

# St. John's Anglican Church

46 Ridout Street West, Tillsonburg ON N4G 5L8

*Rector:*

*Deacon:*

*Honorary Assistant:*

*Choir Director/Organist:*

*The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick*

*The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens*

*The Rev'd. Fr. David Joyce*

*Joanne Smith*

## *THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT*



**Order of Service  
December 21, 2025**

**A Celebration  
of the Holy Eucharist**



# *LOVE*

*Book of Alternative Services  
of the Anglican Church of Canada—1992*



## **CELEBRANT**

The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick

## **DEACON**

The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens

## **LAY READER**

Elizabeth Rolls

## **CHOIR DIRECTOR/ORGANIST**

Joanne Smith

## **AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNICIANS**

Ian McDowell/Frank Van Heck

## **OPENING HYMN**

When the King Shall Come Again (109)

## **GREETING/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Birthday and Anniversaries up until the end of the year.

### **Birthdays**

Kathleen Balega, Ian McDowell, Janet Booker,  
Christine Mulholland, Dean Symons, Frank Mattan,  
Don Minor, Brenda Howse, Dale Howse, Millie Heimbecker.

### **Anniversaries**

Frank and Judy Mattan

# Lighting of the Advent Candle

## The Fourth Candle (Candle of Love)

**Lighting the Candle today: Carole McNeely and Pat Dalton**

**Leader:** Last Sunday we lit the candle of JOY. We light it again, along with the candles of HOPE and PEACE as we remember that Christ will come again and bring us everlasting PEACE and JOY.

*(Light the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy)*

**Leader continues:**

The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of LOVE. Its light is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us.

Jesus shows us God's perfect LOVE. He is God's LOVE in human form. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." LOVE is patient, LOVE is kind and envies no one. LOVE is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. LOVE is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that LOVE cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. LOVE never ends.

We light this candle today to remind us of how God's perfect LOVE is found in Jesus.

*(Light the fourth candle, Love)*

## **PRAYER (All):**

**Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Help us to hear and do Your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

## **HYMN**

Hope Is a Star (NB 35 verses 1, 2, 3, 4)

## **The Gathering of the Community**

*All stand. The presiding celebrant greets the community*

**Celebrant:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the love of God,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
Be with you all.

**People:** And also with you:

*The following prayer may be said.*

## **Collect for Purity**

**Celebrant:** Almighty God,  
**All:** to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hidden.  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

**Celebrant:** Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace,  
to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour,  
now fill us with your grace,  
that we in all things may embrace your will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Collect for Advent

**Celebrant:** Almighty God,  
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and put on the armour of light,  
now in the time of this mortal life  
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility,  
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty  
to judge both the living and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Trisagion (sung)

Holy God,  
holy and mighty,  
holy immortal one,  
have mercy on us.

*Please be seated for the readings.*

## THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

### A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Read by Darryl Carter

**A**gain the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." (*ISAIAH 7:10-16*)

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 80:1-7, 16-18

Elizabeth Rolls



**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance,  
and we shall be saved.

**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?  
You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

You have made us the derision of our neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand,  
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

And so will we never turn away from you;  
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

## The second reading is from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

Read by Gloria Aykroyd

**P**aul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (*ROMANS 1:1-7*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

*Please stand for the Gospel Gradual Hymn.*

### Gospel Gradual Hymn

Hark, a Herald Voice Is Sounding (108)

Verses 1 & 2

### The Holy Gospel

The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens

**Reader:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Reader:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**People:** Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



**N**ow the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

*(MATTHEW 1:18-25)*

The Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **Gospel Gradual Hymn Continues**

Hark, a Herald Voice Is Sounding (108)

Verses 3-5

## **THE HOMILY**

The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick

## **Anthem**

Come to the Light *by Joseph Martin*

*Please stand for the Apostles' Creed*

## **The Apostles' Creed**

*The celebrant may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.*

*Celebrant:* Let us confess our faith, as we say,

*All:* **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
he was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
and born of the virgin Mary,  
he suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
He will come again  
to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Elizabeth Rolls

**I**n our prayer cycle today, we pray for the following Parish families:  
George and Lillian McCune, Ian and Nancy McDowell, Nancy McGuire,  
Ross and Betty Anne McNeil, Don and Linda Minor.

**A**nd at this time, we keep in our prayers, all those who are sick and bereaved and their families. Including: Mary Jean, Elaine and Dean, Lynda and Derrell, Gary, Lori, Rayburn, Joan, Tanya, Marg, Gladys, Allan, Laurel, Pauline, Sue, Ann, Reg, Jim, Nathalie, Marilynne, Judy, Ada, Pat and Ted, Michelle, James, Keith and Joan, Holden, Monica and Marley.

**I**n the Diocese of Huron, we pray for the Parishes of the Circle of Faith:  
St. Matthew's, Windsor; Trivitt Memorial, Exeter; St. George's, Goderich;  
Christ Church, Port Albert.

**T**oday we pray for Dorothy Watts, who has donated the altar flowers  
to the Glory of God and in loving memory of her husband, Wray Watts, and their  
daughters Jennifer and Joanne.

## POINSETTIA DONATIONS - CHRISTMAS 2025

Let us thank God for the beautiful poinsettias in our church today, donated in celebration of the birth of Christ by the following members of St. John's Parish Church Family:

- \* Gloria and Bob Aykroyd in thanksgiving of God's blessings.
- \* The Byrnes family in Celebration of The Birth of Christ for all.
- \* The Chevers family prays for continued blessings of health, happiness, peace and love in our lives.
- \* Pat and Dave Dalton in memory of Pat's mom, Dorothy White.
- \* Millie Heimbecker to Joseph Hart, "forever in my loving memory".
- \* Carol Honsberger in memory of the Rev'd. Fr. Rob Doerr, Elsie & Millford Doerr and Phyllis & John Honsberger.
- \* Fr. David Joyce in loving memory of Patricia.
- \* Paul Peyman and his sister, Carol Peyman, in loving memory of their sister Nancy (Ashton) Peyman and their parents, Arthur and Noreen Peyman.
- \* The Sanderson family in loving memory of Marg Thompson and Wayne Sanderson.
- \* Dale Smith in loving memory of her family, David, Cecile and Colleen.
- \* Paul and Lee Woods in loving memory of their parents, Ruth and Jack Woods and Dorothy and Allan Watt, as well as their brothers, David Woods and Edward Watt.
- \* St. John's ACW in memory of past ACW members.

## The Litany

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying,  
“Lord Jesus, come soon!”)

O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

**Lord Jesus, come soon!**

## Confession and Absolution

*The people are invited to confession in these or similar words.*

**Celebrant:** Dear friends in Christ,  
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy;  
he welcomes sinners  
and invites them to his table.  
Let us confess our sins,  
confident in God's forgiveness.

*Silence is kept.*

**Celebrant:** Most merciful God,  
**People:** we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us,  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

**Celebrant:** Almighty God have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**People:** Amen.

## The Peace

*All stand, and the presiding celebrant addresses the people.*

**Celebrant:** The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People:** And also with you.

*The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord. (You may now shake hands or hug as the spirit moves you.)*

## Offertory Hymn

Herald! Sound the Note of Judgement (111)  
(4 verses)

## Doxology (Sung)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## Prayer Over Gifts

**Celebrant:** Gracious God,  
by the power of the Spirit  
who sanctified the mother of your Son,  
make holy all we offer you this day.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

# THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

## Eucharistic Prayer #3



**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** We lift them to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*Here follows one of the proper prefaces:*

**Celebrant:** Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth;  
we give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
who in the fullness of time came among us in our flesh,  
and opened to us the way of salvation.

Now we watch for the day when he will come again  
in power and great triumph to judge this world,  
that we, without shame or fear,  
may rejoice to behold his appearing.  
Therefore we praise you,  
joining our voices with angels and archangels  
and with all the company of heaven,  
who for ever sing this hymn  
to proclaim the glory of your name.



## **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord (689)**

**People:** Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

*Prayer continues, please kneel or sit, as you are able.*

**Celebrant:** We give thanks to you, Lord our God,  
for the goodness and love  
you have made known to us in creation;  
in calling Israel to be your people;  
in your Word spoken through the prophets;  
and above all in the Word made flesh,  
Jesus your Son.

For in these last days you sent him  
to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.  
In him, you have delivered us from evil,  
and made us worthy to stand before you.  
In him, you have brought us  
out of error into truth,  
out of sin into righteousness,  
out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over  
to suffering and death,  
a death he freely accepted,  
our Lord Jesus Christ took bread;  
and when he had given thanks to you,  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples,  
and said, "Take, eat:  
this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine;  
and when he had given thanks,  
he gave it to them,  
and said, "Drink this, all of you:  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it,  
do this for the remembrance of me."

**All:** Therefore, Father, according to his command,  
**we remember his death,**  
**we proclaim his resurrection,**  
**we await his coming in glory;**

**Celebrant:** and we offer our sacrifice  
of praise and thanksgiving  
to you, Lord of all;  
presenting to you, from your creation,  
this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God,  
to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts,  
that they may be the sacrament  
of the body of Christ  
and his blood of the new covenant.  
Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice,  
that we, made acceptable in him,  
may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time,  
reconcile all things in Christ,  
and make them new,  
and bring us to that city of light  
where you dwell with all your sons and daughters;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
the firstborn of all creation,  
the head of the Church,  
and the author of our salvation;  
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father,  
now and for ever.

**People:**     **Amen.**

*The service continues with the Lord's Prayer*

## **The Lord's Prayer (sung)**

**Celebrant:** As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

**People:** Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **The Breaking of the Bread**

*The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say the following:*

**Celebrant:** God of promise,  
you prepare a banquet for us in your kingdom.

**People:** Happy are those who are called  
To the supper of the Lamb.

## **Jesus, Lamb of God (747)**

**All:** Jesus, Lamb of God,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer, redeemer of the world,  
give us your peace, give us your peace.

## The Communion

*We invite all Christians who are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, who are communicant members of their own church, regardless of their denomination, to join with us in receiving the church's highest offering of praise to God, the Holy Eucharist.*

**Celebrant:** The gifts of God for the People of God.

**People:**     **Thanks be to God.**

*The celebrant and people then receive communion.*

*The sacrament is given with the following words.*

**Celebrant:** The body of Christ (given for you).

The blood of Christ (shed for you).

## Communion Hymns

Love, Joy, Peace.

Words by: Fred Pratt Green, 1979, Music: Meyer's Geistliche Seelenfreud, 1692

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (117)

Heavenly Message (269)

## Prayer after Communion

**Celebrant:** Faithful God,

in this sacrament we receive the promise of salvation.

May we, like the Virgin Mary,

be obedient to your will.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

## **Doxology (said)**

**Celebrant:** Glory to God,

**People:** whose power, working in us,  
can do infinitely more  
than we can ask or imagine.  
Glory to God from generation to generation,  
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## **The Benediction**

**Celebrant:** The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

## **Blessing and Special Hymn**

### **Go Now In Peace**

Go now in peace, never be afraid  
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true  
Know God will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others so all the world can see.

**God will be there watching from above.**

**Go now in peace, in faith and in love.**

### **Recessional Hymn**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (89)

### **Dismissal**