

December 24, 2025 Christmas Eve Worship

The people of Gower Street United Church are committed to doing right by Jesus' teachings: loving, serving, giving generously in our local, regional, and global communities. We envision a vibrant and evolving community where tradition is honoured, change is embraced, and injustice is challenged.

We are dedicated to being welcoming and affirming, engaging participation of all, including people of any age, colour, race, ethnicity, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, marital status, family composition, and social or economic circumstances.

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. This province of Newfoundland and Labrador is home to diverse populations of Indigenous and other peoples who have contributed to 9,000 years of history. We acknowledge with respect the deep histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit. 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 seekers of justice, 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 bulletin is dedicated to **Christmas Eve Service**
From Larry Kelly and Karl Wells.

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Organ

Gower Hand Bell Choir

We sing: Once in Royal David's City Irby
Please see bulletin insert for carol text

Verse 1: Solo We sing verses 2 - 6

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.

Enable us in our waiting to discover once again the peace and hope that the Child of Bethlehem brings.

Amen.

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.

We Sing: VU 60 Come, All Ye Faithful Adeste Fideles
arr. Willcocks

Prayer of 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:

May this night's holy light guide your steps,
steady your spirit,
and awaken in you the assurance
that Emmanuel—God-with-us—makes all things new. **Amen.**

LISTENING TO THE STORY

Solo: O Holy Night
Soloist: Emma Neville

Adolphe Adam

A reading from the Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
The story of Jesus' birth

Karl Wells

Gospel Response: Gloria (*from VU 38*)

Exploring Christmas Eve: "Make a Joyful Sound!"

We Sing: VU 56 Jesus, Our Brother

Orientis Partibus

We invite all young people with us to come forward 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 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.rogers.com. You can also scan the QR code on your mobile device to be brought directly to our website page.



Gathering our Gifts:

On this holy night, when heaven touched the earth and God drew near in the fragility of a child, we gather with the gifts of our hearts and lives.

As the Magi brought their offerings with wonder, we bring our gifts with gratitude— gifts of time, gifts of service, gifts of compassion, gifts of hope.

May what we offer tonight be signs of our longing for peace, our commitment to love, and our trust that the Light shines through the shadows, and "the shadows have not overcome it."

We sing: VU 75 While Shepherd Watched Their Flocks, V 6
Winchester Old

Offering Prayer: Gracious One, we ask a blessing on all the gifts given everywhere tonight, 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 is the medium of our transformation,
this table the foundation of our renewal,
and this community is 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 center aisles, guided by the ushers, to receive a piece of communion bread and a glass of grape juice. There is also a station where you can receive communion bread 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:

Up! Good Christian Folk, And Listen
All Bells in Paradise

*from Piaie Contiones
Rutter*

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Lighting of the Christ Candle

The Arsenault family
Rebecca, Shane and Louisa

Solo: Hallelujah, It's Christmas

Soloist: Justin Goulding

(The taper used to light the Christ Candle tonight has been recently blessed and brought from Bethlehem.)

Tonight we gather in the deep and holy mystery of Love made visible.
In a world longing for justice, aching for peace, and hungry for hope,
we light the Christ Candle— a sign that Love chooses to dwell among us.

We welcome the Light that no shadows can overcome.

This Light comes not with force, but with tenderness.

Not with domination, but with liberation,

not to bless only a few, but to set all people free.

Jesus is born among the poor, the forgotten, and the displaced—
and among us, here and now.

**May this Light awaken compassion in us,
courage in us,
and joy in us.**

As this candle burns,
may we remember that the Holy is already at work—
in every act of kindness,
every struggle for justice,

every vision of peace.

Sharing the Light

We sing: VU 67 Silent Night

Verse 1: Young Peoples Choir

We sing: Verses 1, 2 and 3

Our Christmas Wish for You

Have Yourself a Very Merry Christmas

Soloist: Riley Coombs-Lush

Gower Hand Bell Choir

Carol of the Bells

Organ: Il est né, le divin enfant

Bédard

Worship today was inspired by Gathering, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

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Minister: The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

Youth & Family Minister: The Rev. Rebecca Pike-Winter

Interim Youth & Family Minister: The Rev. Karen Thorne

Minister Emeritus: The Very Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy

Organist & Music Ministry: R. Carl Goulding

Custodian: David Noseworthy

Board Chair: Jonathan Stevenson

To The Glory of God

Donations to the Operating Fund

In remembrance 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 memory of parents, **Shirley and Anderson Abbott, brother, Glenn Abbott, and aunt, Marion Abbott** for music related initiatives from Marilyn & Randy Folkes and family.

In memory of **Rudy Laite**
from Cheryl and Ken Hanlon and Family.

In loving memory of **Edna Green** from nephew David Green.

In loving memory of **Thomas, Jean, and Hunter Stentaford** from Karen Misik.

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

In loving memory of **Verne Somers** from Judi, David, Rob and Kirsten.

In loving memory of **Marston & Elizabeth Cameron** from Louise & Bob, Jennifer, Florence & Louisa, Stephen, Kaleigh, Jacob & Thalia and Charminne Tipple.

In loving memory of **Loved Ones** from Bruce & Linda Nickerson

Donations to the Roof and Restoration Fund

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

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

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

Donations to the Mission & Service Fund

In memory of **Elizabeth and Marston Cameron** 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

In loving memory of **Peggy & Clive Snelgrove** from Judi & Family

Donations to the Benevolent Fund

In loving memory of **Jonathan Anstey** from Angeline, Carolyn Moore, David Anstey & Families.

In memory of **Elizabeth and Marston Cameron** 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.

In loving memory of **Loved Ones** from Bruce & Linda Nickerson

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

Donations to the Warm and Dry Fund

In loving memory of **John G Evans** from Howard Evans

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, **Marston & Elizabeth Cameron and Dennis & Margaret Murphy, and loved ones** from Blair Cameron and Anita Gosse-Cameron

In loving memory of **Dr. Roger Green** from Giovanni Green & Family.

In loving memory of parents, **Fannie and William Trask** from daughters Carol and Cheryl Trask.

Choral Scholarship Fund

In memory of **Elsie Goulding**, from her dear friend Edith Woodland (and daughter Karen)

In loving memory of **Elsie Goulding** from John Roberts.

In loving memory of **Elsie Goulding** from Mary Moriarity.

In loving memory of **Elsie Goulding** from an Anonymous.

In loving memory of **Elsie Goulding** from the Neville's and the Learning Family, Debby & Terry Goulding.

In loving memory of **Elsie Getrude Goulding** from Jan Anderson & Don Lockhart.

In loving memory parents, **Carl and Wendy Stevenson** from Jonathan Stevenson

Donations to the Heritage Fund

In loving memory of **Parents Donald W. K. Dawe, QC & Pearl(Button) Dawe and Marguerite Dawe** from Louise Dawe.

Donations to Bridges and Hope

In loving memory of **Loved Ones** from Bruce & Linda Nickerson



What's Up at Gower

Book Study: We live in challenging times, and many of us face fear and uncertainty. How do you cope? This Lent, we will begin a new book study on "Conquering Fear: Living Boldly in an Uncertain World" by Rabbi Harold Kushner. His stories and teachings offer practical ways to face fear and strengthen our spirits. To sign up, please contact Rev. Karen before January 19th. The book costs \$20, and lunch will be provided. We hope you will join us.

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 \$15.00 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 Felyn, the office administrator, during office hours 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

*Christmas Blessings
from Your Gower Street
United Church Family*

*May God's gift of light
and beauty fill your heart
with peace and joy at
Christmas and always*



*Ministry Team:
Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald
Rev. Rebecca Pike-Winter
Rev. Karen Thorne*