



God comes to us, abides in us:  
**let every heart prepare to receive the Christ.**

Let us worship the God who has come, who is here and who will come again.

### **Advent Candle Lighting -- LOVE**

Voice 1 Let your light shine. Let your spirit soar. Throw open your mind. Hand over your heart. Here it comes - love!

Voice 2 It shines in the darkness. It sings in the shadows. It will not cower and cannot be contained.

Voice 1 It was the hope of the saints, the call of the prophets. It was the fire in the belly of the Baptist and the courage of mother Mary.

Voice 2 Lamp in the shadow, beacon on the hill, star in the night sky. Love, you lead us home.

#### *Four Candles are lit*

Voice 1 On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for love.

**We light a candle for love. May it light the way.**

**\*Hymn**

Come Touch Our Hearts

VU #12

### **Prayer of Approach**

**O wondrous God,  
send your Messenger to us today with a word of grace.  
If we are fearful, move us to confidence.  
If we are weary, offer us rest.  
If we are empty, fill us with hope.  
We have been searching for you from far away;  
let us find you at home in our midst,  
changing hearts and minds  
urging us to join your work of love.  
We pray in the name of the One who is coming,  
Jesus, the Christ.**

With Jesus, we share in the ancient prayer...

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Our 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,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**Song of Mary**

Luke 1:47-55

VU #898-899

**\*Hymn**

“What Child is This”

VU #74

## **All God's Children**

### **Call to Confession**

#### **Prayer of Confession**

**O Holy One, we call to you and name you as eternal, ever-present, and boundless in love. Yet there are times, O God, when we fail to recognize you in the dailyness of our lives. Sometimes shame clenches tightly around our hearts, and we hide our true feelings. Sometimes fear makes us small, and we miss the chance to speak from our strength. Sometimes doubt invades our hopefulness, and we degrade our own wisdom.**

#### **Assurance of God's Love**

Holy God, in the daily round from sunrise to sunset, remind us again of your holy presence hovering near us and in us. Free us from shame and self-doubt. Help us to see you in the moment-by-moment possibilities to live honestly, to act courageously and to speak from our wisdom. Amen.

### **Presentation of Our Gifts**

#### **Offertory Invitation**

The fourth Sunday in Advent celebrates God's gift of love. At this time of year, we give gifts to express our love. So let our offering today be a sign of your love for God and those in God's world who need our love to brighten dark days and difficult times.

#### **Offertory**

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

VU #55v. 4

#### **\*Presentation of Offering**

## **\*Offertory Prayer**

**God of love and joy, God of peace and hope, we are so grateful for these Advent gifts. They bring comfort and courage even in the most challenging times. Receive our gifts as tokens of our love. Bless them with your grace so that they will bring love to those who need it. Bless our lives, too, so we will shine with your love, blessing others in the name of Jesus, our friend and Guide. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you;

and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

### **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her

old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

## **Anthem**

## **Sermon**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

Spirit of Hope,  
whenever the world seems confusing and bleak,  
you pierce the darkness with light, bringing hope and vision for  
the way ahead.

This has been a difficult and confusing year of pandemic,  
and so we thank you for lessons learned and changes of heart,  
for new discoveries and hope restored.

As nature around us prepares for the long sleep of winter,  
we pray for those who are ill or dying,  
and for those who are bereaved or feel any burden of loss.

*silence is kept*

O God, reach out to all of us in Christ,  
and give us hope for the living of these days.

O God of Peace,  
within our lives and relationships, and in communities around the  
world, there is conflict and antagonism, mistrust and resentment.

We pray for all places where violence has done its worst,  
where cruelty and suspicion appear to win the day,

and where the vulnerable live in fear and despair.

*Silence is kept*

O God, reach out to all of us in Christ,  
and give us peace in these times.

O Creator of Joy,  
we thank you for moments of joy and celebration in our lives,  
for pleasure given and received,  
for quiet times spent in reflection and remembering,  
and for happy gatherings, even if they had to be small.  
In these colder, darker days,  
we remember those who feel left out or neglected,  
those who have found the months of pandemic restrictions a  
heavy burden, and those we find difficult to love, even at a  
distance.

*Silence is kept*

Be their light and their warmth,  
O God, reach out to all of us in Christ,  
and give us joy to share in the days ahead.

O Love Come Down at Christmas,  
you call us to live in communion with you and one another.  
You form us into families, circles of friendship and communities.  
Today we pray for our family members, whether we're close or  
estranged, for our friends, whether nearby or far away,  
and for neighbours who share our community, like minded or not.

*Silence is kept*

Help us express both our love and concern in gentle words and  
kind actions. O God, reach out to all of us in Christ,

and strengthen our love for you and for one another. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Responding to the Word**

**\*Hymn**

“O Ancient Love”

VU #17

**\*Blessing**

Go forth, rejoicing always in the gift of God's love. Wherever you go, share that gift with generosity and compassion. And may you go with joy in your heart, blessed by God, who delights in you, who comes as joy to the world, and breathes a song into your soul. Amen.

**Postlude**

**\*Please stand as you are able.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Presbyterian Church in Canada; Worship Planner, 4th Sunday in Advent.