**First United Church**

*Seeking to be a welcoming community of Christian faith, proclaiming and celebrating the love of God in Jesus Christ through the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit*

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December 02, 2018 @ 10:30am

*7 Curtis St., St.Thomas, ON N5P 1H3 Phone: (519) 631-7570*

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*MINISTERS: ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD*

*Pastoral Minister: Rev. Emmanuel K. Ofori*

*Music Minister: Jody McDonald-Groulx*

*Secretary/Treasurer: Lori Hoffman*

*Custodian: Dave Luftenegger*

**First Sunday in Advent**

**PREACHER: Rev. Emmanuel K. Ofori**

**\*** You are invited to stand if comfortable doing so

VU = Voices United MV = More Voices

***We Gather Together***

***Musical Prelude***

***Decorating the Christmas Tree***

***Opening Prayer***

***Hymn:* VU#60** *“O, Come All Ye Faithful” (vv. 1, 2, & 5)*

***Passing of the Peace*** *(***VU 958** *“Halle, Halle, Halle”)*

***Welcome/Life and Work of the Church***

***We Draw Near to Worship***

One: Your promise dawns upon us, Living God –

**All: we wait expectantly.**

One: Your hope arises among us, Living God –

**All: we wait confidently.**

One: Your Cherished One appears for us, Living God –

**All: we wait in joy.**

One: Glory be to the Creator our Father, and to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit our Comforter.

**All: As it was in the beginning, it’s now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

***Lighting of the Christmas Tree***

***O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Thy beauty everlasting***

***O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Thy beauty everlasting***

***Just like the life God promised us***

***Through Jesus Christ, God’s newborn Son***

***O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Thy beauty everlasting***

***Musical Offering:*** Jerome Thomas

***We Light the Advent Candle of Hope***

Rebuilding the future; restoring hope.

Voice 1: Today we light the first candle in Advent, the candle of hope.

*The Candle of Hope is lit*

**All: May the light from this candle kindle anew the hope for the world Isaiah proclaimed.**

*Voice 2: Hope for the time when God's call for justice is complete. When all of us will go up to the mountain of the Lord's house together.*

**Voice** 1: When modern swords like nuclear weapons, cluster bombs, and policies that put profit before people will be made into ploughshares.

**All: We journey in hope for the time when everyone will have enough. We journey in hope for the time when peace will reign.**

*Voice 2: May the light of this Advent candle be a sign of the hope we claim as we wait for the babe to be born. Let us pray together*

**All: Grant us the vision of our swords being smashed into ploughshares, O God.**

**Renew our hope for the time when war will end and there will be enough for all your children. Amen.**

Voice 1: Let us join in the song of Hope.

**ALL:** (VU #6 v.1)

***A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright;***

***A candle of HOPE in December's dark night.***

***While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky***

***Our hearts we prepare now, for Jesus is nigh.***

***Thanksgiving/Intercessory Prayer/The Lord’s Prayer***

We have prayed all these through Christ Jesus our Lord; He is the One who taught us to pray saying … “**Our Father …”**

***Musical Offering:*** Senior Choir

***We Respond in Love***

***Offering:*** Rachel Gorman

***Hymn/Song of Dedication***

***God of Love hear our prayer,***

***bless this offering we bring you.***

***May our lives do your will,***

***guide and guard us forever.***

***Give us courage to stand for truth,***

***help us give to others.***

***God of Love hear our prayer,***

***bless this offering we bring you.***

***Offertory Prayer***

***We Listen for God’s Word***

***Scripture Readings:*** *Job 14:7-12; Luke 2:25-35*

Reader: This is the Word of God

**All: Thanks be to God.**

***\* Hymn of Preparation: “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less…”***

***My hope is built on nothing less***

***Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;***

***I dare not trust the sweetest frame,***

***But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.***

***Refrain:***

***On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand –***

***All other ground is sinking sand,***

***All other ground is sinking sand.***

***When darkness veils His lovely face,***

***I rest on His unchanging grace;***

***In ev’ry high and stormy gale***

***My anchor holds within the veil. Refrain***

***His oath, His covenant, his blood***

***Support me in the whelming flood;  
 When all around my soul gives way,***

***He then is all my hope and stay. Refrain.***

***When He shall come with trumpet sound,***

***O may I then in him be found,***

***Dressed in His righteousness alone,***

***Faultless to stand before the throne. Refrain.***

***The Message:*** “Preparing in Hope”

***We Go Out to Serve***

***\*Closing Hymn:* VU#43***“Go Tell It On The Mountain”*

***\* Benediction***

***\* Triple Amen***

***\*Commissioning Hymn:* MV#33***“Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope” (2x)*

***Jesus came bringing us hope, Jesus came bringing us hope,***

***Jesus came bringing us hope, hallelujah forevermore!***

***\* Musical Postlude***

**LIFE & WORK OF THE CHURCH**

**December 2, 2018**

**The Youth Group would like to thank everyone for their support of their Hot Chocolate/Coffee Sundays in November!**

Because of your donations they were able to give **more than**

**$300 to Inn Out of the Cold**!! Thank you so much!

**Happy birthday to**: Kaitlyn Bosveld, Teah Welch.

**TODAY:** **\*Our ‘Secret Santa Mission’**  There’s still time to choose a bag and shop for a child in need! **Please return your gift bag to the sanctuary NEXT Sunday, Dec 9.** Please don’t gift wrap. Feel free to buy more than one of the same gift. Our gifts will be distributed by CHRISTMAS CARE along with their annual Christmas FOOD HAMPERS. **We welcome gifts of non perishable food items to help fill the hampers, NEXT SUNDAY, Dec. 9th**

**\***You are invited to join us for a catered **Roast Beef on a Bun lunch following worship today in the Assembly Hall.** A freewill offering basket will be out to accept your donations toward the cost of the meal!

**\*2019 Offering Envelopes are available for pickup in the Library!**

**This week:**

**Monday to Friday – Christmas Shoppe is in the Gym**

**Tuesday: \*EarlyON Playgroup** in the AH - 9:30 – 11:30am

**Wednesday: \*Bible Study @ 7pm**. Your world may seem to be crumbling around you. Somebody you know may be hurting. Come join us to explore the **Bible book of Ruth** to discover Someone who can come alongside and support and encourage you and your loved ones.

**Thursday – \***The **Youth Group will be Volunteering for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive** this year. They will be accepting donations at **both entrances of the** **St. Thomas Walmart on Thursday, December 6 & Thursday, December 20 from 6-8pm.** If anyone would like to join them, they’d love to have you – contact Justin Chute!

**\*Sr. Choir @ 7:30pm!** Don’t be shy – singing’s great for the soul – come and give it a try!

**NEXT Sunday:** **\*Sunday Morning Prayer Gathering**: 9:30-10am every Sunday in the Fellowship Room. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**\*Communion will be served**

**\*Return Your Secret Santa Bags & bring non-perishable food items for Christmas Care!**

**\*Visitation Sunday -** Would you consider delivering a plant to one of our members who can’t get out to church? Simply come up to the tables in front of the pulpit after worship next Sunday, and you will be given a plant, a name and an address. The visits are to bring happiness, Christmas joy and greetings from First Church. They do not have to be long … just cheery! Our hope is that enough people come forward so that each visitor only has one plant to deliver*. Thank you from the Membership Committee*

**Upcoming Dates & Events**

**Sunday, December 23 – PLEASE NOTE: \*The Children’s Pageant** will be held on Sunday, December 23 during worship (not Christmas Eve as originally advertised). Children are asked to meet in the Assembly Hall with the Church School Teachers between 10 – 10:15 am! The costumes will be available that day  - the Teachers will help them choose a costume and make sure they are ready for the service at 10:30am!  All children are welcome to participate!

**Monday, December 24 – \*Christmas Eve Service @7pm**

**Vision 2020:**

To be a vibrant Community of faith engaging ALL, with a focus

on youth & young families in ministry and reaching out to the world with the love of God in Christ.

**Financial Update**

Each week $3,500 in General Fund Givings is needed to meet expenses.

Last week our General Fund Givings were $1944.70.

**TODAY’S MESSAGE**

Have you ever been at a point in your life where everything just seemed to be going perfect – mountaintop experience – then suddenly, you find yourselves at the foot of the mountain, desperately trying to dig out from under the rock and rubble that came down with us and on top of us from that mountain?

When life gets hard, we sometimes forget that God is right there, listening to us and addressing our needs.

Our circumstances can cause us to drift away from God and not trust that His plan is right for us.

But God knows and understands the hopes and fears we keep in our hearts. In fact, God is the best listener. Therefore, as you prepare for Christmas festivities, remember this …

1. God is your ***Help*** in times of trouble
2. God is your Shelter/***Home*** through the stormy blast
3. God is your ***Hope*** in moments of despair

**Think about this:**

The hymn writer Edward Mote wrote

***“My hope is built on nothing less***

***Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness …***

***On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;***

***All other ground is sinking sand.”***

**ADVENT MESSAGES**

During the advent month of December, we will be reflecting on the Christ Child as follows:

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| DATE | TOPIC |
| **December 2** | **Preparing In HOPE**  Christ alone can rebuild our broken lives and restore hope within us. |
| **December 9** | **Praying For PEACE**  Christ the Prince of Peace teaches the way to be peacemaker. |
| **December 16** | **Praising God with JOY**  Christ Child fills our emptiness with the joy He brings. |
| **December 23** | **Proclaiming His LOVE**  Christ pours His love into our hearts, so we can share the love of God with others. |
| **December 24** | **Presenting our GIFTS to The Christ Child**  We respond to Christ, the inexpressible gift of God |