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# St. James'-Rosemount United Church

171 Sherwood Ave. Kitchener ON N2B 1K2

519-742-1002 [www.sjruc.ca](http://www.sjruc.ca)

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God's Compassionate Community Sharing Christian Faith



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**December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve Communion  
Worship Leaders Rev. Chris Fickling and Alison Vicary**

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**Welcome and thank you for sharing in our  
Christmas celebrations!**

Prayers in this service are *adapted from prayers*  
by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org  
and Jan Richardson.

*We acknowledge that we are on the Haldimand Tract,  
traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and  
Haudenosaunee peoples. We acknowledge their care of the  
land and give our thanks for their conservancy.*

Please remain seated for all of the singing  
(except the final carol, Silent Night)

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude     **What is This Lovely Fragrance**     *(Robert Lay)*

Opening Hymn     **In the Darkness Shines**     VU 92  
(tune: Once in Royal David's City)

- 1 *In the darkness shines the splendour  
of the Word who took our flesh,  
welcoming, in love's surrender,  
death's dark shadow at his crèche.  
Bearing every human story,  
Word made flesh reveals his glory.***
- 2 *Light of nations, veiled in history,  
born of woman's flesh and blood,  
calling to the depths of mystery  
restless hearts that seek the good.  
Healing every human story,  
Word made flesh reveals his glory.***
- 3 *Broken bread, sustaining us in sorrow,  
wine poured out to toast our joy;  
exodus and new tomorrow,  
life's full promise to enjoy!  
Gladdening every human story,  
Word made flesh reveals his glory.***

**4 All God's people, sing in jubilation  
of the birth that sets us free,  
telling of the revelation:  
Jesus, God's epiphany.  
Celebrate the human story!  
Word made flesh reveals our glory.**

Opening

One How does a weary world hold onto hope,  
practice peace, spread joy, or know love?

**All: How does a weary world combat cruelty?**

One: How does a weary world shine a light into  
our bleakest night?

**All: We do all these things with God's help.  
For tonight, a child is born in Bethlehem.**

One: Tonight, Christ draws near.

**All: Tonight, we light the Christ Candle.**

One: Tonight, we are not alone.

**All: God is near. Love has drawn close.  
Rejoice! For God loves this weary world,  
loves it into new life.**

Lighting our Advent Wreath – Christ Candle

Sung Blessing **Between Darkness and Light**

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First time: Solo, Second time: All

***Between darkness and light I will always walk;  
and wherever I will go,  
I will open a window of light,  
and plant the seeds of love.***

## **OUR CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

The Story of Christmas – The Prophets

Reflection – *Blessing for Waiting (Richardson)*

Carol            **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming**            VU8

**1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
from tender stem hath sprung,  
of Jesse's lineage coming,  
as seers of old have sung.**

**It came a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter,  
when half spent was the night.**

**2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
the Rose I have in mind,  
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
she bore for us a Saviour  
when half spent was the night.**

The Story of Christmas – The Gospel of John  
Reflection – *How the Light Comes* (Richardson)

Carol    **Of the Father's Love Begotten** v1-3 VU 61

**1 Of the Father's love begotten  
ere the worlds began to be,  
Christ is Alpha and Omega,  
Christ the source, the ending he,  
of the things that are and have been,  
and that future years shall see,  
evermore and evermore.**

**2 At his word the worlds were framed.  
He commanded, it was done:  
heaven and earth and depths of ocean  
in their threefold order one;  
all that grows beneath the shining  
of the moon and burning sun,  
evermore and evermore.**

**3 O that birth for ever blessed!  
When the Virgin, full of grace,  
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,  
bore the Saviour of our race,  
and the babe, the world's redeemer,  
first revealed his sacred face,  
evermore and evermore.**

The Story of Christmas – The Gospel of Luke  
Reflection – *Blessing for the Longest Night* (Richardson)

Carol            **See Amid the Winter's Snow**            VU 76

**1 See amid the winter's snow,  
born for us on earth below,  
see, the tender Lamb appears,  
promised from eternal years.**

Refrain **Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;  
hail, redemption's happy dawn;  
sing through all Jerusalem,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.**

**2 Lo, within a manger lies  
God who built the starry skies,  
who enthroned in height sublime  
sits amid the cherubim.** Refrain

**3 Say, ye holy shepherds, say  
what your joyful news today;  
wherefore have ye left your sheep  
on the lonely mountain steep?** Refrain

**4 'As we watched at dead of night,  
lo, we saw a wondrous light;  
angels singing 'Peace on earth'  
told us of the Saviour's birth.'** Refrain

**5 Sacred infant, all divine,  
what a mighty love was thine,  
thus to come from highest bliss  
down to such a world as this!** Refrain

The Story of Christmas – The Gospel of Luke  
Reflection – *For Joy* (Richardson)

Prayer

One: Loving Christ, Scripture tells us that you were placed in a manger among livestock and hay because there was no place in the guest room.

**All: The space was full, and yet-your parents made room.**

One: Scripture tells us that shepherds arrived from the fields beyond town.

**All: The space was full, and yet-they made room.**

One: Scripture tells us that Mary pondered what the shepherds had to say.

**All: Her heart was full, and yet-she made room.**

One: Too often we assume there is no more room.

**All: Too often we choose exclusion  
and close off our hearts. Self-preservation,  
protection or bad experiences make it easy.  
Teach us how to make room for one  
another. Teach us how to make room for you  
Carve out space in our hearts to love as  
you love, for we do not want to build  
hostility here. Guide us.  
We want to build your promised day.  
Guide us forward together.  
With hope and honesty we pray, Amen.**

Choir Anthem **Sleep, Holy Child** (Gerald F. Manning)

*Sleep, holy child, now hid away,  
from human heartbreak, hate, and strife.  
What will you know of peaceful days  
when even now they stalk your life?*

*Rest, Lamb of God, for comes the day  
when earth will judge you, strike you, scorn.  
Sleep soundly now as Mary smiles  
and holds you in her arms newborn.*

*Shine, fragile life, this starry night,  
in sleep, unknowing, sigh and nod,  
for none on earth can overcome  
the light in you that comes from God.*

Reflection – *For those Who Have Far to Travel* (Richardson)

**SHARING OUR CHRISTMAS JOY**



Invitation to Offering (Donate online at [sjruc.ca](http://sjruc.ca))

\*Offering Response **What Child is This v1,3** VU 74

**1 What child is this, who laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?**

Refrain **This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.** Refrain

Sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup  
During Communion **O Holy Night** Jennifer Carter

*We will share in communion by coming forward, and then please  
receive a candle and make a circle around the Sanctuary.*

Carol

**Silent Night**

VU 67

***Silent night, holy night!***

***All is calm, all is bright***

***Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child***

***Holy Infant so tender and mild***

***Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace***

***Silent night, holy night!***

***Shepherds quake at the sight***

***Glories stream from heaven afar***

***Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!***

***Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born***

***Silent night, holy night!***

***Son of God, love's pure light***

***Radiant beams from Thy holy face***

***With dawn of redeeming grace***

***Jesus Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.***



**In Memory of family & friends flowers have  
been placed in the sanctuary by:**



Janice Bock

Jim & Teresa Carse

Bill & Dianne Dyck

Maize Evers

Beverly Houston

Joan Kaehler

Lynda Perkes

Edna Rhoda

Evelyn Shantz

Neil Taylor

Corinne Wettlaufer

Carol & Christopher Wilson

Tom & Kathy Butt

Suanne Crouse

Nancy Ebel & Family

Dorothy Hibbard

Terry & Sandra Jardine

Norma Mosgrove

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Doug & Alison Riddell

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