



Mount Royal United Church

"At Mount Royal United Church, our mission is to serve God; living our faith inside and outside these walls and nurturing each individual on their faith journey."

December 18th, 2022. Advent— Love (Seeking Home) Sunday

Congregational responses are in bold.

(*) Indicates Standing.

We Come Together

Prelude... (*this is an opportunity for us to appreciate the gift of music and prepare our hearts for worship*)

Greeting

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land upon which we live, work, worship and play is the unceded territory of the Wabanaki people; in this area they are they Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may the gifts of this season, hope, peace, joy and love, guide us into reconciliation with all Indigenous peoples.

Announcements

Candle Lighting:

One: God's Love is like an open door.

Susan: God's Love is the light that guides us home.

One: God's Love is a table with room for you.

Susan: God's Love is space made in our hearts for another.

One: God's Love is a home for you and for me,

Susan: for neighbors and strangers, for family and friends.

One: God's Love is a home for all.

Susan: Today we light the candle of love to remind us of this truth.

One: May it burn brightly here and even brighter in our hearts.

Amen.

***Hymn:** "Hope Is a Star"

VU# 7

Call to Worship:

One: We come seeking,

All: a deeper faith and a place to belong.

One: We come seeking,

All: life that overflows with love and light.

One: We come seeking,

All: the freedom to be ourselves, and the courage to love as Jesus has taught us to love.

One: We are seeking but here in this space,

All: we are found.

One: Take a deep breath, this is your sanctuary.

All: Together, we worship in love.

Opening Prayer: (unison)

Holy One, our worship is an act of love, seeking You in every corner of our living. As we bow our heads, we close our eyes, and we search. We search for a sense of belonging, we long to feel Your Love surrounding and enfolding us, and we long to know that when we knock, You will find us. As we worship this morning, we give You thanks for the ones who have been there when we needed them. For the ones who have blessed us with joy, and for the ones who have opened for us a doorway into Your Love, where all of us are welcomed home. Amen.

***Hymn: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

VU#333

Personal Prayer: "Where Two or Three..." X 2

MV#14

(Concluded as we pray together the Lord's Prayer)

Children's Learning Time

Children's Prayer:

Your gift of love is in our hearts, that we can always share. It's in our world and in our thoughts, and with us deep in prayer. As we walk within this week, dear God, allow that love to show, all the world that we are yours, and in your love we grow. Amen.

***Hymn: "Once in Royal David's City"**

VU# 62

We Listen to the Word

Prayer for Illumination:

Reader: Val T.

Gracious and Loving God, we come to Your Word today hoping that it will be an open door, like Elizabeth welcoming Mary, a home for us all. We want to fall into it, we want to find our sanctuary in it, we want to breathe easier just from hearing these words. Today grant us a deeper understand of Your Love through this reading and my Your Love encircle us all. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Scripture Lesson: *Luke 1: 39-55*

Response:

One: This Word is the love of our hearts,

All: **and a home for us all. Amen.**

Sermon "The Staircase"

Anthem "Chosen Home"

Prayers of the People

We Respond to the Word

Invitation to the Offering:

Elizabeth offers her home. She offers her arms. She offers her love. She offers everything she has when Mary shows up at the door. Part of our call as people of faith is to give when and where we can. So today we are invited to be like Elizabeth, opening our hearts and giving generously, trusting that God will take these gifts and use them to build a better world and community here in this place.

Offertory Prayer: (*unison*)

Good and Gracious God, in the offering of our hearts this day, we pray that You take and bless our gifts. May they be a welcome home for those still searching, may they build Your Kingdom for those longing for peace and may they stir in us a passion for opening every door we can into the hearts of all Your children. With these gifts today, we also offer these handwarmers to your children who are looking

in from the outside. May they warm the receiver and may Your Spirit continue to walk with them in Love. In the tender name of Your Son Jesus, we pray. Amen.

*Hymn: "All Earth is Waiting" VU#5

***Our Candle of Hope, Peace and Joy remain.**

***Benediction:**

Friends, as we leave this place love goes with us:
tending our hearts,
guiding our feet,
blessing our path,
and welcoming us home
at the side of Christ's manger. Amen.

***Choral Benediction** "May God's Sheltering Wings" MV#214

Postlude

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday, 9am – 2pm; Friday
9am -12pm

Screen operators for the coming weeks:

Dec 18 Elizabeth **Dec 21** Tracy & Stephen **Dec 24 7pm** Erik
Jan 1 Tracy

Ushers for the coming weeks:

Dec 18 Valerie B. & John B. **Dec 24 4pm** Katelyn & Colin
Dec 24 7pm Jennifer & Nick **Jan. 1** Sue R. & John B.

This Week's Events: Dec 19th – Dec 25th

Monday	9:30am	Tai Chi	Church Hall
Tuesday	10:00am	Craft Group	Church Hall
Wednesday	9:30am	Tai Chi	Church Hall
	7:00pm	Blue Christmas Service	Sanctuary
Saturday	4:00pm	Children's Christmas Eve	Church Hall
Saturday	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service	Church Hall
Sunday	Merry Christmas!!!		

Announcements

Grocery Gift Cards - are available! Please contact the office to purchase. Thank you for supporting this important fundraiser.

Winter item collection during Advent - We are collecting socks, mitts, handwarmers and hats to donate to Ensemble. Each Sunday is a different item: Dec. 18 – Socks. If you can't make it to the Sunday service; donations can be dropped off during regular office hours. *Together we can make a difference!*



Holiday Office Hours – Office closes at noon on Dec. 23rd and Dec. 30th. Office is closed Dec. 26th, Dec. 27th and Jan. 2nd. Open all other weekdays from 9am- 12pm.

Blue Christmas – Dec. 21 @ 7pm. A quiet service of reflection as we acknowledge that even though this is a season of celebration not all may be right in our lives as we continue to find ourselves separated by illness, grieving various losses, and still experiencing the ups and downs of what it is to be human.

Memorial Tree Dedication

For:

In loving memory of Laurie Leblanc

In loving memory of June Robinson

By:

Joe Robinson

Joe Robinson

Council Highlights: CORRESPONDENCE: "Thank You" card from the Art Club thanking Mount Royal. A thank you letter was received from the Inspiration Café and the Peter McKee food bank for the recent donation. **REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REPORT:** The 2023 budget will be brought to the January council meeting for review. **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:** No chair of this committee. Discussion about what positions are available for 2023. **MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL:** Job descriptions for Director of Music and Minister were submitted. Remote work in the event of weather closures, illness, etc. was discussed. 2023 Cost of living increases recommended by UCC were approved which are: 1. 3.4% COL salary increase 2. Continuous education and learning resource \$1543 3. Travel : \$0.55 per km 4. Visiting Ministry Personnel = \$232 daily rate. **PASTORAL CARE:** Pastoral Care worked together with UCW to organise another successful year of cookie and holiday card delivery. **UCW/CRAFT GROUP:** Continue to meet regularly. **WORSHIP COMMITTEE:** Worship committee is looking forward to upcoming Blue Christmas, Christmas eve services and Epiphany Sunday. **MINISTERS REPORT:** Rev Scott Stuart submitted a written report outlining his activities since the last council meeting. Shared how the donation of winter items were extremely well received at Ensemble. **FUNDY ST. LAWRENCE DAWNING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL:** The annual meeting will be held in Charlottetown in 2023. Our region representative and the minister will both attend. **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE:** The mini split heat pumps were successfully installed, the Mount Royal entrance step has been replaced and options were presented for the lighting project. **COMMUNICATIONS:** Recent communications activity include Facebook posts, Christmas letter, virtual voices and website updates. **FUNDRAISING/ TRUSTEES:** Sobey's cards are selling well. Potential fundraisers (chilli, auctions, dinners). Sears will no longer be our insurance provider as we are now dealing directly with the Hub Insurance. **CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** Kids Korner will resume every other Sunday beginning mid January 2023. **OUTREACH:** White Gift raised close to 2300 dollars. \$1000 of gift cards will be given to Bessborough school, \$500 for Hillcrest School and \$500 for St. Bernadette. The remainder will stay at the church for donations arising through the holiday season. **NEW BUSINESS:** Visioning Committee recommendations: document to prioritize recommendations, set timelines, costs, responsibility etc. was discussed. **Living in Transformative Change Zoom Conversation:** This January 15, 2023 event was discussed and will be shared early in the new year. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** January 13th 2023 at 7:00pm.

Sharing the Light of Christ

Draw me to the warmth of your light, O God.
Warm my spirit by your soft but mighty glow.
Illumine my life's Mission & Service.
Bless all who receive my gift of love.
Bless all whose love I receive.
Fill me with gratitude for every
sign of hope,
movement toward peace,
expression of joy,
and impulse to love.
Amen.

—A prayer for Advent 4, "Love" Sunday

