



December 22nd, 2024 9:30 a.m.

Advent 4

Together Toward the Light

Prelude

Annie Schulz

Gathering Thoughts

Mac Plunkett

Call to Worship

Leader: Advent is a time for God's people to reawaken our longings. The Christ candle flame in front of us today calls us to be true to the hopes in our hearts, it calls us to be true seekers of God's peace, it invites us to be devoted to a life of joy, and it assures us that we can know and share the promise of God's love.

**People: God so loved the world
that God gave his one and only son.**

Leader: When we longed for the joyless silence to be broken,

**People: God loved the world, and each of us in it,
and gave his only son.**

Leader: When we knew only darkness,
and longed for the light to shine,

**People: Looking with love at the world,
God gave his only son.**

Leader: When we longed for the peace
that passes understanding,

**All: God so loved the world
that God gave his one and only son.**

Prayer

Good Hope, Deep Peace, and Great Joy are your gifts to us, O God, even in times of weariness, darkness, weakness, carelessness or shallow self-satisfaction. Help us to renew our understanding of the perfect gift of Boundless, Boundary-less Love that we find in Jesus, who leads us to live with grace and generosity through all our days at every age and stage of life, for the glory of your holy loving Name. Amen.

Lighting the Candle of Love ~ Moment of Silent Reflection

Hymn

Love came down at Christmas

HWB #208

Passing of the Peace

Offertory Prayer

Musical Reflection *Helpless and Hungry* Grace Singers

Prayers of the People

Mac Plunkett

Hymn *Hark! The herald angels sing* HWB #201, vv.2,3

Scripture Reading Micah 5:2-5a (OT p.865)

Women's Chorus *The Angel Gabriel Called Mary Blessed*

Scripture Reading Luke 1:39-45 (NT p.57)

Meditation "Love Welcomes" Darrell Winger

Hymn of Response *Helpless and Hungry / What child is this*

*Helpless and hungry, lowly, afraid,
wrapped in the chill of midwinter; comes now among us,
born into poverty's embrace, new life for the world.*

*Refrain: Who is this who lives with the lowly,
sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?
This is Christ, revealed to the world in the eyes of a child,
a child of the poor.*

*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? This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

Benediction

Darrell Winger

Sending Hymn

He Came Down

*He came down that we may have love; (3x)
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have peace; (3x)
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have joy; (3x)
hallelujah forever.*

Postlude

It is good to be together in worship this morning!
The ushers are pleased to help any who need assistance.
[Offering plate is available on table at back of sanctuary]

Coffee Time after the service today

GRACE NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Let's Be Praying

- For Anne D., Dan C., and Reg F. in their health challenges
- For the South Sudanese refugee family waiting to come to Canada through Bridge of Hope
- For those who process grief and other kinds of challenges in this Christmas season
- For Mary K. (St. Catharines) continuing her recovery
- For those traveling over these days of Christmas
- For blessing on Nick and Cathy in their engagement

Sunday December 15th ~ Attendance – 43

Christmas Eve Service, December 24th at 4:00 p.m.

Coffee, Cider and Cookies in the Church Hall after the service

Sunday December 29th

Speaker: Mac Plunkett

Scripture Texts: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148;

Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Coffee Times ~ January 5th, January 19th

♪ Women's Chorus ~ Thursdays on

January 9th, January 23rd at 9:30 a.m.

2024 Offerings: Please submit any 2024 offerings by Sunday, December 29, either at our Sunday service or by e-transfer. Canada Post is alerting us that items put into the mail may not be delivered until sometime in 2025 due to significant backlogs. If you are unable to attend church at this time and not able to do an e-transfer, and still wish to give an offering, please contact Lorraine Sawatzky and arrangements can be made.

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
still nothing is as shining as it should be
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an
uproar of mice – it is the season of their
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves
and through the walls the squirrels
have gnawed their ragged entrances – but it is the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up to the path, to the door. And still I believe you will
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.
Mary Oliver

The 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 that 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.*

Tel: 905-935-6112 Email: gracemennonite@bellnet.ca

677 Niagara Street, St. Catharines

Office Hours: 8:30-2:30 ~ Wednesday, Thursday

www.gracemennonitechurch.com

www.facebook.com/gracemennonitechurchstcatharines

Pastor	Darrell Winger 905-483-2335	Darrell.winger@gmail.com
Worship & Music Associate	Annie Schulz 905-941-5511	annieschulz@yahoo.ca
Office Administrator	Ester Funk	gracemennonite@bellnet.ca
Community Chaplain	Jan Steven 289-990-4839	janscats@gmail.com