



Dear Siblings in Christ,

One of the phrases we hear time and again throughout the stories of Advent and Christmas is: **Don't be afraid.** When Gabriel asks Mary to give birth to God's child, Gabriel says "Don't be afraid, Mary! You have found favour with God." And when Joseph decides to break off his engagement, an angel enters his dreams to tell him: "Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife." And when the angels find the shepherds in the fields on Christmas night, the first thing they say is: "Don't be afraid! We bring you good news of great joy for all the people!"

The thing is—Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds all had good reasons to fear. They lived in a world of rampant oppression, economic disparity, uncertainty, and instability (not so unlike our own). And yet, when each of these people are called into God's story, **they do not deny their fears—they move through them.** They ask questions, hold fast to courage, trust in good news, and say, "Here I am, Lord!" And we will tell their stories this Advent to help remind us that, when we find ourselves in fearful times, God makes space for the hopes and fears of all our years.

You see, God doesn't ask us to pretend that everything is fine when it's not. In Advent, God invites us to hold onto hope, to cultivate peace, to choose joy as an act of resistance against hate, and to let love grow our hearts open just a few sizes more so that we can face the fears of our years and not be undone by them.

So, this Advent, **I am inviting you to join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 10:30am.** We'll be lighting candles weekly for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and exploring what it means to be people of faith in times such as these. And, while you're at it, consider inviting someone you know who could use some of this good news to worship, one one of our other December events. Because **this faith and these stories change lives for the better! So, let's share the news this Advent that God's good news is greater than fear.**

Rev. Penny Nelson

UPCOMING EVENTS



December 4 | 5 - 8PM

During Festoon in Hantsport, roast a marshmallow at the fire and check out the community art installation by Andrea Cann Tracey!



December 21 | 10:30AM

A fun service full of Christmas music featuring the handbell and community Christmas choirs!



Friday, Dec. 5th, 12th, & 19th | 1-3PM

Drop by the church for a chance to chat with neighbours and enjoy some coffee, tea, and Christmas treats!



December 24 | 7PM

Join us for our annual candle lit Christmas Eve service. Full of music and fellowship, all are welcome to attend!

December 25 | 3PM

You are invited to a Christmas Dinner! If you would like to attend or volunteer, **please RSVP by Dec 12th** by email, calling the church office, or DM our Facebook Page

December Holidays | Dec 26-Jan 2

Avon United will be closed for holidays until January. The office will open on Jan 2nd, and **worship will resume Jan 4th**

Looking back on 2025 and looking towards 2026...

2025 has been a busy year for Avon United Church!



- We established a **Benevolent Fund** to support people in the Hantsport area looking for help with food, rent, fuel, and heating homes. **This year, we supported 3 different households** to get a leg up in difficult times
- We continued the **Sunday Sessions concert series** to promote local musicians and help raise funds for good causes! **In 2025, we held 7 concerts to support charities** including the Hantsport School Lunch program, the Alzheimer's Society of Nova Scotia, and Chrysalis House
- Through **Avon United's Community Outreach Fund**, we hosted weekly coffee and conversation groups at The Border, Paint Night programs, and a school lunch supplies give-away for adults and kids in our community.

Thank you so much for your support!

And we have plans for so much more!

Recently, the congregation and a number of community groups shared their hopes for making improvements to Avon United's facilities that will help our building to be more welcoming and serve the community better, including:

- Making the building more accessible, including washrooms
- Painting the hall, front entry, and outdoor window frames
- Installing a new sign out front with our new logo
- Purchasing comfy furniture for the basement for pastoral visits and programming

We need your support to continue helping local folks who fall through the cracks, hosting amazing programs, and upgrading our facilities to become more accessible and welcoming.

Please consider making a special Christmas donation to help our ministries thrive! Donations can be made via PAR, envelope, or e-transfer to: hantsportpc@ns.aliantzinc.ca.



If you would like to specifically support the church facility upgrades, put **"Building Fund"** in the memo. To support the Benevolent Fund, put **"Benevolent Fund"** in the memo. To support general programming, simply put "Christmas" in the memo.