



UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

Office: (306) 752-2288 Email: melfortuc@sasktel.net

Website: www.melfortunitedchurch.com

Worship Time: 10:30 AM

Ministers: All of us

Lead Minister: Emmanuel Menyereye

Music: Tracey Smetaniuk

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Denise Todosichuk

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter: Dorothy Busby

Scripture Readers: Yvonne Stevenson, Eileen Brooks

ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 22, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A
(SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM)

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

As we gather for worship today we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANNIVERSARIES & CONCERNS:

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Instead of waiting for presents and Christmas treats,

we choose to wait on God.

Instead of the way of consumerism, capitalism, and individualism,

we choose to seek a better way,

instead of fear, hate, and complacency,

we choose to be courageous.

Instead of being bound by the pressures and expectations of traditions

we choose to trust in God.

Instead of everything else,

we choose to worship.

Come let us worship.

HYMN (VU 9) *“People, look east”*

OPENING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

Restore us, O God,

let your face shine on us.

As you have led Joseph, lead us.

**As you have restored those who have been broken by the
cruelty of the world, restore us.**

**As you have shined on our ancestors,
shine on us, so that we may be saved.**

Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: LOVE

(Light the first three Purple and Pink candles)

In this season of expectant waiting, we hold our breath.

We yearn for love that makes us whole.

When we feel lonely, when we feel alone, when we feel
abandoned, when we don't feel lovely, when we know not where to
turn, when we despair,

God settles into our hearts, loving.

On that foundation, on that potential, on that created reality within,
we trust with growing confidence.

Into the vacuum of loneliness, love seeps; into the ugliness of
abandonment, love caresses and coaxes; into the depths of
despair, divine love fills to overflowing,

**as the flame of love is gifted from the One who
transforms.**

(The fourth Advent candle is lit).

Sung Response (VU 6) *“A candle is burning”* - verses 1-4

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:

God of waiting, God of birth, we watch in fear for your coming;

scared of the pain and risk, the struggle of new life emerging and our own capacity to bear it. God of waiting,

wait with us.

God of the future, we watch in hope for your coming; anticipating an unknown future, uncertain of the unnamed reality, not sure of the form it will take, God of waiting,

wait with us.

God of love and God of celebration, we watch in joy for your coming; expectant with promises of freedom, eager for new possibilities, delighting in the gift of birth. God of waiting,

wait with us.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Through Prophet Isaiah God says,

“...I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you” (*Isaiah 43:1-2*).

This is our assurance that God waits and is with us always.

Thanks be to God!

PRAYER RESPONSE (MV 99) *“Stand, O stand firm”*

CHOIR ANTHEM *“Celebrate this Christmas Day”*

- Ciereau/Liebergen

WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD TO US

ESPECIALLY FOR THE CHILDREN:

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

(see insert)

HYMN (VU 644) *“I was there to hear your borning cry”*

MINUTE FOR MISSION:

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

- RESPONSORIAL READING: PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19
(VU p.794 Part One):
Shine forth and save us.
- HEBREW READING: ISAIAH 7:1-7:
The sign of Emmanuel.
- GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 1:18-25:
Joseph's dream.

SERMON:

OUR RESPONSE

OFFERING:

OFFERTORY HYMN (VU 55)

"In the bleak midwinter" - verse 4

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Loving God, we would dedicate these gifts of money and discipleship to your purposes in this world, re-gifting your gifts you have given to us in order to further your dream of love.

We also would dedicate all the other giving that we do at this time of year: gifts to family and friends, but also responses to at least some of all those letters that come, asking for support to alleviate hunger, to assist in refugee sponsorship, to care for the environment, to aid democracy, to help in recovery from natural disasters, and more.

Our gifts, as we are able to give them, may seem small and even diluted among the many needs, but we ask you, Gracious God, may each gift, no matter the size, Engender warmth and hope. Amen.

[Written by David Lander, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019-2020 Year A Gathering, page 35].

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

God of love, lover of creation, lover of all humankind, we praise and adore you. You are the Source of our life. You have created us to know you and love you, and today, we praise and thank you for all the ways you have taken to convince us of your love.

Thank you for the signs of your love in the workings of the universe, and in the faiths of humankind. Thank you, above all, that you humbled yourself to be one of us to convince us of your love. Thank you for everything that Jesus said and did to show what a human life can be when you are fully in it - from birth to death, from cradle to cross. Thank you, that before we knew you, while we were yet sinners, resisting your law and your love, Christ died for us. Thank you that Jesus, like us, did not come from nowhere but from a family, a tradition, and a people where you were loved and known. Thank you, also, for people and traditions that have shaped, loved us, made us what we are and tried to give us confidence to love.

We confess that in spite of everything you have done to convince us of your love, we resist you so strongly, so deeply. Dismantle our resistance to your love. Melt the ice of our distrust. Turn us toward you and each other. Help us to put you first in all our decisions. Make us trustworthy, faithful, and true.

With confidence that you love us and cherish us, we pray for others whom you love:

We pray for all who have been so hurt, oppressed, or abused that they cannot believe they are lovable or trust in other people's love. Give them hope and heal their wounds. Give patience, wisdom, and skill to social workers, health workers, teachers, and volunteers who try to prevent abuse and to build trust as agents of community care.

We pray for the church throughout the world and for this congregation. Make every church a safe and trustworthy community where people can rely on one another and grow in faith and love. Protect us against breaches of trust and every kind of abuse.

We pray for our world. Curb the violence that springs from failure to love and destroys love and trust. Build love and respect for all. Hear our prayers for particular people who need love and care, especially... *(Please mention them aloud or silently.)*

Living God, draw together our prayers, silent and spoken, as we show our trust in your love by joining all your church in the prayer of Jesus:

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

SENDING FORTH

HYMN (VU 30) *"Hail to God's own anointed"*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:

Go out, go out through the gates.

Prepare a way for the people.

Build up, build up a highway and
clear it of stones.

Hoist a signal to all earth's peoples.

Proclaim the Living God's deliverance
to earth's farthest bounds.

And may the Living God strengthen,
protect, and guide you with peace and love
now and forever. **Amen.**

CHORAL BLESSING *"My Peace"* - K. Routledge

PRAYER RESOURCES:

**Seasons of the Spirit – SeasonsFUSION, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019-2020; Candles and Conifers, Resources for All Saints' and Advent; Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Liturgies and Prayers for Public Worship; The United Church of Canada Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019-2020 Year A Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission.*

CHRISTMAS EVE READINGS:

*Psalm 96; Isaiah 9:2-7;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20).*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome:

Welcome to worship here today. Whether you are worshipping with us today for the first time or you have been here before or longer than you can remember, you are welcome to be here and to participate however you feel comfortable. Sometimes you may be invited to stand and you want to stay sitting, or you might feel comfortable standing but no one else is. Do what feels right and comfortable for you.

We each bring something of ourselves to worship, and it enhances the experience for each of us. Regardless of your age, stage, gender, sexual identity, or how great or small you feel your faith is, God, through us, welcomes you to worship.

Please remember to sign our guest book at the entrance of the church, and stay back for a cup of coffee and conversation at the CE Centre immediately following the service.

THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH

December 24th

@ 7 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Rev. Emmanuel's Office Hours & Contact Information

Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Office Number: 306.752.4312 Cell Number: 306.930.4093

For emergency pastoral care call 306.930.4093

Confirmation / Transfer or Applying for Membership

If you want your child to be confirmed or you wish to transfer or apply for membership in our church, please contact the church office or a member of the Membership Committee.

Changes to Contact Information

If you've changed your address or phone number please advise the Church Office so that we can keep your information current.

Thank you!

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed from December 24th to January, 1st. Rev. Emmanuel is taking study leave over the holidays and is back to the office on January 5th. 2019 donations will still be accepted during this time. You can drop the donations in my mailbox or mail them to Box 1064. I will periodically check the voicemail and email over the holidays if you have any pressing concerns. For pastoral care emergencies, Rev. Emmanuel will be able to be reached on his cell at 306-930-4093.

Offering Envelopes

The offering envelope packages for 2020 are on the table in the CE foyer.

UCW Annual Report & Annual Congregational Report

If you have a submission/report for either of the 2019 Annual Reports please email or drop it off at the church office by Thursday, January 2nd, 2020.

Stewardship Seconds

God gives us glorious, perplexing, unbelievably wonderful gifts! Stewards recognize them for what they are—and give God the best they have to offer in return.