.

Please join us in Fraser Hall immediately following today's worship service as we celebrate James' time with us as our Minister of Music. There will be a card for all to sign, a delicious cake made especially for the occasion by Judy Wolanski and the opportunity for each of you to share your personal best wishes with James.

This Thursday, December 18th at 6:30 p.m. the annual *Healing Christmas Service* will be held. Come join us for a quieter, reflective service designed for those of us who need a little space from the merrymaking.

And now, let's acknowledge the land on which our sanctuary stands.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ruth Burnett-Cole

"Today we want to take a moment to say thank you. We are gathered on the traditional land of the Algonquin people. The Algonquin people have cared for this land, the rivers, the trees, and the animals for thousands of years.

We are grateful to live, learn, and play here. Let's remember to take care of the land, just as the Algonquin people have always done."

Let us worship!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jeremiah said, "I am only a boy."

Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"

Mary said, "How can this be?"

We often say, "But God, I am afraid."

Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer.

So may we trust the Inviter.

May we heed God's invitation.

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

Let us worship our courageous, inviting, calling God. Amen!

LIGHTING OF THE WREATH

In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of joy?

We see glimmers of joy in birthday candles and homemade cards. We see joy in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents. We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas songs.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us.

Today we light the candle of joy as a reminder of this good news, May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, joy is here. Joy is real. We only have to look for it.

Light candle.

Thanks be to God for that good news! Amen.

HYMN We Light This Candle

TLUS 55

**We light this candle for joy.
Awake the new life within.
May our hearts now live each day.
So joy can find a way,
so joy can find a way.**

OPENING PRAYER

Hi God! It's us again!

We're getting excited as Christmas comes closer.

The celebration of Jesus coming to earth will happen in a couple of weeks.

Be with us as we anticipate presents and special meals, parties and families. Amen.

HYMN Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

VU 232

1. **Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.**

2. All your works with joy surround you,
 earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
 centre of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and mountain,
 flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
 sound their praise eternally.

3. You are giving and forgiving,
 ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
 ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
 let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
 lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals join the mighty chorus
 which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
 joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
 victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
 in the triumph song of life.

SIGN OF PEACE

One of the hallmarks of faithful living is concern for others –
we pray for better conditions for people here and throughout the world.
We seek to build peace in our homes and workplaces,
and on the national and international stages.
It is in remembering this sacred duty that I say to you:

Friends, the peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you.

**Hope shines as the solitary star,
faith is the inner light,
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumines the pathway home.**

SEEKING JESUS

Every year we assemble the Manger scene at the front of the church
in an effort to display the nativity story once again.
This year Children's Church needs your help!
The pieces are scattered throughout the church – can you locate
them and hand them to the kids to set up?

PRAYER FOR INSIGHT

Holy One,
the story of this season is not a new one.
We've heard this tale before.
We've seen the nativities, watched the plays, sung the songs,
witnessed the children act it out.
The story of this season is not a new one,
and yet we long to hear it as if it is.
So spark our spirits awake.
Call forth awareness, attention, and reverence in us.
Allow us to hear this ancient tale with brand new ears.
With hope we pray, amen.

POP UP PAGEANT – O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Animals

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;

Everyone

Yet in your dark streets shines forth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in you tonight.

Angels

For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.

Everyone

O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing, and voices ring
with peace to all on earth.

Wise Ones

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the glorious love of heaven.

Everyone

No one discerns God's coming,
but in this world of sin,
where yearning souls long to be whole,
the dear Christ enters in.

Holy Family & Shepherds

O Holy Child of Bethlehem
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.

Everyone

We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Responding in Thanksgiving

HYMN Let the Heavens Be Glad (*Round*)

VU 24

- 1 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice.
Let the sea and all within it roar.
Let fields and all they bear be thrilled
before the Lord, the Lord is come.

- 2 Let the forests shout, let them sing, let them shout;
every path made straight before the Lord.
With joyful sound, with dancing down
upon the earth, the Lord is come.

INVITATION TO GIVE

During this season, we are focused on gifts – the gifts we find for others, the gifts we receive under our tree, the gifts of love and caring that are shared among strangers for the good of all, and the gift of the baby Jesus. Let us think about the ways that we ourselves share gifts of time, money, prayer, and commitment as we seek to enable the ministries that are important to us and support the partnerships that allow us to share in God's purposes beyond the walls of this church.

OFFERING HYMN Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope

MV 33

**Jesus came bringing us joy
Jesus came bringing us joy,
Jesus came bringing us joy,
Alleluia forevermore!**

**Jesus came bringing us joy,
Jesus came bringing us joy,
Jesus came bringing us joy,
Alleluia forevermore!**

OFFERING PRAYER

God of justice, as we offer what we have, we remember your promise to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. May these gifts be used to build a world where peace and justice reign and where your love shines in every corner of the earth. Inspire us to walk in your light and to work for the well-being of all people. In the name of the Prince of Peace, Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Prepare the Way of the Lord

VU 10

**Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Make a straight path for him,
make a straight path.
Prepare the way of the Lord.**

PRAYER OF JESUS

**Our Mother and 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.**

Sent by the Spirit

HYMN Joy to the World

VU 59

- 1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

2. Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

SENDING FORTH

In a fearful world,
May we look for God's spirit.
May we reach for each other's hands.
may we choose courage whenever you can.
And in all things, may you remember
That good news is louder than fear.
In the name of the one who calls,
The one who sends,
And the one who journeys with –
Go in peace and
be not afraid.

SUNG AMEN

Robinson II

MUSIC TO SEND US FORTH

End of Worship – Beginning of Service

MUSICAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Poinsettia: A big thank you to Wayne MacWhirter who has once again donated poinsettia for the front of the Church. The plants are in memory of his parents Betty & Gordon and his granddaughter Raine.

We welcome you and thank you for joining with us this morning.
Please join us in Fraser Hall following the service for coffee and fellowship.

During Coffee Hour we will be celebrating our Organist, James Caswell. James' last service at Glebe-St. James will be on Christmas Eve. Come help us say goodbye.

A healing Christmas – Thursday, December 18th, 6:30 pm
Come join us for a quieter, reflective service.

Advent book study – 7 pm tonight on zoom.
e-mail Rev tcb.gsj@gmail.com if you need the link.

On the website:

The slides and summary discussion notes from the December 5th Congregational Conversation have been posted to the members portal on the website. If you need help accessing this section, please get in touch with Jennifer in the office.

Our next Conversation is scheduled for February 1st

GSJ finances: We are about 80% of the way there. Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated.

Christmas Eve services

4:30 pm	Family Service
7:30 pm	Lessons & Carols candlelight service

Glebe-St. James United Church
650 Lyon St. S., Ottawa, ON K1S 3Z7

admin@glebestjames.ca

613-236-0617, x 21