



## Union United Church

### Christmas Newsletter 2021

As I write this it's the final week of the liturgical year. This past Sunday was Reign of Christ or Christ the King Sunday, and the coming Sunday is the first of Advent. Where, o where has the year gone? I can hardly believe it, but in just six weeks Advent, Christmas, and 2021 will all be in the past.

In Luke's gospel (2:19) we hear that Mary *ponders* in her heart what the shepherds report about the message they received from the angel that appeared to them whilst they were in the fields watching their flocks. As I *ponder* the meaning of Christmas I wonder, will it really be over by December 26?

Inasmuch as Christmas is about the birth of the baby Jesus, it will indeed be past. However, if we think about Christmas as a celebration of the birth of the Christ in the heart of each one of us, that is something that we can celebrate every day that we wake up.

The difference between the two is that, in the first instance, we celebrate the divine spirit entering into matter and flesh in a particular person: Jesus, while, in the second instance, we celebrate the divine spirit entering into matter and flesh in every person. In Genesis we read that we are created in God's image, and that humankind did not become living beings until the *Ruach* (a Hebrew word that can be translated as wind, breath, or spirit) of God was breathed into the nostrils of humankind. As living beings, I think of each and every one of you as containing a spark of the divine; a part of God's spirit.

Just to carry this a step further, when we call Jesus the Christ, what we are saying is that Jesus is God's anointed one: 'Christ' (Greek) and 'Messiah' (Hebrew) literally mean 'anointed,' specifically God's anointed. I think of each of us as God's anointed, and that would mean that I think of each of us as God's Messiah, or God's Christ. What would it mean for us if we all thought of ourselves as God's Christ? Would we act differently? How so? What would it mean for us if we all thought of all others as God's Christ? Would we treat one another differently? I suspect we would and that, as a result, we would see God's Dominion come to full realization.

My Christmas wish this year is that each of you would see the Christ; the divine in yourselves and in one another; and may it be a most blessed Christmas for all.

Peace and Blessings

Rev. Mark



## Upcoming worship services:



### Worship 9:45 a.m.

November 28 Advent 1

December 5 Advent 2

December 12 Advent 3

December 19 Advent 4 Communion Service

December 24 Christmas Eve Service 7 p.m.

(Christmas Eve service will have limited in-person capacity, so come early for a seat)

December 26 Christmas 1

### All services are in-person or on zoom.

If you have lost your zoom link, please let Rev. Mark know so he can resend it to you.

revcmarkperry@gmail.com

The Christmas Eve service will be a separate link which Mark will send out closer to the date.

## Offering / donations

Those wishing to mail your offering or donation the address is:

Union United Church

c/o Berniece Lidster

46810 Martyn Line

Sparta, ON N0L 2H0

If you prefer to donate your offering electronically, click on the [donate now](#) Dec. 28 is the deadline for 2021 local giving. Dec.14 is the deadline for M&S donations so it can be sent to Toronto before Christmas.

**Sunday School** continues to meet on Zoom each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. to 9:20. Becki or Valerie make craft deliveries to each family by Saturday. If you have family members or friends whose children would like to join the Sunday School zoom, please let Becki or Valerie know so they can deliver craft supplies.



[Join Zoom Meeting \(Sunday School \)](#)

## Unified Board Meetings in 2022 on zoom

January 19 7 p.m.

April 20 7 p.m.

June 15 7 p.m.

Sept. 21 7 p.m.

Nov 16 7 p.m.

Feb 6 Congregational Annual meeting

Mark will send out zoom links closer to the meeting dates.

## Outreach for December

Even though we will not have a White Gift service this year, we are still collecting toys or food items for Christmas Care. If you wish to leave items at the Church, please bring them on November 28 or December 5 so they may be delivered to Christmas Care prior to their delivery dates. Or, you may mail a cheque to: Christmas Care, Elgin Centre, 417 Wellington Street, St. Thomas, ON N5R 5J5



Photo credit: Kara Gebhardt, Lightsock.com

During Advent, Christians light candles weekly. They symbolize hope, peace, joy and love. The idea is that Jesus' spirit is born in us when we live out these values. Through M&S, InDwell, Christmas Shoppe, Christmas Care, Gifts with Vision and the Food Bank, we shine Christ's light of hope, peace, joy and love. There are several online Gifts with Vision this year that are directly related to challenges surrounding COVID-19. In addition to being able to purchase [vaccines](#) for people in the Global South and East, there are Gifts to help people who have [lost work](#) because of the pandemic, as well as supporting our partners across the world who are dealing with the [effects of COVID-19](#) on their communities.

This Christmas, make a gift through M&S or to local agencies. Help transform and save lives, inspire meaning and purpose and build a better world.

Let your unique light shine, and have a blessed Christmas.

### **British Columbia Disaster Relief**

In a letter released by Treena Duncan, the Executive Minister of Pacific Mountain Regional Council (of The United Church of Canada), the following was offered:

"Many people have been inquiring about how to help; another example of faith in action! Generally speaking, organizations such as the Red Cross are best positioned to get the kind of support needed into the community quickly and effectively. However, Kamloops United and Trinity United in Abbotsford are willing to receive donations which will be used to offer relief through their community ministries.

The following links were provided:

Kamloops United Church: Assistance for those who have been evacuated to Kamloops

- By cheque made out to "Kamloops United Church"
- By e-transfer by calling the church office +1-250-372-3020
- [Online at Canada Helps Kamloops United Church](#)

(Select 5. General Fund; Note "Flood Relief")



Jesus came bringing us hope,  
Jesus came bringing us peace,  
Jesus came bringing us joy,  
Jesus came bringing us love,  
Hallelujah forever more.

(Words: Traditional song, Cameroon; arr. More Voices 2007)