



Northlea United Church

**In the community. For the community.**

125 Brentcliffe Road, Toronto, ON, M4G 3Y7

[www.northleaunited.ca](http://www.northleaunited.ca) ✧ 416-425-5252



**December 24, 2023**  
**Communion**  
**Christmas Eve**

At Northlea United Church,  
we encourage one another as we:  
Love God ✧ Connect with others  
Nurture the spirit ✧ Serve the world

Northlea rests on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Thank you for joining us for service today whether in-person or online. If there is anything we can do to improve your experience, please let us know by calling the church office at 416 425 5252 or emailing us at [office@northleaunited.ca](mailto:office@northleaunited.ca). There are many ways to access online videos whether live streamed or pre-recorded. The Northlea United Facebook page or our website will have links to our services:

**Facebook:**

Simply sign on to Facebook and search for the Northlea United page. You will find links there.

**[www.northleaunited.ca](http://www.northleaunited.ca):**

Visit our website. Links will be posted to our homepage for easy access.

**Thank you for helping with today's service:**

Rev. Jennifer Henry – Presiding

David Jafelice – Music Director

Senan Whelan – Organist

Marianne Zin – Soprano ✧ Karen Davidson – Alto

Joshua Clemenger – Tenor ✧ Andrew Gunpath – Bass

Jo Dullard – Video Production ✧ Donna Rutz – Social Media Support

Harshil Maram – Reader

**Guest Minister: Rev. Jennifer Henry**

**Minister:** Rev. Lee-Ann Ahlstrom [lee-ann@northleaunited.ca](mailto:lee-ann@northleaunited.ca)

**Music Director:** David Jafelice [david@northleaunited.ca](mailto:david@northleaunited.ca)

**Office Administrator:** Tricia Reid [office@northleaunited.ca](mailto:office@northleaunited.ca)

**Facility Manager:** Robert Pringle [building@northleaunited.ca](mailto:building@northleaunited.ca)

**Congregational & Community Outreach Coordinator:** Jo Dullard  
[jo@northleaunited.ca](mailto:jo@northleaunited.ca)

Consider financially supporting Northlea United through Canada Helps (scan QR code) or by contacting the office to receive a Pre-Authorized Remittance form to set up automatic monthly donations or by mailing in your donation.



Please contact the church office if you would like more information.

**416 425 5252 or [office@northleaunited.ca](mailto:office@northleaunited.ca)**

\*\* The “Invitation to the Communion Prayer” is adapted from a prayer created by Carol Holbrook Prickett. The “Sending Forth” is by Gertrude Lebens.

**Northlea United Church**  
**Sunday, December 24, 2023. 5:00 PM**

**We welcome and thank Rev. Jennifer Henry for her leadership in today's worship service.**

**Choral Prelude:** Wexford Carol – (Traditional Irish, 12<sup>th</sup> Century) arr. Elaine Hagenberg  
Carol of the Bells – (Ukrainian carol) music by M. Leontovich,  
words & arrangement by Peter Wilhousky  
Gesú Bambino – (*The Infant Jesus*) by Pietro A. Yon

**Welcome**

**Call to Worship:**

This is the night

**When joy bursts into our world.**

This is the night

**When earth meets heaven**

This is the night

**When God comes to be among us**

Tonight, in this beloved community

**The Christ Child is born**

**Gathering Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful**

**Voices United 60**

**Candle Lighting:**

**Susie Henderson**

Through our Advent journey, we have lit the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

**We have yearned for you to be among us.**

*Light the first, third and fourth candles.  
In solidarity with the churches in the Holy Land,  
we will leave the second candle, the peace candle,  
unlit tonight.*

**Hymn: A Candle Is Burning –**

**Voices United 6,v 5**

Into this now, this night, this world You come,  
vulnerable, beautiful, impossible Hope.

Sink deep into our worried hearts,  
inhabit our wounded lands,  
unsettle our established injustice.

Find us, Blessed Christ Child.

**With the peace, joy and love of a world transformed. Amen.**

*Light the fifth candle (Christ Candle)*

**The Gift of Peace**

*(Take a moment to turn and greet one another in the peace of Christ—a smile, a bow, a wave)*

**Opening Prayer:**

Christ Jesus, we cannot say precisely from where you came, nor do we fully understand the why. But we know that the heart of this mystery is love. Love came down. Love lives among us. Love transforms us in hope. Love drowns out hate. Love never ends. Holy One, may your steadfast love find us tonight. May it leave us changed and may it send us forth to be love in a world that needs it still. Holy Child of our hearts, hear our prayer. Amen.

**Hymn: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing**

**Voices United 48**

❖ **Listening** ❖

**Prayer for Illumination:**

Holy Spirit, stir us with your word,  
as we listen for inspiration in your sacred story.  
Amen.

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:2-7

Harshil Maram

In this reading we hear God's voice,  
**The Spirit is still speaking, thanks be to God.**

**Hymn: Joy to the World**

**Voices United 59**

**Gospel:** Luke 2: 1-20

Rev. Jennifer Henry

The Gospel of Christ  
**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection: Do we Believe?**

❖ **Responding** ❖

**Anthem:** Night of Silence

Daniel Kantor, arr. by Marilyn Biery

~ Sacrament of Communion ~

**The Invitation:**

**Thanksgiving Prayer:**

My heart opens to you God

**Our hearts open to one another**

Let's begin in gratitude

**With thanksgiving for this land, for this place, for this community**

Help us to enter this story

**And believe that hope is possible.**

The way the story goes, there are parents, young ones, on the move, with so little, not even a plan for a baby to be born.

*Place Mary and Joseph on the altar*

We pray tonight for those rushing to get to family, for those fleeing violence and war, and any without shelter.

**May unexpected comfort find them.**

In this story there is no king and no warrior. God comes as a wriggly, wee baby born in a manger.

*Place the manger and Christ Child on the altar*

We pray tonight for those most in need of tenderness and joy, for the places and spaces that crave the Holy, where there is division and deepest despair.

**May unexpected grace enter every aching heart.**

In this story, there are angels, an other-worldly lot, brave enough to bring life-changing news—spectacular news—even to those not ready for it.

*Place the angels on the altar*

In this story, there are shepherds, an odd sort of folk, who know the hardship of life and open themselves to the transformation that this good news means.

*Place the shepherds and sheep on the altar*

In this story, there are wise ones, strangers who will follow a path unknown, lit only by a star.

*Place the magi and camels on the altar*

We pray tonight for those who can only dream of equity, justice and peace.

**May we be brave enough to believe in transformation and help bring it to birth.**

Together with Mary and Joseph, with the angels and shepherds and wise ones, with sheep and cattle and camels, we lift our voices in praise:

*Sing this refrain after the choir and after each verse.*



Ho - san - na! Ho - san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

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### **We remember:**

In this story, a blessed child grows to be our teacher. He draws to himself the unexpected, unrecognized, and unloved. He comes alongside all those made marginal by the empires of this world and risks it all for love and justice. Jesus, who came to be with us, offers a way home to God.

On the night before he was murdered for his extravagant love, he called his friends to the table. He took ordinary things—bread and wine—and he asked his friends to remember. Taking the bread, he held it, broke it, and offered it to them and said: “eat this, and each and every time you do, remember me. My body is broken for you.” And then, taking the cup, he held it in his hands, lifted it, and offered it to them and said: “drink this, and each and every time you do, remember me. My life is poured out for you.”

Jesus has died. But my friends, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

We sing to remember:

*Sing this after the choir.*



Christ has died, Christ is ris - - sen, Christ will come a - gain.

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We remember: the God who loved us into being; the Child who came into the world to be with us; and the Christ from whose body hope comes again. We pray that the spirit fills these gifts with comfort and joy, feeding us with the hope that transforms the world.

*Sing this after the choir.*



A - - men, a - - men, a - - - - men.

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Love came down. Come now to the stable, come to the manger, come to this table—and feast on that love.

### **Sharing the Meal:**

*Please come up to receive the bread and grape juice and return to your seats. We will then eat the bread and drink the juice together, at the same time.*

Let us share the bread of heaven. **Thanks be to God.**

*Eat the bread together.*

Let us drink the cup of blessing. **Thanks be to God.**

*Drink the juice together.*

My friends let us not leave this meal the same. Let us be filled up by God's love, that we might be deep in spirit, bold in our discipleship, and daring in our justice. May the peace of this Holy Child—born in our hearts tonight--flow through us to our aching world. Amen.

**Prayers of the People:**

**Lord's Prayer:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us away from temptation and deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

*Candles are lit from the Christ candle and light is spread across the church*

**Closing Hymn: Silent Night**

**Voices United 67**

**Sending Forth:**

May you be blessed by the Womb from which the world was born;  
by the Child who united heaven and earth,  
and by the Spirit who quickens our every breath.

Go with love and hope so that the world may be witness to this joy.

**Amen.**

**Sung Amen**

**Canedo/Hurd**

A - - men. A - - men. Now and for - ev - er, a - - men. A - - men. A - - men. Now and for - ev - er, a - - men.

*rit. poco a poco al fine*

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**Postlude**

### Reading Next Week - From *The Gathering*

Christmas Day: Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:1-7, 8-20

New Year's Eve: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

New Year's Day: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6; Matthew 25:31-46

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

### COMING EVENTS:

**NEW INFORMATION - Sunday, December 31, 2023** – 10:30 am – New Year's Eve – pre-recorded online service. Northlea United has also been invited to join worship in person at Lawrence Park Community Church (2180 Bayview Ave, North York, ON M4N 3K7) at 10:30 am in a joint service with Eglinton St Georges.

**Sunday, January 7, 2024** – 10:30 am – Epiphany Worship with Rev. Ambury Stuart

**Sunday, January 14, 2024:**

- 10:30 am – Worship with Rev. Eun-Joo Park
- 5:00 pm – Northlea United is thrilled to host "**Broadway & Beyond: An Exploration of Musical Theatre and English Art Song**" featuring our own Joshua Clemenger along with Ivan Jovanovic. They will take us on a musical journey through the soundscapes of English Art Song to the stages of Broadway.

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024** – 11:30 am – Lunch & Learn: Fraud Awareness with Toronto Police – register by noon January 12, 2024 – [office@northleaunited.ca](mailto:office@northleaunited.ca) or 416 425 5252.

### ONGOING EVENTS

- **Wednesdays:**
  - Nothing But Treble** youth choir from 4:00 - 6:00 pm - First day in 2024 – January 10
  - For the Love of Singing** community choir will resume at 7:30 pm in February – date to be confirmed.
- **Thursdays:**
  - Art Circle** at 1:30 pm - everyone welcome. First day in 2024 – January 11
  - Northlea Church Choir** practice at 7:30 pm. First day in 2024 – January 4
- **Fridays:**
  - **Bible Study** at 2:30 pm on Zoom. First day in 2024 – January 12

To find out what's happening at Northlea United, visit [northleaunited.ca](http://northleaunited.ca).