

Balzac United Church
December 21, 2025, 10:00am
Guest Minister: Rev. Kelley Warner
Music Ministry: Lee Dowan, Dr. Alex Shawn

Prelude *Variations on French Carol* arr. L. Daquin

Welcome and Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

For millennia, Indigenous people have lived, worked, and played on this Treaty 7 land. They have stewarded this land with connection and respect. Over time people from other parts of the world have come to this region and made their homes here. May we learn together what this land and its people need. May we continue to grow in our good relations with one another.

Lighting the Christ Candle

(George Allan, Laura Turnbull in Gathering 2025)

The Advent Season is a time known for candles, colored lights and bright stars. It is important to light the candles to remind us that we are not overcome in the challenges of despair and discouragement. We are a people of light and love.

Come people of God, let us wait patiently together.
Let us await the coming of Emmanuel.

**Let us listen for God's word,
seeking God's promise, opening ourselves to it.
Let us bless and worship God!**
Let us bless and worship God!

Opening Song *O Come, O Come, Emanuel!* VU # 1

Lighting the 4th Advent Candle

Advent 1 - we lit the first candle for hope-

We seek hope for ourselves, hope for God's beloved world.

Advent 2 - we lit a second candle for peace -

We welcome peace in our hearts and peace on earth.

Advent 3 - we lit the third candle for joy.

We join in the angel's song of joy to the shepherds,

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Love

We look to the Holy Night when the birth of Jesus brings light in our shadows. We like Joseph open our hearts to the mystery of God in our world.

We worship in love, seeking to be people of love.

Christ, be our light and love always. Amen.

Song

Hope is a Star

VU# 7

Opening prayer

(Leeyan Steinthorson, Gathering 2025)

Gentle Creator, who travels beside us and dwells among us, we gather in community to feel your embrace. We are waiting in joyful anticipation for the arrival of your son, God-Made Flesh. Ready our hearts for the hopes, the peace, the joy, and the love that arrives with Jesus. Open our senses to your message today, to feel your grace weaving between us and drawing us closer to you and each other. Thank you for your many blessings, now and always. Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

"The sign of Emmanuel"

Gospel reading

Matthew 1:18-25

"Joseph, Ambassador of Light "

Anthem

Joy Has Dawned

arr. Lloyd Larson

Reflection

Ambassadors of Light

Song

O Ancient Love

VU#17

Offertory

Sing Hallelujah

arr. M. Hayes

Prayer of Presentation

(Elaine Bidgood Sweet, Gathering 2025)

Holy God, bless these gifts and the givers. May the sign of our collaboration in giving be another sign of Emmanuel's presence in the world. Strengthen the work of this church and the growth of your "kindom" coming. Amen

Prayers of the People

(Wendy Maclean, Gathering 2025)

God of Wonder, Light and Love:

We are waiting on this longest of days, with the shortest of light, waiting for you to set us free. God hear our prayers:

VU# 400 Lord, listen to your children praying

Lord, send your Spirit in this place

Lord, listen to your children praying

Send us love, send us power, send us grace

Fear keeps us huddled in dim light, but your love pierces the shadows with a call: Come, come! Like a mother calling her children home, you reach out for us and draw us to you. When we open our spirits, we discover we are not alone. We are all your children wherever we may live. We lift up those who live in Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Palestine, North and south Korea, Sudan and Egypt, Calgary to Torrington, from different places of worship, the synagogue, the mosque, the forest. We hear and experience the cries of your children, for shelter, for healing, for peace. Holy One where our siblings have been silenced by brutal regimes or poverty, or fear, help us to raise our voices for justice. For loved ones in our families and communities who are struggling, may our prayers find their path to help in ways of compassion and care. God hear our prayers

Lord, listen to your children praying

Lord, send your Spirit in this place

Lord, listen to your children praying

Send us love, send us power, send us grace

Fear keeps us huddled in the dim light, which makes it hard to perceive ourselves as you perceive us. We forget the goodness and live with which we are made. We forget that we do not earn your love by work, or virtue, or by success. You give it without conditions and without measure. In Jesus, you give us your life, and you give us your presence, your courage and your comfort. Holy One, we praise you and give you thanks. God hear our prayers:

Lord, listen to your children praying

Lord, send your Spirit in this place

Lord, listen to your children praying

Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Help us to become ambassadors of light in a hurting world and we pray as Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Closing song *A Light is Gleaming* VU# 82 v 1,2 & 4

Benediction

Our God of love is always near. Let us allow God's love to reign in our lives as we go forth as ambassadors of light into a wearied world, God being our helper. Amen.

Postlude

Sleepers Wake arr. H Livingstone, Jr.