



**December 22, 2024
Advent Four - Love**

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.

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Christmas Musicale Gower Community Band

1. *O Come, All Ye Faithful / Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*
arranged by Steven Reineke
2. *It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*
arranged by Chris Sharp
3. *Cantique de Noel (O Holy Night)* arranged by Harold L. Walters
4. *The Little Drummer Boy* arranged by James D. Ployhar
5. *And the Mountains Echoed: Gloria!* by Robert Longfield

We sing: VU 62 Once in Royal David's City (v.1 solo) Irby
descant: Cleobury

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:

God's Love is all around us.

God's dreams and vision take root in the mangers of love and compassion.

God's Love breaks down the walls of pride and greed.

As we gather we are reminded that God's love is for all.

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Hawco Family

We sing: VU 7 Hope Is a Star (v. 4)

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we come with love as a community of faith.

We watch, we wait, we wonder.

When we feel God's unfailing love, we are able to give love to—and receive it from—our families, our friends, our community of faith, and, yes, even those we find hard to love. There is enough love for all.

We experience God's love in the greatest gift for all of us, in the birth of Jesus, who is bringing love to the world.

As we light the fourth candle in our wreath, we breathe in the Spirit of love. *(Take a breath, then light the candle.)*

Advent Response: We Wait in Hope Joel Ramsey

Gathering Prayer:

God of love, we give thanks for your unfailing love and for the gift of love in the human relationships that give our lives meaning.

Gracious God, we know that Love is a choice.

Love is less what we feel and more what we do.

An act of love. A labour of love.

We come choosing love when apathy is easier.

May we come to the manger filled with your infinite love. Amen.

Exploring Advent: VU 56 Jesus, Our Brother (v.1 & 6)

Orientis Partibus

LISTENING TO THE STORY

We sing: VU 59 Joy to the World Antioch

Prayer for Illumination:

O God of Love, **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.**

Anthem: Patapan Burgundian tune
arr. Reginald Jacques

A reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: Micah 5:2-5a
Out of Bethlehem in Judea will come a leader.

Anthem: Torches John Joubert

A reading from the Gospel: Luke 1:39-45
Mary visits Elizabeth.

Gospel Response: Alleluia Norah Duncan

Gower Community Band Musical Meditation

1. *Do You Hear What I Hear* arranged by Jerry Nowak
2. *Fantasie Noel* by Douglas Akey

See Hearing and Listening at the end of the bulletin for a message from the band

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 love so that they can experience an abundant future.

We sing: VU 541 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow
Old 100th

Offering Prayer:

On this Sunday when the Advent Candle of Love spreads the warmth of your love, we offer these gifts for your purpose in the world. Bless them as signs of our love for neighbours worldwide. Bless us as a sign of your love cultivated within our hearts, beating to the cadence of right relation within all Creation. Amen.

Bell Choir:

Silent Night (Viola – Jonathan Stevenson)
O Come All Ye Faithful
Carol of the Bells

Prayers for the World and the Prayer of Jesus

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

We sing: VU 36 Angels from the Realms of Glory Regent Square

We go out into the world:

Surely God is our love.

We wait in love.

For God is our strength and our might.

We watch in love.

We give thanks and sing praises 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 43 Go, Tell It on the Mountain Go, Tell It

Gower Community Band Postlude: *A Christmas Festival*

by Leroy Anderson

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 Pardy

Organist & Music Ministry: R. Carl Goulding

Band Director: Ron Collins

Bell Choir Director: Dana Collins

Custodian: David Noseworthy

Board Chair: Patrick Griffin



Hearing and Listening

- Ron Collins and The Gower Community Band

Those of us without significant hearing loss routinely take our ability to hear for granted. In fact, our sense of hearing continues to be active even when we are asleep; that's why alarm clocks work. We hear so many things every day, that our brains often tune them out. Just ask anyone who has lived near an airport for years if they still hear every flight like they did when they first moved there. During a recent power outage, my family and I were suddenly aware of all the sounds that stopped... sounds that we weren't even aware of just moments before. The hum of the refrigerator motor, the whisper of air in the ventilation system, and the faint buzz from some electronics all disappeared. We hadn't been listening to them prior to their disappearance, but we were hearing them.

That's the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is constant, but listening requires focus and attention. We do both or switch between them all the time. When you are driving in a car, you hear the noise of the tires on the road and the wind passing by, but you listen to the radio. When you are in a crowded room, you hear many voices but you listen to the person with whom you are having a conversation.

This year I (on behalf of the GCB) am asking you to listen a little more this season. When you are visiting with family and friends, listen to the people around you, and pay attention to what they are saying. Focus on the lyrics in a song you've heard many times to appreciate the message all over again.

You will hear the band play today. I invite you to focus your attention on some of the components of the band instead of the overall sound occasionally, from the high notes of the flutes to the low notes of the tubas, from the warmth of the French Horn tone to the brilliance of a cymbal crash, and all the instruments in between. There are many individuals you can listen to while hearing the band play, and I think you will find the experience rewarding.

Our first selection has an obvious connection to our theme, but the second one may require some explanation. "Fantasie Noel" is based on *Silent Night* and *Once In Royal David's City*. During the first World War, there was a moment when Allied and German soldiers, squatting in trenches close enough to hear each other, suddenly listened more intently as the sounds of singing rose into the night air. Men on both sides knew the melodies, including *Silent Night*, and joined together in a temporary break in hostilities known as "The Christmas Truce". There is great power in genuine listening. We hope you enjoy our musical offerings.



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 2nd, 2025.

A Quiet Evening of Reflection: The Gower Worship Team shared 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.

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. All are viewable online now.

2025 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.

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

