



December 15, 2024
Advent Three – Joy

Gower Street United Church is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of race, creed, age, ability, cultural background, or sexual orientation.



We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we live, work and worship as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Kaimuki (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

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Bold indicates unison.
Rise in body and spirit as you prefer.
The projected text in white is a communal response.

**Today's bulleting is dedicated to the loving memory of The Brookings and Smith Families
from Cheryl Conway.**

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Voluntary: Variations 2,3 and 4 on "In dulci jubilo" Denis Bédard

Introit: VU 22 Wait for the Lord

We sing: VU 6 A Candle is Burning (v. 1,2 &3) Away in a Manger

Words of Welcome:

No matter who you are, where you come from, how you come to be here, what you believe or what you are questioning, you are welcome in fullness.

Gathering Words:

Joy, in the midst of sadness—is such a thing possible?

We come weary but full of hope that this is true. We come full of love for one another and God.

Joy, even when things are hard, this joy we seek today.

We gather seeking God with-Us.

Let us pray for Emmanuel, for joy, for wisdom to find those glimmers of joy like stars in the night sky.

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

The Butt Family

We sing: VU 7 Hope Is a Star (v. 3)

Moon Beams

On this third Sunday of Advent, we come with joy as a community of faith.

We watch, we wait, we wonder.

May we bask in the joyful moments that are ours when we take time to notice joy....

-in the beauty of nature, in the beauty of a single snowflake with its intricate, always-unique pattern,

-or in the many snowflakes that comprise the softly falling snow,

-or in the play and laughter of children.

We embrace joy as we anticipate the birth of Jesus, Mary's new boy.

As we light the third candle in our wreath, we take a moment to breathe in the Spirit of joy. (*Take a breath, then light the candle.*)

Advent Response: We Wait in Hope

Joel Ramsey

Gathering Prayer:

God of Joy, on this third Sunday of Advent,

may we bask in the joy of the season, the joy we find in relationships, the joy of gathering in our community of faith and being with those we love, and the joy that awaits us in the coming of Jesus.

Amen.

Exploring Advent: VU 340 Jesus, Friend of Little Children (vs. 1 & 2)

Farnham

LISTENING TO THE STORY

We sing: VU 29 Hark! The Glad Sound

Richmond

Prayer for Illumination:

O God of Joy, **bless this reading that it may inspire us today as we struggle to believe in an unbelieving world. Strengthen us as we take these words into our homes, workplaces, and schools, that we may find ways to witness for you. Amen.**

Responsive Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: VU p.880

Isaiah 12:1a-6 - Proclaim God's deeds to the nations.

A reading from the Gospel: Luke 3: 7-18

John warns the crowds, "You brood of vipers!"

Gospel Response: Alleluia

Norah Duncan

Anthem: Lo, How A Rose E're Blooming

trad. German Melody
harm. Praetorius

Meditation

We sing: VU 4 God of All Places

Whittlesey

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND SHARING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OUR MINISTRY

The offering plates are located near the sanctuary doors. You are invited to place your offerings there when you arrive or leave. You can also scan the QR code on our bulletin to donate via our website.

Advent Unwrapped

Gathering our Gifts:

The kin-dom comes closer through our thoughts, our prayerful action, and our considerate deeds. One way of finding the kin-dom is through our giving of time, talents and money. May our giving be an agent of hope in your world; lifting people up in joy so that they can experience an abundant future.

We sing: VU 541 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Old 100th

Offering Prayer:

So often, when we present our offerings to you, O God, we do so out of a sense of duty and of responsibility.

On this Sunday of Joy, however, we want to celebrate how you bless us each day.

By sharing our abundance—no matter how insignificant it may seem to us—our spirits dance in celebration of how your purpose, through what we give, changes lives. Bless us by changing our lives too. Amen.

Prayers for the World and the Prayer of Jesus

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

We sing: VU 18 There's a Voice in the Wilderness

Ascension(Bancroft)

We go out into the world:

Surely God is our joy.

We wait in joy.

For God is our strength and our might.

We watch in joy.

**We give thanks and sing praise to God as we go out into the world.
We wonder in love as we share the Good News with others.
And may the....Amen.**

We sing: VU 420 Go to the World, vs 3

Sine Nominee

Postlude on "Il est né"

Denis Bédard

Worship today was inspired by Gathering, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, 2024/2025, Year C.

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Minister: The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

Youth & Family Minister: The Rev. Rebecca Pike

Minister Emeritus: The Very Rev. Dr. Marion Parody

Organist & Music Ministry: R. Carl Goulding

Custodian: David Noseworthy

Board Chair: Patrick Griffin



What's Up At Gower

Gower Office: The Gower Office will be closed from December 20 until January 2nd. SuAn will check email, drop-offs, and messages once weekly, but the office will not reopen to the public until January 2, 2025.

Bless this Advent: Join Rev. Rebecca for a reflective discussion during the season of Advent. Thursday evenings at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom. Contact Rev. Rebecca to receive the Zoom link.

Advent Pauses: Online throughout Advent, the Ministry Team will offer a reflective time inspired by The Weary World Rejoices from The Everything Happens Project with Kate Bowler. These videos will be posted on Gower's YouTube Channel at 10:00 a.m. on Fridays throughout Advent.

Christmas Donations: If you would like to donate in memory or honour of a loved one this Christmas, please contact SuAn in the office. These will be reported in our Christmas Eve worship bulletin. Information for memorial donations must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, to be printed in the bulletin.

2025 Church Calendars: A limited quantity of United Church of Canada Church Calendars is available from the church office for purchase. The cost for a calendar is \$7.00.

Bridges to Hope: Canned meat is the suggested food item for December. Other non-perishable food items are always welcome and appreciated.

A Quiet Evening of Reflection: The Gower Worship Team will share an online worship on December 21 at 7:00 p.m. on the Gower YouTube channel. This worship is a time for all to pause and reflect on the hustle and bustle of the season and a time of support for those struggling during this time of year.

Bulletin Dedications: The Worship and Sacraments Committee invites members of our faith community to help with the cost of printing weekly bulletins. It costs us approximately \$12.00 to have color-printed bulletin covers. You may dedicate a bulletin of any Sunday in memory of a loved one, in celebration of a significant event, or in celebration of a life's milestone. The name of Memorial/Celebration/Milestone and Donor will

appear in the bulletin on the specified Sunday. Please forward any donations to the church office and contact SuAn, the office administrator, during office hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. via email (gsuc@nl.rogers.com) or phone 709-753-7286 ext. 200.

Coming Up At Gower

Sunday Worship:

December 15: Advent Three

December 22: Advent Four, Christmas Musicale Sunday

Weekly Activities:

Tuesday, December 17:

Gower Youth at 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 18:

Pastoral Care Worship at Lane's Retirement Home at 2:15 p.m.

Gower Bell Choir at 6:30 p.m.

Gower Community Band at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 19:

Pause for Prayer online at 4:30 p.m.

Bless This Advent at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 21:

A Quiet Evening of Reflection Worship Online at 7:00 p.m.



CHRISTMAS EVE
AT GOWER

Worship at 5:30 P.M.

with Communion and special music from Gower Young
People's Choir, Gower Senior Choir & Gower Handbell Choir

Worship will be in person and livestreamed on YouTube

