Sunday November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent – Don't Be Afraid!

We Gather In God's Presence

Acknowledgement of the Land (not in unison)

This land is our Creators. For thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked on and cared for this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. As we come into worship, we recognize that Dorchester United Church is located on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg, the Attawandaronk, and the Mississauga. The community of Dorchester is represented by the London Township Treaty of 1796.

As treaty people, we commit to listen, learn, and work toward justice and reconciliation as together we care for God's creation and for one another.

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation:

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

Prelude:

Gathering Hymn VU 1 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1,2,7)

Call to Worship

One: Something stirs deep within us – a longing, a hope,
All: A desire to be seen and known.
One: Something stirs deep with us – uncertainty, fear,
All: A desire for peace that sustains.
One: It is Advent; a time of waiting, hoping, yearning.
All: A time when God's people listen for good news.
One: "Do not be afraid!" the angels proclaim.
All: We hear the songs of the angels and we go forward in faith.
One: Something stirs deep within us -
All: Come, Lord Jesus, come! *

Gathering Prayer

Anthem:

Learning With All God's Children

The Candle of Hope

One: In a world that feels uncertain the angels declare: "Do not be afraid." We light this first candle in our Advent wreath as an act of hope, trusting in the promises of God.

All: We wait, hearing the angels' words and allowing the flame of hope to be kindled within us. (The Candle of Hope is lit)

Together: God of waiting, calm our hearts. Help us to focus on you and teach us to wait in the warmth of your light and hope. Open us to hear your promise. Amen.

(Sung Response VU #7 Hope is a Star vs. 1

Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.
When God is a child, there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture: Luke 1:5-23

Sung Response to the Word (MV 90 Don't Be Afraid) (sung through Advent)

Don't be afraid.
My love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid.
My love is stronger and I have promised,
promised to be always near. (sing x2)

Sermon: Do Not Be Afraid

Hymn VU 286 If You Will Trust in God to Guide You (vs. 1,3)

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Offertory Hymn: VU 55 In the Bleak Midwinter (vs. 4))

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,

if I were a wise man, I would do my part,

yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

Prayer of Dedication

A Time of Covenanting

Act of Covenanting

Prayer of Faith

Uniting God, you call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship:

to celebrate your presence,

to live with respect in creation,

to be your servants in the service of others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,

to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.

Send your Holy Spirit to bind us in full communion

so that we may be a uniting church

embodying your love for the world.

As one, we proclaim:

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

you are with us,

we are not alone,

all glory and power be unto you.

Amen.

Promises of the New Minister

Promises of the Community of Faith

Rev. Paul Browning: Will you join with Rev. Tracy in a ministry of worship, study, prayer, and action within Dorchester United Church, Anter River Watershed regional Council and within the wider church?

Members of Dorchester United Church: We will.

Rev. Paul Browning: Will you support them as they serve among you in this ministry?

Members of Dorchester United Church: We will.

Presentation of Symbols

Prayer

Decommissioning of the Search Team

Prayers of God's People & The 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 not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn VU 639 One More Step Along the World We Go vs. 1, 3, 4 (changing all of the "I" and "me" to "We" and "us")

Commissioning and Benediction

Sung Response: MV 220 Hope Shines as the Solitary Star

Hope shines as the solitary star,
faith is the inner light.
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumine the pathway home. (sing x2) (each week we will change from hope, peace, joy, love, Christ to match the candles)

Postlude:

*The Call to Worship is adapted from a prayer written by ***Dr. Derek C. Weber, Director of Preaching Ministries, Discipleship Ministries of the UMC***