
Hope
Espoir

CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH

Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

November 29th, 2026 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Minister:	Rev. Daniel MacDonald
Minister of Music:	John Scott
Lay Reader:	Valerie Rowlands
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VU: Voices United (red book) **MV:** More Voices (spiral-bound book)

We welcome and celebrate human diversity - including spirituality, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Here, people of any faith or none can question and discover the sacred in life through openness, struggle, laughter, prayer and music.

Prelude

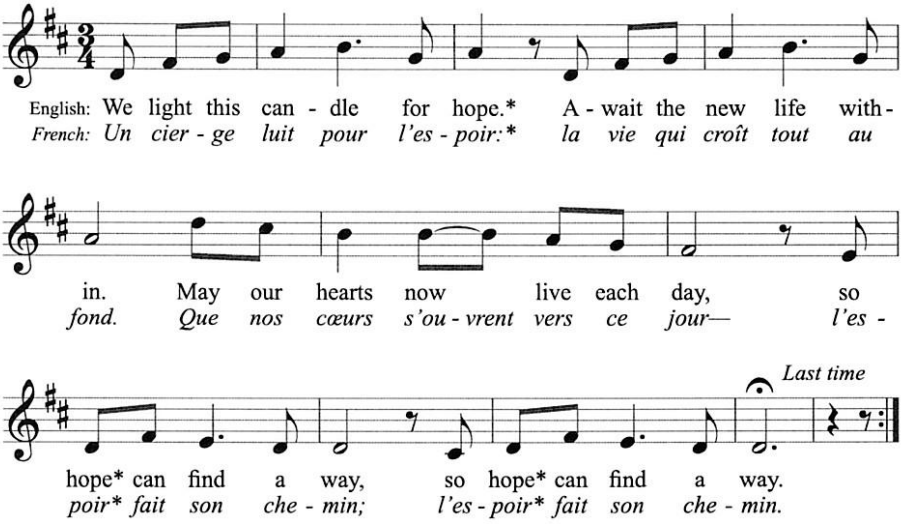
Words of Welcome and Acknowledgement of Land

We Light Our Advent Wreath ~James Blinn & Thelma Blinn

Hope is tiny, twinkling, colourful lights
strung along railings and rooftops,
breaking through the grey and damp of winter
– persistent little beacons of welcome and joy.
Hope is fragrant green branches and trees,
watered, decorated and given pride of place,
while outside, the world settles into
a season of stillness and hibernation.
Hope is one tiny candle burning alone in winter's darkness,
a reminder that light, life and love will return in due time,
Hope is believing that no matter how deep the shadows,
no matter how barren the landscape,
no matter how cold the night,
all will be well once again.
Today, we light a candle for hope.



Sung Refrain: **"***We Light This Candle"* **TLUS #55**



Opening Prayer:
As November draws to a close
and our thoughts turn to Christmas,
to the gifts that need wrapping, the cards that need writing,
the treats that need baking, the guests who are coming,
and all the other tasks that need doing,
turn our hearts, Holy One, to the needs of this world, too.
Help us to name with hope, this Advent season,
all in our lives that's in need of healing, in need of repair,
in need of restoration
– trusting that such things are still possible,
and all will be well once again.
Through this simple act of naming, of listing,
of bringing to mind, may we remember our ability
to make a difference, bringing light to this world,
even as we wait for the One we call Light of the World. Amen.

Hymn: *"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"* **VU #36**

A Mission & Service Story: *Gifts with Vision*

Hymn: *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* **VU #1 v2,6,7**

Scripture Readings:

Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Sermon

Hymn: *"God Be with Your Weary People"* Tune:Hyfrydol
Text: Hannah C. Brown, b.1980; 2023
Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887; 1830

God, be with your weary people,
rise from sacred ancient root.
Branch of ages, bud among us,
leaf and blossom, fill with fruit.
We await your new beginnings,
dreams deferred and hopes delayed.
Meet despair with sweet assurance,
strengthen hearts so long afraid.

God, be with your hungry people,
serve a feast for all to eat.
Bread of life, abundant blessing,
bring a justice more complete.
We have yearned for peace and plenty,
snared by greed and worn by war.
Make our weapons fit for farming,
move our hands to share once more.

God, be with your hardened people,
ease each brittle mind and soul.
Source of stirring, righteous waters,
free us as your mercies roll.
We have longed for life unbounded,
fresh and flowing, clear and bright.
Baptize us with fire and spirit,
birth among us new delight.

We Celebrate the Life and Work of Our Community

We Share Our Offerings
Offertory Hymn: *"In the Bleak Midwinter"* **VU#55, v4**

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 him my heart.

Dedication of Our Gifts:
Aware of the needs in our world, Holy One,
and the need for hope in these days,
we act with hope, bringing our gifts
of time, talent and treasure forward today.
that they might bear your light of hope
into the hearts and minds and lives
of our community and world.
Help us to reflect that same light in all we do
this Advent season and the whole year through.
Amen.

Choir: *"Bless What is Breaking"*

Bless what is breaking and bless what is lost.
Bless all the grieving, the pain, and the cost.
Bless our refusal, confusion, and fear.
Bless us however we came to be here.

Bless what is present and bless what is true.
Bless all the straining of seeing it through.
Bless our discernment to choose for today.
Bless us to never lose heart on our way.

Bless what is forming and bless what is found.
Bless all the healing as bonds are unbound.
Bless our new dreaming, courageous and free.
Bless us whatever our lives come to be.

We Celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Here on the cusp of December, as the countdown begins,
we find ourselves waiting…
waiting for wrapped boxes to appear beneath lighted trees,
waiting for hope to become a reality,
waiting for peace to find anchor in places of violence,
waiting for joy to blossom like flowers in the snow,
waiting for love in all its forms to unashamedly show itself even in the midst of scorn.
Here, at the beginning of Advent,
We are waiting for a little one to kindle the thrill of hope
that this weary world most desperately needs.
We are waiting, and yet…
our waiting is not passive.

While we wait, we work with hope,
While we wait, we work towards peace,
While we wait, we prepare the way for love to be born again,
Gathering at table, we break bread, tell stories,
and remember who we are and who we're waiting for.

So, come, beloved, to this table.
Come and be nourished for the journey ahead.

God of every tomorrow,
God of the stars above us,
God of the sunrise before us,
we gather at your Table today, hungry for a better tomorrow.
hungry for a morsel of hope.
hungry for a glimpse of your Spirit…

…we know there is joy to seize,
courage to summon,
words to speak, songs to sing,
and people to love.

So until the dawn rises—
until your holy tomorrow,

we will gather at your Table
to fuel ourselves for this holy work of Advent.

As we do, we continue to give thanks
for the stars that guide us,
for the community that surrounds us,
for the dreams that sustain us,
for the Spirit that holds us,
joining with all of creation to sing:

O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space **MV #203**
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heaven,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name always.

We give thanks too, Holy One,
for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night…

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared
with all whom he met, in food and story…

…revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb,
we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all.
With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation, as we sing:

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen. **MV #204**
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen.
Christ will come again!

Blessing of the Elements
Lord's Prayer

Sharing of the Feast

Prayer after Communion:
Holy One,
until the sun rises on a world
that finally knows peace and harmony,
until all people know their love and worth,
until that day,
until that dawn,
until that holy tomorrow,
we will gather at this Table.
We will break bread,
and we will remember what it looks like for all to be fed.
Thank you, loving God,
for meeting us here once more to remind us. Amen

Closing Hymn: *"Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending"* **VU#25**

Commissioning and Benediction
Postlude

Our communion liturgy today was adapted for our use from materials first written by Rev. Kelly Sprinkle and Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed. Used with gratitude and permission.

CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS
Sunday, November 29th, 2026

Please send your announcements to the church office by Wednesday.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Wednesday, December 2nd: Soup & Chowder Luncheon 11:30-1:00
- Wednesday, December 2nd: Choir practice at 6:30pm
- Thursday, December 3rd: Handbell practice at 10:00am
- Saturday, December 5th: Men's Supper in the hall at 6:00pm

Benevolent Fund: On the last Sunday of the month, we invite folks to bring in donations for our Benevolent Fund and place them in the red offering plate at the back of the sanctuary. This fund is used to support urgent and emerging needs in our community, such as assisting people with paying bills, buying groceries, and more. Donations of $5 or more receive a tax receipt at the end of the year. Thank you to all who are able to support this important ministry!

Improving Accessibility, Strengthening Community: One of the priorities from our retreat day, held last March, was a desire to make our sanctuary space more accessible and functional. In an effort to do this, a group of interested people from the congregation have met to explore different options. Many of those who attended last March favoured removing some pews, so the task group has chosen to start with this. We are fortunate to have lots of space. In the next few weeks, we will be removing three pews from the back nearest the coffee area. This will provide more space for the welcome this area provides. There will also be two half pews removed closer to the front - one on each side. This will provide more options for those with accessibility challenges. We are also exploring options to improve the church entrance. Stay tuned! If you have any questions about this project, please contact the members of this task group - Iris Cosh, Shirley Zinck, Shelley Mann, Carolyn McAllister, Anne Burgess.

Zatoun Fair-trade Olive Oil For Sale: Olive oil from Palestine is available for purchase again this Advent Season. Bottles are $30 each and can be found at the back of the sanctuary. This is a great way to support peace in the Middle East this holiday season and makes a great gift!

Socks & Mittens for Souls Harbour: We are collecting socks and mittens for Souls Harbour in Bridgewater. From the first Sunday in Advent through to Christmas Eve, donations can be placed in the basket under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary.

How do you prepare for the coming of the ones you love? This Advent season, we will be exploring that question through our theme *"The Work of Waiting"*. As we wait for Christmas and the Christ-child, we do not wait aimlessly - Just like how we plan and prepare for guests and visitors, getting ready for those that we eagerly wait to see over the holidays, so too this Advent, we are invited to do the same, working with hope, towards peace, out of love and with joy, as we look forward to the coming of the little one who changes everything.
Each week, you will find a card in the bulletin, with a question to ponder. Feel free to use these cards as a spiritual practice throughout the season. Take them home, share them with others, respond to the prompts however feels right to you. And make sure to have a look at the back table in the sanctuary for more ways to engage with this theme throughout Advent.

Resources to Share this Advent
On the table at the back of the sanctuary, you will find a variety of resources offered to accompany you through the season of Advent this year. These include Advent calendars, devotional books, an Advent photo challenge, poetry, Gifts with Vision catalogues and more. Feel free to explore this table over the coming weeks and take whatever you would like.

In the community:

Friday December 4, 7:00pm at St John's Lutheran Church in Mahone Bay (That's the middle one of the three churches**).** You are invited to come "Ringing and Swinging into Christmas" presented by the St John's Lutheran Bell Choir and the Mahone Bay Legion Swing Band. There will be a free will offering at the door. Guaranteed to be a good time!

On **Wednesday, December 2nd**, Trinity United Church in Mahone Bay is hosting the third annual **Youth Arts & Crafts Market from 4:30-7:00pm.** All ages are welcome to attend and admission is free. Vendors and musicians are in grades 6-12. Hot drinks and treats will be sold in support of the youth group program. Come support local young crafters and artists while you shop for the holidays!

Rev. Daniel MacDonald: 902-634-7165, centralminister@bellaliant.com
Rev. Daniel is at the church Tuesdays from 10-2pm or by appointment

Carrol Heinsma (office): 902-634-4035, centralsecretary@bellaliant.com
~ Office Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 10:00am-1:00pm
CentralUnitedLunenburg.ca