

**The United Church of Canada**  
**Carlisle/Kilbride Pastoral Charge**  
**Advent 3 – Joy**  
**December 14, 2025**

*Joy is the serious business  
of Heaven.~ C. S. Lewis*

**Worship Leader:** Rev. M. Gayle MacDonald  
**Email:** mgmacd@gmail.com; **Cell:** 289-442-8420  
**Music Leader:** Dr. Heather Olaveson  
**Office Administrator:** Andrea Osterroth McRae  
**Office:** 905-689-8630

*Those who wish to do so are invited to stand for the Hymns and the Sending  
Forth/Benediction. Likewise, those who wish to do so are invited to respond aloud  
where indicated by **bold** print.*

**Welcome & Acknowledgement of the Land:**

Welcome to this place and to this time together. We are pleased that you could join us today, as your presence helps to enrich the experience of worship.

As we worship God, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of  
(Kilbride: the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca, Neutral, Anishinaabe, and most recently  
the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation),  
(Carlisle: the Neutral, Haudenosaunee, Anishinabek, and Mississaugas of the Credit  
First Nation),  
who continue to cry out for justice. As treaty people, we commit to listen, learn, and  
work to right the wrongs of the past and present.

**The Life and Work of the Church**

**Centring Song:** VU 9 (v. 5) – People, Look East

*Words: Eleanor Farjeon 1928; Music: French folk melody; harm. Martin Fallas Shaw 1928*

**Eleanor Farjeon's Advent carol, in a choral arrangement by Malcom Archer, is performed by Atlanta Master Chorale, a professionally trained and nationally recognized community choir that was founded in 1985. Its current Artistic Director and conductor, Dr Eric Nelson, has been with the group since 2000.**

**People, Look East (Arr. Archer) | Atlanta Master Chorale**

5     Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
       Christ who brings new life to earth.  
       Set every peak and valley humming  
       with the word, the Lord is coming.  
       People, look east and sing today:  
       Love the Lord is on the way.

## **Advent Candle Lighting:**

**Minister:** Advent is a season of waiting: waiting for the hope, peace, joy, and love of God to break into our lives anew through the story of the birth of Jesus and through acts of hope, peace, joy, and love. Today we light the third candle, the candle of joy.

**Voice 1:** We wait.

We wait –

not because we do not know the story of Jesus and not because you are not already and always here.

We wait because to wait  
is to expect something more.

To wait is to expect that the story might enter our hearts  
and our world in new ways,  
to bring the change for which we long.

*(First reader or a third person lights three Advent candles. Light **two purple and one pink candle**; the pink candle is lit today.)*

**Voice 2:** As we light the candle of joy, we remember the stories  
of God's loyalty to all creation.

We give thanks for the messengers –

the apostles, prophets, artists, sages, faithful ones – present in every age,  
who bring us the good news of God's restoring love, and we shout with joy,  
trusting that God

is with us and before us  
and that joy will be born anew in us.

**Response: Light a Candle** *(tune: VU 81 – As with Gladness Men of Old)*

David Wood's 2012 lyrics are set Conrad Kocher's tune DIX, which is performed by the Goodwick Brass Band. The band was established in October of 1911 in a little town in West Wales. The band's history relates how "practices were held in a corrugated zinc hut . . . lit by oil lamps on the walls," as there was no electricity then. "If the practice was really good the flames would shoot up high and the euphoniums could easily put all the lamps out!"

As With Gladness Men of Old

Light a candle bright and tall  
For the Joy this season brings.  
Joy like fountains brimming full.  
Through our world now let it ring!  
Shine within our hearts today.  
Come, O Joy, to us, we pray.

**Opening Prayer:** *(The eternal things)*

We travel closer to Bethlehem,  
and there are whispers on the wind.

Mary sings: *'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'*  
What do our souls magnify?  
In what do our spirits rejoice?  
God who calls us to Christmas,  
may it be the eternal things, and not the shiny empty ones.  
As we make our way through Advent,  
may we magnify love, hope, joy, peace, forgiveness –  
they can be made bigger through our little efforts.  
May our spirits rejoice in the unnoticed kindness,  
the unexpected generosity,  
the unwarranted grace.  
When we are tempted to chase the baubles  
and tinsel and the pretty packages;  
when we become afraid and anxious,  
and in some mad rush of consumerism forget why we celebrate,  
may we hear the angel echoes:  
*'Do not be afraid – there are tidings of great joy.'*  
And then may we remember.

We travel closer to Bethlehem,  
and there are whispers on the wind.  
Don't you hear Mary singing?  
What do our souls magnify?  
In what do our spirits rejoice?  
God of love,  
may they be the eternal things. Amen.

**Hymn:** VU 45 – Joy Is Now in Every Place

*Words: Author unknown; Music: German carol melody ca. 1500*

Robert Aszmies offers a piano track for RESONET IN LAUDIBUS (Latin for "Resound in praises"), a melody you may recognize from "Christ Was Born on Christmas Day." This tune dates from centuries ago: it was a widely known Christmas carol in 14<sup>th</sup>-century medieval Europe and appears in various guises in manuscripts from a variety of nationalities, including as the German carol "Joseph, lieber Joseph mein" ("Joseph dearest, Joseph mine").

Joy Is Now in Every Place #045 Voices United Church Canada German carol Vaughan Williams Christmas

- 1 Joy is now in every place,  
Christmas lightens every face;  
now be with us, in your grace,  
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.
- 2 May the star that shone that night,

making your poor stable bright,  
fill our hearts with love and light,  
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.

3 Through the New Year let it stay,  
leading us upon your way,  
making Christmas every day,  
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.

4 Now and ever may we find  
your good news to fill our mind:  
peace and love to humankind,  
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.

**Invitation to Prayer:** *"There was once a home that was buzzing with the busyness of Christmas and one little girl just seemed to be underfoot, doing what she could to get attention. Her mother, not too pleased with her little one, put her to bed. The mother stood at the door while the little girl said her prayers. Part of her prayer went like this, 'Forgive us our Christmases, as we forgive those who Christmas against us.'"*  
- story by Bass Mitchell, used with permission

### **Forgive Us Our Christmases: A Prayer for the Season**

For all the noise and fuss and ads  
and the pressure to buy expensive gifts;  
For anxiety over wanting our gift to be liked,  
or wanting to be liked  
because of what we buy, own, wear, give;  
For tempers and nerves that are frayed  
as we scramble to get too much ready  
in too little time;  
For lights and decorations and images of Santa  
that obscure the image of a humble family  
celebrating the birth of an infant;  
Forgive us our christmases  
**as we forgive those who christmas against us.**

In a city square, as the image of an infant in a manger  
rests silently in the cold and the rain,  
in the cold and the snow;  
and the images of a young mother and father  
stand protectively over a humble, makeshift crib;  
while images of shepherds with their sheep  
--newly from the field, untidy and smelly  
stand in awe of the young parents  
and their baby lying in a manger,

a silent backdrop for the noisy round  
of shopping and parties;  
Forgive us our christmases  
**as we forgive those who christmas against us.**

Amidst all the plans and preparations  
with all the joyful celebrations and parties,  
parties where we might not want  
to invite young, impoverished parents  
newly arrived from a shelter in a stable;  
parties where we might not welcome  
scruffy shepherds  
who haven't even taken the time to shower;  
parties where the last person we would invite  
is the grown-up cousin of the infant  
in his camel hair tunic shouting:  
*"Repent" and "Prepare the way of the Lord"?*  
parties where we might welcome the cousin himself,  
the grown-up infant whose image  
rests quietly in Lowe Square--  
provided he is still willing to bring the best wine  
and provided he does not insist  
on rearranging the seating order  
so that the most important guests  
sit in the least important places.

Yes, we might invite the infant when he's grown,  
as long as he listens to us  
about whom he can bring  
because, God knows,  
he is likely to show up with a prostitute  
he has just rescued,  
or a gang member whose mind he has changed,  
or someone he's just healed  
(even if he doesn't know them all that well),  
or maybe even some people on welfare,  
or a bunch of noisy children.  
Yet, if he understands the rules,  
and agrees to them,  
we might invite him to our Christmas celebrations.  
Forgive us our christmases,  
**as we forgive those who christmas against us.**

©M. Gayle MacDonald, 1997

**Assurance of Grace:**

God waits for us,  
waits to forgive our busy distractions,  
waits for us to find Love  
the midst of Christmas chaos;  
Love ever-present, ever patient,  
guiding us to a place of peace,  
filling us with quiet joy.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sung Response:** VU 45 (v. 1) – Joy Is Now in Every Place

[Joy Is Now in Every Place #045 Voices United Church Canada German carol Vaughan Williams Christmas](#)

1 Joy is now in every place,  
Christmas lightens every face;  
now be with us, in your grace,  
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.

**Prayer for Illumination:**

God, through these words shine the light of your truth upon us. Show us the world through the eyes of your love. Let us welcome into our hearts Mary's daring song. May truth of your love fill us with hope, peace, and joy. Amen.

**Reading from Our Christian Tradition**

**1st Lesson:** James 5:7-10, *Patience until the Lord's coming*

5:7 Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

5:8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

5:9 Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**Responsive Reading:** VU 898 – Song of Mary

**2nd Lesson:** Matthew 11:2-11, *The forerunner of Christ*

11:2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples

11:3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

11:4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:

11:5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

11:6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

11:7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

11:8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.

11:9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

11:10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

11:11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

**Reflection:** The Energy of "Yes": A Conversation with God about Mary's Predicament

**Hymn:** MV 134 – There was a Child in Galilee

*Words and Music: Janet Gadeski, 2005; arr. Patricia Wright, 2006*

Jane Gadeski's 2005 hymn is rooted in the Magnificat or the Song or Canticle of Mary, when Mary proclaims, "My soul magnifies the Lord . . ." (Luke 1:46-55). Musician and YouTuber KatieRoselia put together a lyric video for this hymn, which was recorded by the Metropolitan United Church Choir in Toronto where arranger Patricia Wright was Director of Music and organist for over 35 years.

[There Was a Child in Galilee Hymn Lyric Video](#)

- 1     There was a child in Galilee  
      who wandered wild along the sea.  
      A holy child, alone was she,  
      and they called her Dreaming Mary.  
          And she dreamed, rejoicing in her savior.  
          She dreamed of justice for the poor.  
          She dreamed that kings oppressed no more  
          when she dreamed, that Dreaming Mary.
- 2     One holy day an angel came  
      with voice of wind and eyes of flame.  
      He promised blessed would be her name  
      when he spoke to Dreaming Mary.  
          Then she spoke, rejoicing in her saviour.  
          She spoke of justice for the poor.  
          She spoke that kings oppressed no more  
          when she spoke, that Dreaming Mary.
- 3     And did she dream about a son?  
      And did he speak, the angel one?

We only know God's will was done  
in the son of Dreaming Mary.

Then she prayed, rejoicing in her saviour.  
She taught him justice for the poor.  
She taught that kings oppressed no more  
when she taught, that Dreaming Mary.

- 4 Then Jesus grew in Galilee;  
they wandered wild along the sea.  
Now he calls to you and me  
to dream with Dreaming Mary.  
And we dream, rejoicing in our saviour.  
We dream of justice for the poor.  
We dream that kings oppress no more  
as we dream with Dreaming Mary.

**Offering Song:** VU 55 (v. 4) – In the Bleak Midwinter

*Words: Christina Georgina Rossetti, ca. 1872; Music: Gustav Theodor Holst 1906*

Beautifully arranged by Brenda Portman, Gustav Holst's hymn setting is performed by Julliard graduate and flautist Katie Althen-Velázquez, accompanied by pianist Alex Tuchman.

[In the Bleak Midwinter for flute & piano !\[\]\(fa6f3af6bfa46c5d4a2d362681095beb\_img.jpg\) | Gustav Holst](#)

- 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him – give my heart.

**Offering Prayer:** (for Luke 1:47-55)

Gift-giving God, holy are you. You have shown mercy for the lowly and filled the hungry with good things. You have scattered the proud and encouraged the seeker. Receive our offerings and look with favour on our gifts. We pray in the name of the One who is love incarnate. Amen.

**Hymn:** VU 59 – Joy to the World

*Words: Isaac Watts 1719, alt.; Music: attrib. Georg Friedrich Händel 1742*

The 18<sup>th</sup>-century carol "Joy to the World" is given a fresh face in Dan Forrest's Celtic arrangement and was recorded earlier this year at Wadley Farms in Lindon, Utah. This video is a joyful and energetic collaboration between two music ensembles from Utah: Rise Up Children's Choir, a contemporary vocal performance group for ages 5 to 18, and The Reel Folk, an ensemble playing Irish traditional and folk music. Enjoy!

[Joy to the World | Rise Up Children's Choir with The Reel Folk](#)

- 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.

### **Commissioning & Benediction**

**Sending Forth:** VU 9 (v. 1) – People, Look East  
[People, Look East \(Arr. Archer\) | Atlanta Master Chorale](#)

- 1 People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love the guest is on the way.

**Online Postlude:** Ode to Joy to the World

The Piano Guys are another Utah-based musical group consisting of pianist Jon Schmidt, cellist Steven Sharp Nelson, videographer Paul Anderson, and music producer Al van der Beek that is dedicated to making YouTube music videos to "inspire, uplift, and make the world a better place." In this 2016 offering, they gift the

online community with an arrangement of "Ode to Joy" and "Joy to the World" in collaboration with choristers, bell ringers, and other guest musicians.

Ode To Joy To The World (With Choir & Bell Ringers) The Piano Guys

**Liturgy Credits:**

Advent Candle Lighting ©Wood Lake Publishing Inc. 2017, *Seasons of the Spirit*

Opening Prayer from "Waiting Is Part of Everything" in *Hope Was Heard Singing*, by Susan Foster-Fulton, ©2013, Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, Scotland

Prayer for Grace & Assurance of Grace and Prayer for Illumination by mgm

Offering Prayer by Laura J. Turnbull, *Gathering*, ACE, 2025, used with permission, p. 31