



Open Hearts • Open Minds • Open Arms

**December 24, 2024
Christmas Eve
Worship**



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

Bold indicates unison.

Rise in body and spirit as you prefer.

The projected text in white is a communal response.

Today's bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of Harry and Madalene Earle and Loyola and Gladys Slaney from Kathryn, Ken and family.

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Organ: Chorale Prelude on *Quem Pastores*

Healey Willan

Gower Hand Bell Choir Selections

We sing: VU 60 O Come All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles
arr. Willcocks

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:

We are waiting, for wrapped boxes to appear beneath the lighted trees,
for the day to finally arrive when the fancy paper can be ripped from those neatly wrapped presents.

We are waiting to discover the gift that is waiting for us.

We are waiting.

In this time enable us to discover once again

the peace and hope that the Child of Bethlehem brings. Amen.

Lighting of Advent Candles:

The Collins Family

On Christmas Eve, the eve of Jesus' birth, we light each candle.

We light the candle of Hope

as we embrace the light brought into this world by Jesus.

(The first blue candle is lit.)

We light the candle of Peace,

peace brought to us by the Child of Bethlehem.

(The second blue candle is lit.)

We light the candle of Joy

as we delight in welcoming baby Jesus.

(The third blue candle is lit.)

We light the candle of Love

as we celebrate God's great gift of love,

the birth of Jesus on this holy night.

(The fourth blue candle is lit.)

Gathering Prayer:

God of Christmas Eve,
the birth of your son Jesus fills us with awe and wonder.

**It is the greatest gift we can receive,
a baby born to bring gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love. Amen.**

Young Peoples Choir: Let There Be Peace on Earth

Prayer for Transformation:

Let us offer the fears, worries, and concerns of our hearts, as we hold onto the words of the angel: "Do not be afraid." *(silent prayer)*

Words of Affirmation: VU 61 Of the Fathers Love Begotten (v.5)

Divinium Mysterium

LISTENING TO THE STORY

Solo: O Holy Night

Adolph Adam

Soloist: Emma Neville

A reading from Scripture: Isaiah 9: 2-7

A child has been born for us.

Bert Riggs

A reading from the Gospel: Luke 2: 1-14

Jesus' birth.

Mark Peters

Gospel Response: VU 37 Gloria (refrain only)

Gloria

Exploring Christmas Eve

We invite all young people gathered this evening to receive a special gift. We hope it will be a remembrance of this special night.

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

You can offer your financial gifts to Gower Street United Church in many ways. As you enter/leave the sanctuary, there are offering plates where you may lay your offerings. You can also continue to drop off offerings in the secure mailbox outside the church office or you can donate via

E-Transfer, using the email address gsuc@nl.roges.com. You can also scan the QR code on your mobile device to be brought directly to our website page.



Gathering our Gifts:

Christmas Eve is here. Excitement has built among our families and loved ones as we approach this holy night. The biblical stories have told us of the ways in which God was part of the birth of Jesus. These tales echo in our minds and sit in our hearts. We are reminded through word and song that Jesus is God's gift for the world. Now it is our turn to respond, in the tradition of gift giving and gift sharing. We are invited to give our gifts to God, to the ministry that we share as part of our living God's mission in love and to the mission of the Church globally through the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. Let us present the gift of our offering.....

We sing: VU 75 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (V.6)

Offering Prayer:

Gracious One, **we ask a blessing on all the gifts given everywhere tonight, but especially for those offered here and all the people they touch. Amen.**

The SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

We sing: VU 48 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn
arr. Willcocks

As we come to this table,
we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus,
a banquet prepared for everyone.

**All who seek to be nourished and sustained
in the journey of faith,
all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths
to peace and justice, are welcome here.**

God be with you.

And also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Breath of peace,

Giver of all life,

Source of love that knows no boundaries.

Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began.

Throughout the ages, your song of liberation has impregnated us with your hope for a world where:

those considered last and least are first and most.

Violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and,

all siblings work together for peace.

**You bring our longings to birth,
and send prophets to awaken us
to your approaching Advent among us.**

We thank you for those who, like Mary,

have the strength and courage

to give birth to your love in the world.

For those who, like the shepherds,

dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem.

For those who, like the wise ones,

actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us

in womb and tomb,

in cradle and cross,

in tenderness and compassion.

We join in the Advent prayer of all your people,

“O come, Emmanuel.”

**And, as we wait and watch for your coming among us,
we proclaim your goodness.**

We sing: VU 942 Sanctus and Benedictus

Schubert

**At this time, we also remember
all with whom you would have us share your feast.**

We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...
all who are ill or alone...
all who are close to our hearts...
all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger...
all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty...
for all whom the world counts as last and least.

**We pray for the church and its many ministries,
for nations as they strive for peace and justice,
for an end to violence.**

God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding,
this juice the medium of our transformation,
this table the foundation of our renewal,
and this community the place of our rebirth.

**At this time, we remember Jesus,
who on the night before he died,
took a loaf of bread,
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,
“This is the cup of New Life!”**

Gracious God, Breath of Peace,
Source of Love,
we pray for your Spirit.

**Make us, while many, One.
Make us, though broken, Whole.
Make us, despite death, Alive.**

And so, we pray:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

The Prayer of Jesus

We are thankful for this meal.
**May it bring love, hope, peace and joy
to our hearts and a broken world. Amen.**

Sharing The Bread and Cup

The communion table at Gower is open to everyone without a single exception. You are invited to come forward to the rail through the centre aisles, guided by the ushers, to receive a communion wafer and a glass of grape juice. There is also a station where you can receive a communion wafer and a glass of grape juice on the balcony. Please let the server know if you require a gluten-free option, and they will provide one. Once you have received the elements, you are welcome to eat and return your seat as you are ready.



If you do not wish to receive communion, you are welcome to either remain seated or come forward with your arms crossed to receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, we will come to serve you in your seat following serving the rail.

Communion Music:

Christmas Lullaby
Ding Dong! Merrily on High

Lo. How A Rose

John Rutter
16th c. French
harm. Charles Wood
trad. German Melody
arr. Praetorius

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Our Christmas Wish for You

Solo: Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas Riley Coombes-Lush

.mLighting of the Christ Candle & Sharing the Light

We sing: VU 67 Silent Night

Stille Nacht

Gower Hand Bell Choir Selections

Organ: In Dulci Jubilo BWV 729

J.S. Bach

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

The Advent Communion Liturgy was written by Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality, General Council Office.

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To The Glory of God

Donations to the Operating Fund

In loving memory of **Florence and Donald Butler** from Donna Butler.

In loving memory of **my parents, Edward & Audrey Green**, from son, David.

In loving memory of **my aunt Edna Green** from nephew, David Green.

In loving memory of **our parents, Dr. Clarence and Mrs. Marjorie Pottle and Mr. Lawrence and Mrs. Donna Smith**. Always remembered and dearly missed by Brad and Karen Smith.

In loving memory of **parents Donald W. K. Dawe, QC & B. Pearl Dawe, and Aunt Marguerite Dawe** from Louise Dawe.

In loving memory of **parents, Clive & Peggy Snelgrove** from Judi, Verne & family.

In loving memory of **Wylie, Whiteway & Barrett Families** from Ian Barrett.

In loving memory of **parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents Marston & Elizabeth Cameron** from Louise & Bob Tipple, Jennifer, Florence, & Louisa Tipple, Stephen, Kaleigh, & Jacob Tipple & Charmine Tipple.

In loving memory of **Uncle Elsie Barbour, parents Wilhelmina and Harry Wright and Dinah and George Green, brother Robert Green** from Marie-Beth and Carl Wright.

In loving memory of **loved ones including parents, Shirley and Anderson Abbott, brother, Glenn Abbott, and aunt, Marion Abbott** from Dana, Gerard, Hayley and Noah Collins.

In Loving Christmas memories of **our Mom & Dad, Harrison & Susie Noseworthy** from daughter Grace and son-in-law Seymour Kell.

In loving memory of **parents Herbert and Gertrude Bailey** from daughter Dianne Bailey.

In loving memory of **Mary Elms**, ever remembered, forever loved from Wince, Greg, Natalie and their families.

In loving memory of **Rudy Laite, Dereck Power, the Laite, Noftall, and Kerrivan families** from Cheryl & Ken Hanlon and family.

In loving memory of **loved ones** from Bruce & Linda Nickerson.

Donations to the Roof and Restoration Fund

In loving memory of **my late wife, Dr. Verna M. (Robbins) Skanes** from Graham Skanes.

In loving memory of **my parents, Mark and Alma Badcock, and my precious aunts, Jean Taylor and Emma Wells,**
from Susan Hibbs (Badcock).

Donations to the Mission & Service Fund

In loving memory of **parents, grandparents & great-grandparents William & Mabel Jones, Harold & Annie Noel, brothers & uncles, Lloyd Jones & Selwyn Noel, and sister & Aunt Muriel King** from Darroch & Lois Jones, their children Nicole (Mathieu Larose), Stefan (Sara Slade) & Heather (Shane Rose) and their grandchildren Chloé Larose, Sophie Larose, Lincoln Rose, Anderson Rose, Sebastian Jones, and Dawson Jones.

In loving memory of **parents Stanley & Mary Noftall, brothers Stanley & Bernard, sister Mary Elms & sisters in law Jackie, Esther & Cynthia** from Darren & Brenda Martin & the Noftall family

In loving memory of **parents William & Addie Martin & sister Dana** from Darren & Brenda Martin

In loving memory of **grandparents, Stanley & Mary Noftall & Max & Muriel Vardy** from Russell, Sean & Nicole Vardy

In memory of **Elizabeth and Marston Cameron** a donation to the Mission and Service Fund by Robert and Marilyn Cameron; Laura, Blair, Emma and Lucy Bridger; Scott, Claire and Jon Cameron; Lisa Moore;

Matthew, Thea, Georgia, Margot and Alexander Cameron; Andrew, Lana, Grace and Kate Cameron; Jane, Russell, Mckenna, Anya and Callum Noseworthy.

Donations to the Benevolent Fund

In loving memory **parents Auburn & Gertie Lethbridge** from Carrie Lethbridge.

Donations to the Wendy & Carl Stevenson Choral Bursary

In loving memory of **Shirley and Anderson Abbott, Glenn Abbott and Marion Abbott**. We loved and miss them all from Marilyn and Randy Folkes and family.

Donations to the Gower Community Band

In loving memory of our **parents, Marston and Elizabeth Cameron and Dennis and Margaret Murphy, and loved ones** from Blair and Anita Cameron.

In loving memory of **our parents, William and Frannie Trask**, from Carol & Cheryl Trask

Donations to Organ Fund

In loving memory of **Lester Goulding** from Elise and family.



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.

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.

Upcoming Sunday Worships:

December 29: 1st Sunday of Christmas

January 5: Epiphany Sunday

January 12: 1st Sunday after Epiphany, Baptism of Jesus

January 19: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

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 Memoriam/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.

Giving to Gower – Ways to Donate

Ways to maintain your financial support of our church there are options available:

- Sign up for P.A.R. (Pre-Authorized Contributions), or consider increasing your contribution if you are already on P.A.R. This can be done by contacting the office by phone (709-753-7286) or by email (office@gowerunited.com)
- You can also scan the QR code on your mobile device to be brought directly to our website page. We also accept e-transfer. Just send it to gsuc@nl.rogers.com
- You may also send a cheque via mail or drop it in the dropbox accessible to the right of the office entrance. Our mailing address is 99 Queens Road, St. John's, N.L., A1C 6M6

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

Custodian: David Noseworthy

Board Chair: Patrick Griffin

Bell Choir: Dana Collins

