

## January 12, 2025 Baptism of Jesus

**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.*

**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

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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 in celebration of Rev. Rebecca's marriage with Kyle Winter from her co-workers.**

### THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

#### **The Life and Work of Gower**

**Voluntary:** Andante Pastorale Thomas Adams

**We sing:** VU 660 How Firm a Foundation (v.1-4) St. Denio

#### **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.

#### **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

Fire and water are sustaining when handled with respect.

**Thanks be to God for the gift of water and fire and within them the gift of life.** *(candle is lit)*

#### **Gathering Words:**

With unfailing love, God calls us by name.

**We long to be known and seek relationship with God.**

Come, find refuge. Take rest and comfort in God's shelter.

**We eagerly come, seeking shelter and security.**

**Let us worship God!**

#### **Gathering Prayer:**

Come to the edge of the sea, the barrier between you and a new life. Pray for a path to freedom.

**Turn barriers into highways, O Holy One!**

Come to the edge of a river, the obstacle between you and security in a new land.

**Turn obstacles into footpaths, O Rock of Ages!**

Come to this time of worship and its challenge of meaning and belonging.

**Turn us into a people of the journey, willing to take the path, the highway to daring love, peace and justice.**

**We sing:** MV 161 I Have Called You by Your Name Kelly  
*(Young People are to leave for choir and Gower Learners)*

### LISTENING TO THE STORY

#### **Prayer of Illumination:**

The tree is down, God-  
the decorations are put away.

**But Christmas isn't gone, is it?**

Jesus lives, in us and with us,  
making every day and every moment,  
a Christmas.

**Open our eyes to God's wisdom that comes from many places  
to this place. In his name, in your love, we ask it. Amen.**

**A reading from Scripture:** Isaiah 43:1-7 Shelley Abbott  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

**A reading from the Gospel:** Luke 3:15-17,21-22  
Jesus is baptised by John

**Anthem:** A New Year Carol

Britten

## **Meditation**

**Exploring Epiphany:** The Circle Song

Farrell

### **Renewing our participation in God's Family:**

The church is a community of people with varied gifts,  
united by the Holy Spirit.

We gather to celebrate God's presence,  
to discern God's truth,  
and to follow the way of Jesus.

By baptism some are made members of God's church.

By water we know that God's love is unending and for all.

We all belong in many ways to the family of God.

**This water symbolizes both life and belonging.**

### **Let us pray:**

Gracious and holy God, we bless you for the gift of life,  
And within it, the gift of water.

**Over its unshaped promise your Spirit hovered at creation.**

**By water, comes the growth of the earth.**

**In the waters of the Jordan, your Child Jesus was baptised.**

Let this action of sprinkled water be a sign for all of new life in Jesus, of belonging to God's family.

**Let this water be a reminder of new life, new beginnings and sacred belonging. Thanks be to God. Amen!**

*(Water is poured.)*

Listen to the waters free-flowing powers.

**Listen to its releasing powers.**

We listen to its welcoming powers.

### **Sprinkling the Water of our Faith**

O God of life and love,  
you have given us the gift of water and within it the gift of new life.

**Give us the courage and strength to go from this gathered time with renewed hope and vision.**

May Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith.

**May we be rooted and grounded in love  
and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit and the gift of water.**

**Amen.**

**We sing:** VU 766 As the Deer Pants for the Water

As the Deer

### **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](mailto: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:**

Our gathering today, O God, reminds us of our reliance upon one another and upon you. In this way, we would invite you to hold on to us in our baptism, to hold on to us with grace and tender purpose. Open hands and open hearts are offered to raise us up in the flow of the Spirit you freely pour out upon your people.

**We sing:** VU 540 Grant Us, God, the Grace

Stuttgart

**Offering Prayer:**

**Bless the work of our lives and the love of our hearts this day, offered now in so many ways. We share your desire to create better lives and a better community. Let the soul of the world be restored in an ocean of your love. Amen.**

**Prayers for our World and Prayer of Jesus**

**WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD**

**We sing:** VU 20 On Jordan's Banks

Winchester New

**We go out into the world:**

Go from here to live out your renewed calling to God's family through baptism.

**Let the waters of creation give us strength.**

Go from here nourished at this gathering of renewed life and love.

**Let the Holy One of Bethlehem be our guide and our light.**

Go in peace and as you go from here, remember who you are:

**I am.....(offer your name here!)**

As you go forth from here, remember whose you are:

**I am a child of God and a disciple of Jesus.**

And you go forth, never forget to give thanks to the God who accompanies us on our journey.

**Thanks be to God, for we never have to journey alone. Amen.**

**We sing:** VU 966 Amen (Dresden)

**Organ Postlude:** Noel X

Daquin

*Worship today was inspired by Gathering, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, 2024/2025, Year C and Celebrate God's Presence, a book of services.*

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**What's Up At Gower**

**Condolences:** We extend condolences to Judi Somers and her family on the passing of her husband, Verne Somers, on January 6, 2025. Funeral service took place on Friday, January 10th at 11:00 a.m. from Gower St. United Church.

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Tuesday, January 21, 7 p.m., St. Teresa's Catholic Church:** Sponsored by: The St. John's and Area Council of Churches. Guest Preacher: The Very Rev. Dr. Marion Parady. Please join with members of other Churches to express your commitment to Christian unity within diversity.

**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.

**Contribution Envelopes:** 2025 contribution envelopes are ready for pick up on Sunday mornings or during office hours on Wednesday and Thursday, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Team Gower - Coldest Night of the Year:** We are investing some of our time in fundraisings for the Coldest Night of the Year in support of Choices for Youth. Consider joining our team - Gower Street United Church, and walk with us on Saturday, February 22. The Coldest Night of the Year is a walk that raises money for folks in our community who need our help. Some of them are hungry, more than a few are hurting, and regrettably, some are homeless too. You can visit the link in What's Up or on our website to join or donate to support the team.

## To the Glory of God

Donations to the  
*Memorial Fund*  
in loving memory of  
**Alma and Mark Badcock and my Sister  
Carolyn Bonfere**  
from Win Kennedy

Donation to the  
*Warm & Dry Fund*  
in loving memory of  
**Verne Somers**  
from Graham Skanes

**Roy and Gladys Smith**  
from The Conway Family

Donation to the  
*Mission and Service Fund*  
in memory of

**my father Rev G. Manuel Saunders and  
my mother Anne B. Saunders**  
from daughter Lynn Skinner

**Noftall, Martin, & Vardy Families**  
from Darren & Brenda Martin

Donation to the  
*Wendy and Carl Stevenson Choral Bursary Fund*  
in celebration of

**the upcoming 90th birthday of Jane Foltz**  
from Jim and Laura Richardson

**Epiphany Study to Introduce United Church 100th Anniversary Activities:** All are invited to an Epiphany Study with Friends of the Foundation (the sponsors) and even friends of the Friends. Panels will be hosted by well-known CBC and United Church communicator, Royal Orr, and are anchored by Brian Arthur Brown, author of *THE UNTIED CHURCH OF CANADA* and chair of Friends of the Foundation. The first panelists, on January 8, were The Very Rev. Richard Bott, chair of the UC Centennial Committee, and Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, the Senior Governance Support Lead for the General Council Office, who know so much about everything that is coming our way between January and June 2025, and the reasons why we should celebrate. Future panels will discuss relevant chapters of *THE UNTIED CHURCH OF CANADA*, a book from Wood Lake published to help us prepare for the anniversary and get maximum benefits from it. The first session can be viewed via link in What's Up. To join other sessions beginning at any evening hour you like on January 15, you are invited to search YouTube for "Epiphany Study" and enter the date, for panel discussions on upcoming activities in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada. Online panels may be followed by discussions in groups at some churches or readings at home of related chapters of *THE UNTIED CHURCH OF CANADA*, or the online presentations may be enough to get us thinking.

**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](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)) or phone 709-753-7286 ext. 200.

### Coming up at Gower

#### **Sunday Worship:**

- January 12: Baptism of Jesus
- January 19: Second Sunday after Epiphany

#### **Weekly Activities:**

- Tuesday, January 14, 2025: Gower Youth at 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 15: Pastoral Care Worship at Bishops Gardens at 3:30 p.m., Gower Community Band at 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 16, 2025: Worship and Sacraments Meeting at 1:00 p.m., Pause for Prayer at 4:30 p.m. (Online)