

**December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 – 10:15 am**  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*



**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP**

*"We gather in the promise of Love that draws us near."*

**Carols in Advent:**

VU 50 *Il est né, le divin Enfant*

**(R)** He is born, little Child divine;  
play on the reeds while the lutes are  
strumming.  
He is born, little Child divine;  
join the song to announce the day.

**1** Through long ages of the past,  
prophets have foretold his coming;  
through long ages of the past,  
now the time has come at last! **(R)**

**2** O how lovely, O how pure  
is this perfect child of heaven;

O how lovely, O how pure,  
gracious gift to humankind! **(R)**

**3** Lowly lodged in a stable poor,  
laid on straw for his infant cradle.  
Lowly lodged in a stable poor,  
God came down to our mortal aid. **(R)**

**4** Jesus, Light of all the world,  
coming as a child among us,  
Jesus, Light of all the world,  
grant to us your heavenly peace. **(R)**

VU 73 *The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy*

**1** The virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
and they say that his name is Jesus.

- (R) *He come from the glory, (clap, clap)*  
*he come from the glorious kingdom.*  
*He come from the glory, (clap, clap)*  
*he come from the glorious kingdom.*  
*Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!*  
*He come from the glory, (clap, clap)*  
*he come from the glorious kingdom.*
- 2 The angels sang when the baby was born,  
the angels sang when the baby was born,
- 3 The shepherds came where the baby was  
born,  
the shepherds came where the baby was  
born,  
the shepherds came where the baby was  
born,  
and they say that his name is Jesus. (R)

VU 60 *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (vv. 1-3, 5))

- 1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:  
come and behold him, born the King of angels;
- (R) O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Child.
- 2 God of God, light of light,  
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;  
very God, begotten, not created: (R)
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God in the highest: (R)
- \*5 Yea, Child, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
word of the Creator, now in flesh appearing: (R)

**Prelude:** *God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman* (Recorder Duet: Dan Main, Tom Clark)

### **Acknowledgment of Traditional Territory**

Kore Signet-Yang

As we gather in this holy place, we remember that this land has been a meeting place, a home, and a sacred trust for Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island for thousands of years. We honour the stewardship, wisdom, and enduring presence of the First Peoples and give special recognition to the Mississaugas of the Credit, whose traditional territory we share today. In this Advent season of Love, we acknowledge that love is never abstract, it is lived through justice, truth, and right relationship. We hear the ongoing cries of Indigenous communities for equity, land, and healing, and we recognize that love calls us to respond.

**As treaty people,**  
**we commit to walk the path of love with humility,**  
**to listen with open hearts,**  
**to learn from Indigenous neighbours,**  
**and to work courageously to repair harm,**  
**so that love may take root in these lands**  
**as surely as the Christ Child takes root in our world.**

### **Advent Wreath Lighting: Candle of Love**

Kore and Sophia Signet-Yang

Today, we come face to face with the quiet courage of Advent love.

Joseph, a righteous man, discovers Mary is expecting a child not his own.

In the midst of confusion, fear, and social pressure, he chooses compassion over condemnation, gentleness over pride, and love over fear.

Through Joseph's open heart, God makes room for Emmanuel, Love-made-flesh, to enter the world.

**With Joseph, we choose a love that listens before judging,  
trusts before understanding,  
and responds with tenderness rather than fear.  
We open our hearts to Emmanuel, Love-with-us.**

We light this candle of love as a sign of our desire to walk Joseph's way, the way of brave, steady, faithful love that makes space for God to be born among us. *(Light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath.)*

### **Words of Welcome**

Welcome to worship on this fourth Sunday at Trinity-St. Paul's United Church, Toronto. We are delighted you have joined us to worship God, whose spirit and presence is LOVE! Whether you are here in this sanctuary or joining us online, you belong in this circle of love. Today, we listen for the voice of Love made visible, in scripture, in silence, in song, in the courage of Joseph, and in the courage Love asks of us. Welcome home. Welcome to worship!

### **Gathering Words:**

As Christmas draws near,  
**we gather to welcome Love made flesh.**  
Like Joseph,  
**we open our hearts to courage and compassion.**  
God's love comes quietly,  
**in unexpected places and ordinary lives.**  
Come, Emmanuel,  
**be born among us, and awaken love within us.**

### **Hymn: VU25 Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending**

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|---|--|
| <b>1</b> Lo, he comes with clouds descending,<br>see the Lamb for sinners slain!<br>Thousand, thousand saints attending<br>join to sing the glad refrain:<br>hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!<br>God appears on earth to reign.                  | <b>3</b> Now redemption, long expected<br>see in solemn pomp appear;<br>all the saints, by us rejected,<br>thrill the trumpet sound to hear:<br>hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!<br>See the day of God appear!                        |
| <b>2</b> Every eye shall then behold you,<br>robed in awesome majesty;<br>all who jeered, and mocked, and sold you,<br>pierced, and nailed you to the tree,<br>deeply grieving, deeply grieving, deeply<br>grieving,<br>shall the true Messiah see. | <b>4</b> Yea! Amen! Let all adore you,<br>high on your eternal throne;<br>crowns and empires fall before you,<br>claim the kingdom for your own:<br>O come quickly! O come quickly! O come<br>quickly!<br>Everlasting Christ, come down. |

### **Opening Prayer**

*Silent Confession*

### **Advent Love & Passing of the Love:**

God's Love meets us where we are.  
**And Love invites us to begin again.**  
Love is patient, and Love is brave.  
**Love holds us, heals us, and sends us.**  
The Love of Christ be with you.  
**And with your spirit.**

*(You are invited, whether in the sanctuary and online, to share this Love, with a gesture, a smile, or a word that blesses).*

**Anthem:** *Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain* by Carolyn Jennings

## WE GROW IN FAITH

*"We grow through scripture, reflection and prayers, as Love takes root in us, shaping our hearts and our world."*

### Introduction to the Scripture:

Today's scripture invites us into Joseph's quiet, courageous love. In Matthew 1, we meet Joseph, caught in crisis, yet guided by compassion, and whose faithfulness helps make space for Emmanuel, God-with-us. As we hear this story, may we listen for the love that transforms fear and prepares the way for Christmas hope to be born.

**Scriptures:** Matthew 1:18-25 (Inclusive Bible)

Kore Signet-Yang

Herein is wisdom.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon:** *"Joseph – Courageous Love!"*

### Silent Reflection

### Offering and Thanksgiving

In this season of waiting, we are reminded that love is not a feeling;  
it is a choice to practice care and companionship.

As Joseph offered his life to God's unfolding story,

**So, we offer what we have for the work of Love in this community and beyond.**

Let our gifts be signs of Love that takes flesh here and now.

*(The offering is collected in the sanctuary. For those online, you are welcome to donate to the work of TSP with the QR code below.)*



### Offertory Hymn: MV 12 *Come Touch Our Hearts* (vv. 1-4)

- 1     **Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,  
from failing embers build a blazing fire;  
love strong enough to overturn injustice,  
to seek a world more gracious, come touch and bless our hearts.**
- 2     **Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,  
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;  
create a space for spirit to grow in us,  
let life and beauty fill us, come touch and bless our souls.**
- 3     **Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,  
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;  
help us to open doors of understanding,  
to welcome truth and wisdom, come touch and bless our minds.**

4      **Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,  
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;  
that we may rise to follow and to serve,  
steady now our nerve, come touch and bless our wills.**

**Offering Prayer**

**Loving God,  
receive these gifts as signs of our desire to live with kindness,  
to love as Joseph loved, quietly and courageously.  
Bless what we offer, our resources, time, and compassion,  
that they may become instruments of your healing love in this world.  
Amen.**

**May these gifts be seeds of peace,  
signs of your coming realm,  
and the fruit of our partnership in love. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

Betsy Anderson

**Loving God, hear our prayer.  
And in your love, answer.**

**Sung Response: VU7 Hope is a Star (v. 4)**

**Love is a flame that burns in our heart,  
Jesus has come and will never depart.**

**Encircling Prayers... *We hold in our prayers:***

**Trinity-St. Paul's United Church**

Hendrika Haasen, on the death of her mother, Arnoldina Haasen  
Jennifer Ratzlaff Hauck, Brad's sister  
Betty Butterworth  
Greg and Vera Callaghan

**Shining Waters Regional Council**

Parkwoods United Church, Toronto  
Unity United Church, Midland  
Runnymede United Church, Toronto

**WE GO TO GOD'S WORLD**

*"We go to embody Love with courage, tenderness, and joy."*

**Closing Hymn: VU333 Love Divine, All Love Excelling**

1      **Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.**

**let us all thy grace receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.**

2      **Come, almighty to deliver;**



3      **Finish, then, thy new creation;  
          pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation  
          perfectly restored in thee,**

**Benediction**

**Postlude:** *In dulci jubilo*, BWV 729 by J. S. Bach

**changed from glory into glory,  
          till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
          lost in wonder, love, and praise.**



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

*Beloved Companions, as we prepare to celebrate the wonder of Christmas, I want to wish each of you a joyful and hope-filled season, and every blessing for the year ahead. May 2026 bring you peace, renewed strength, and moments of deep gladness.*

*Thank you for the thoughtful cards, warm greetings, and generous gifts you have shared this season. Your kindness is a true embodiment of the love we celebrate at Christmas. May Christ's light surround you and guide your steps in the coming year.*

*Merry Christmas, dear ones!*

*Hewitt T. Holmes (Minister)*





See this week's e-newsletter for the full announcements. You can sign up to receive the announcements by scanning the QR code above, or by emailing Sarah.

### Upcoming Dates

**December 21:** Carols by Candlelight - 7PM

**December 24:** Christmas Eve Service - 7PM

**December 28:** Sunday Service with Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu -

**January 4:** Communion Sunday with Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu -

**January 18:** New Members Session - 11:45-1:15PM

**January 20:** Deep Listening Session - 2-4PM

**January 25:** Holy Land Service

### Carols by Candlelight – December 21, 7PM

Our beloved Carols by Candlelight service is this Sunday! Join us for an evening of Christmas carols, music, and joy of the season. This is a free event, open to all, and no tickets are required. An offering will be collected to support the Trinity-St. Paul's music ministry.

### Holiday Building Closures

The church building will be closed for the holidays from **December 24th-January 2nd, 2026**. It will be **open** for our Christmas Eve service at 7pm on December 24th, and Sunday Service on December 28th at 10:30am. The building will reopen on January 3, 2026.

### Winter-Epiphany TSP Times – Wisdom

As we prepare for Christmas and the New Year, the Communications Committee invites you to consider your contributions to the Winter (Epiphany) 2025 issue of the TSP Times. The gathering theme is "Wisdom". Please send your reflections, pictures, articles, and reviews to Sarah at [church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca) by January 16, 2026.

### Changes to PAR Administration for 2026

Beginning in 2026, Eric Hellebust will take on the role of PAR Administrator. We want to thank Sumiko Jin for her many years of dedicated service in this role. For PAR signup instructions, visit [www.trinitystpauls.ca/donate](http://www.trinitystpauls.ca/donate) or see this week's e-newsletter.

### Volunteer Opportunity- Sunday Greeter

We are looking for volunteers to join our Greeters Guild! This is a monthly commitment (either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month). See this week's e-newsletter for the full description. Contact Alex ([alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com](mailto:alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com)) or Jim Lewis ([tspjimlewis@gmail.com](mailto:tspjimlewis@gmail.com)).

### Registration Forms

A reminder that hard copies of member registration forms are available at the Welcome Table throughout the Sundays in December, and can be accessed digitally by checking your Weekly Announcements email.

### Connecting with Hewitt in December

Hewitt will be in the building at Trinity-St. Paul's for three Sundays each month to lead worship and share in the life of our congregation. During those weeks, he will also be in the church office Monday through Wednesday. On Thursdays, Hewitt will be working from home and is available for online meetings or conversations. Fridays are his Sabbath day off. One week of each month will be Hewitt's reading and research week and he will be available for pastoral emergencies only. **In December and January, Hewitt will be away December 28 to January 10 (2026).** If you would like to connect with Hewitt for pastoral care, conversation, or to discuss church life, you are welcome to reach out during his office hours, schedule an online meeting, or meet with him following Sunday worship. His email is [hholmes@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:hholmes@trinitystpauls.ca) and 416 9228435 ext. 24

### New Members Sessions - January 18, 11:45AM

If you have been worshipping with us in person or online and are sensing a desire to make Trinity-St. Paul's your spiritual home; we warmly invite you to join one of our upcoming New Member Sessions with our minister, Hewitt. We will meet in person on **Sunday, January 18, from 11:45–1:15 pm**. See the e-newsletter for the full announcement.

## **Deep Listening Session – January 20, 2-4PM**

As Trinity-St. Paul's begins a new chapter of ministry, you are warmly invited to join in a series of Deep Listening Sessions. These gatherings provide an opportunity to pause, share, and hear one another's stories as we reflect together on life, community, and the church. All are welcome, members, adherents, newcomers, and friends of TSP. In-person at Trinity-St. Paul's (Minister's Office).

**Please confirm your attendance with the church office by emailing [church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca)**



427 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1X7 - (416) 922-8435 - [www.trinitystpauls.ca](http://www.trinitystpauls.ca)

*Trinity-St. Paul's is an inclusive and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Canada. We seek to be a centre for faith, justice and the arts: **a centre for faith**, where the Gospel is lived and shared; **a centre for justice**, where voices are raised for peace and equity; **a centre for the arts**, where beauty, imagination, and creativity reveal God's presence.*

**Minister:** Hewitt T. Holmes (The Rev., Ph.D. Candidate)

[hholmes@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:hholmes@trinitystpauls.ca)

Phone: (416) 922-8435 ext. 24

**Music Director:** Deborah Park

[musicdirector@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:musicdirector@trinitystpauls.ca)

Phone: (416) 922-8435 ext. 26

**Communications and Administration Coordinator (Church Office):** Sarah Redikopp

[church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:church-admin@trinitystpauls.ca)

Phone: (416) 922-8435 ext. 23

**General Manager:** Aaron Dawson

[adawson@trinitystpauls.ca](mailto:adawson@trinitystpauls.ca)

Phone: (416) 922-8435 ext 25

**Chair of the Board:** Lois Kunkel

[tsploiskunkel@gmail.com](mailto:tsploiskunkel@gmail.com)

**Secretary of the Board:** Dan Main

[tspdanmain@gmail.com](mailto:tspdanmain@gmail.com)

**Church Treasurer:** Bob Savaria

[bsavaria@sympatico.ca](mailto:bsavaria@sympatico.ca)

**Board of Trustees, Chair:** David Craig

[david@davidscraig.com](mailto:david@davidscraig.com)

**Building Management Board, Chair:** Lorna Niebergall

[lorna.niebergall@sympatico.ca](mailto:lorna.niebergall@sympatico.ca)

**Finance Committee, Co-Chairs:**

Del Doucette

Deepak Ramachandran

[doucette@furgielelaw.com](mailto:doucette@furgielelaw.com)

[deepak1.ramachandran@gmail.com](mailto:deepak1.ramachandran@gmail.com)

**Ministry and Personnel, Co-Chairs:**

David Fallis

Jeanne Moffat

[davidfallis408@gmail.com](mailto:davidfallis408@gmail.com)

[jeannemoffat@gmail.com](mailto:jeannemoffat@gmail.com)

[alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com](mailto:alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com)

**Nurturing Community, Chair:** Alexandra Horsky

**Pastoral Care, Co-Chairs:**

Janet Mairs

Paula Nieuwstraten

[jpmairs@outlook.com](mailto:jpmairs@outlook.com)

[tsppaulan@gmail.com](mailto:tsppaulan@gmail.com)

[haddock.janet44@gmail.com](mailto:haddock.janet44@gmail.com)

**Public Witness, Chair:** Janet Haddock

**Stewardship, Co-Chairs:**

Del Doucette

Alexandra Horsky

[doucette@furgielelaw.com](mailto:doucette@furgielelaw.com)

[alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com](mailto:alexandra.horsky@yahoo.com)

[jamesbb.mackey@gmail.com](mailto:jamesbb.mackey@gmail.com)

**Technical Support:** James Mackey

**Worship and Faith Formation, Co-Chairs:**

Lynne Brennan

Martin Pinckney

[lbrennan@georgebrown.ca](mailto:lbrennan@georgebrown.ca)

[martin.pinckney@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:martin.pinckney@mail.utoronto.ca)