

Southminster United Church, Ottawa, Ontario

December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Toller

Director of Music: Sarah Westbrook

Reader: Sandra Black

Prelude:

Welcome and Announcements

Territorial Acknowledgement

*Adapted from a land acknowledgement by Rev. Mitchell Anderson at Golden Ears United Church

Long ago, all of this land was covered by ice

Clothed in a winter without end

But God our Creator brought back the warmth

Pulling back the ice and revealing this land

Plants and animals returned to the land

And it was good

Then God gave to the land a people

And a people to the land

To care for one another

To live together

And in this time, we acknowledge we worship on Turtle Island.

We are on the traditional and unceded land of the Anishnaabe Algonquin people.

We celebrate all who make this place a home

We celebrate the promise of hope

Hope for a future good beyond imagining

When all will share this land together

in hope, peace, joy and love. Amen

Lighting of the Candles

Opening Prayer

Loving and merciful God, we have come together awaiting the birth of peace on earth, goodwill to all people. This we seek and pray for, time and time again. Bless us with your love and grace on this day and forevermore, we pray. Help us to open our hearts to others: family, friends, strangers—neighbours all, even as you welcome us into your loving presence. Help us to give of ourselves, we pray, in new relationships and in old, that we may reflect your love and peace and grace.

Help us to love, cherish, and share, and to be both loving and loved, today, tomorrow, and forever. O come, O come, Emmanuel. Amen.

George Allan, Chatham, Ont.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

During Advent, we have lit candles representing hope, peace and joy. This week we light a candle for love.

Love is a star.

A star that lights our way, even when love is hard.

When we let love light our way, our spaces in the world brighten.

Love is our guiding star.

Hope Is a Star (VU 7)

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.**

Refrain

**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.**

**Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
Giving a promise of safety and worth. *Refrain***

**Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born. *Refrain***

**Love is a flame that burns in our heart,
Jesus has come and will never depart. *Refrain***

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Christmas Pageant

Invitation of Offering

We make our offering today with hopeful hearts, trusting that the Holy One who comes to us will bless our gifts and our lives, to make us signs of hope in the world God loves.

Presentation of the Offering: Grateful - (MV 182)

Refrain

**Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.
Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,**

**joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.**

**You are more than we imagine,
Ancient, Holy, Living Lord.
Even when we doubt your presence
you are faithful to your Word. *Refrain*
May our lives proclaim your justice,
may our voices sing your praise.
May our hands work in your service
to the glory of your name. *Refrain***

Words and music: Tom Tomaszek, 2003; arr. Sarah Hart and Tom Tomaszek, 2003

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Offering Prayer

Holy and Righteous God, we offer our gifts with humble hearts, knowing the needs in your world are great and our gifts alone will never fill that need. We offer our gifts in hope that you will bless them and use them to help fulfil your purpose revealed in Jesus Christ, Saviour of us all. **Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Creator, Source of all Love,
We thank you for your son Jesus.
It is a joy to re-enact his birth
And celebrate his influence on our world.

We are grateful for all those people who try to remind us to live in a good way - parents, teachers, children, coaches, mentors, political leaders.
Are there any special people you feel appreciation for today?

Unfortunately, there are still people hurting in the world.
God, we ask you to comfort them and strengthen them.
Hold them up to the sun and the stars so they can see your radiant light
Like the star that guided the shepherds, and the wise ones so many years ago.
Are there people or situations needing God's attention today?

We need to lift up the Jewish community in Australia, as well as Jews here who continue to experience threats to their lives, Palestinians and Israelis who still live in fear of each other, Ukrainians and Russians who need to be liberated from war, Sudanese people who just want to live in peace

May the story of Jesus live on in our hearts, and may its lessons radiate out to where love is needed. Hear our silent prayers.

Please join me in the words your son taught us to pray,

The Lord's Prayer

Our Mother and 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 who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Go Tell it on the Mountain (VU 43)

Refrain

**Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth! *Refrain***

**Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

Words: John Wesley Work II 1907. Music: African-American spiritual 19th century, arr. United Reformed Church (U.K.)
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Benediction and Sending Forth

Rejoice in God always!
In the excitement of looking forward to Christmas,*
rejoice in God always!
As we search for gifts and plan our celebrations,
rejoice in God always!

As we anticipate sharing time with family and friends again,
rejoice in God always!
In Advent worship and the singing of carols,
rejoice in God always!

May you find our Loving God in the warm hug, in the family memories, in the laughter of a little child, and in hard times shared.

We rejoice in God always. Amen.

David Sparks, Rossland, B.C.

Postlude:

Coffee Time

*Most of the prayers in this service are by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.
Scripture readings are from the New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition) of the Bible.*

**Coffee Host: Donald Tarte/Brian Kinsley
Ushers/Counters: Heather Macfaden/ Paul Mullin**

As the people of Southminster United Church, we affirm and actively support the life experience of all. All persons are invited to take part in every aspect of church life including membership, leadership, celebration of life passages and marriage. We are committed to following Jesus' example as we embrace people of all ages, racialized groups, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, ethnic origins, economic circumstances and differing abilities and challenges in the ministry and life of Southminster United Church.



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