

**SEEKING GOD TOGETHER**

**PRELUDE** Cradle Song (Henry G. Ley)

**WELCOME & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE  
PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

*Lighting of the Christ Candle*

*Acknowledgment of Territory/Every Child Matters*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Just as Mary and Joseph  
brought Jesus to the temple—  
**we come to this sanctuary,  
brought together as a faith community—  
a family.**

Just as Simeon followed the call  
of the Holy Spirit—  
**we come to this place,  
looking for the Messiah.**

Just as Anna bore witness  
to Simeon’s prophecy—  
**we come to this place,  
preparing ourselves to share  
the good news of God’s love  
with all the world.**

We come to this place—  
**to worship God!**

**\*HYMN** The First Nowell p 7

**PRAYER FOR RENEWAL**

**Loving God, we thank you for the joy of Christmas  
and the birth of your Son, Jesus. We thank you for  
the peace and hope he brings to the world, to our**

community, to our church and to our own lives.

**We acknowledge that too often we leave Jesus in the  
cradle, forgetting that he and Mary and Joseph will  
soon become refugees, fleeing for their lives to Egypt.**

**We realize that we live our comfortable lives, forgetting  
at times, the migrants and refugees of our own time,  
and those who suffer in this world. Keep us mindful,  
Christmas God, of what we continue to celebrate; your  
presence among us; your gift of love to us, and your call  
to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. God in  
Community, Holy in One, we pray in Jesus’ name.  
Amen.**

**WORDS OF GRACE**

The light of God illuminates the darkness.  
**Thanks be to God!**

**SUNG RESPONSE** Hope Is a Star (Wren/Collier/Holden))  
VU 7

**Christ is the gift that God still imparts;  
our thanks to God is the gift of our hearts.  
When God is a child there’s joy in our song.  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong  
and none shall be afraid.**

**THEME CONVERSATION**

**SONG** The Twelve Days of Christmas

**FINDING GOD TOGETHER**

**SCRIPTURE** Matthew 2:1-12 (p. 2 Pew Bible NT)  
(The visit of the Magi.) Anne Ella-Arnold

**GIFT OF MUSIC** The Birthday of a King (W.H.Neidlinger)  
Bob McRoberts, Bass

**GOSPEL** Luke 2:22-40 (p. 59 Pew Bible NT)  
(Jesus is presented in the temple.)

*Come to the quiet...a time for reflection*

**REFLECTION** The Gifts of Christmas

**\*HYMN** In the Bleak Midwinter p 8

**SHARING GOD’S LOVE**

**OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD**

**OFFERTORY** God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen  
(English Traditional arr. Steve Calderone)

**\*DEDICATION** As We Offer Gifts (Tune: VU 81)

**As we offer gifts most rare  
at your stable crude and bare,  
and we bend our knee before  
Christ, whom heaven and earth adore;  
so our humble hearts we bring,  
Christ, to you our praise we sing.**

**OFFERTORY PRAYER & Prayer Shawl Blessing**

**PRAYER PRELUDE** Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ (J.Bell)  
MV 166

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Son of God among us,  
thank you for every sign showing that you love us.  
(sing twice)

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD'S PRAYER**  
*VU p.910*

**\*HYMN** I Am the Light of the World **p 8**

**\* COMMISSIONING**

And now, let us go into the New Year with confidence,  
for God goes with us...  
**that we may know peace in the midst of turmoil,  
know patience, when challenges come,  
know friendly support in the lonely moments,  
know purpose, when we are drifting,  
and know God's limitless love,  
when we deeply feel the limits of this time and space.**  
Go into the New Year with confidence,  
**for God goes with us!**

**\*SUNG BLESSING** Hope Shines as the Solitary Star  
**Love shines as the solitary star,  
faith is the inner light.**  
**You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,  
and illumine the pathway home. (MV 220)**

**POSTLUDE** Noël (*Louis-Claude Daquin*)



**MISSION AND SERVICE**

2023 in the 'Rear View'



While we look forward to the New Year and all the possibilities for joy and love that 2024 will bring, it's important to reflect on the growth we went through in 2023. Through the peace, pain, joys, and sorrows, it has been a true blessing to see God working through United Church people like you.

Through earthquakes, conflict, economic decline, hunger, and other crises, United Church people are quick to ask, "How can we help?" Thank you for holding our neighbours in tender, warm care throughout a challenging year. You've helped put food on tables, rebuild communities after disaster, provide life-saving medication, educate children, and so much more.

Your gifts continue to help partners as they respond to the immediate needs of people in Canada and around the world. Your gifts provide the light of hope and remove barriers to allow our partners to continue the important work they do. As we reflect on the past year and look forward to a new one, thank you for supporting [Mission and Service](#).



The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.



**AURORA UNITED CHURCH**



An Affirming Congregation

Church Office 905-727-1935  
[www.auroraunitedchurch.ca](http://www.auroraunitedchurch.ca)

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar  
Music Coordinator—Margaret Heney



**CHRISTMAS 1**

**December 31, 2023  
11:00 AM**

*Bring us bright God from yesterday into today and tomorrow. Cheer us with courage. Disturb us with justice. Safeguard us with wisdom. Bless us with wonder. Cherish us with love.*  
*(Ruth Burgess, Iona)*

### **The First Nowell**

The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

**Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.**

They looked up and saw a star,  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. **R**

And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went. **R**

This star drew nigh to the northwest;  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
and there it did both stop and stay,  
right over the place where Jesus lay. **R**

Then entered in those wise men three,  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. **R**

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
and with his blood our life hath bought. **R**

### **In the Bleak Midwinter**

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign; in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day, a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay. Enough for him, whom angels fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore.

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him - give my heart .

### **I Am the Light of the World**

**'I am the light of the world!  
You people come and follow me!'  
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery  
of what you were meant to do and be.**

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home, the work  
of Christmas is begun: **R**

To find the lost and lonely one, to heal the broken soul with love, to feed  
the hungry children with warmth and good food, to feel the earth below,  
the sky above! **R**

To free the prisoner from all chains, to make the powerful care, to rebuild  
the nations with strength of good will, to see God's children everywhere! **R**

To bring hope to every task you do, to dance at a baby's new birth, to make music  
in an old person's heart, and sing to the colours of the earth! **R**