

St. James United Church

United by Faith
Strengthened by Friendship
Building a Community of Love and Justice



CHRISTMAS EVE



The love of God is represented by a heart with three triangles, that seem to fold inward, ready to embrace.

December 24, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

181 Portland Street
Dartmouth
B2Y 1J5
902-464-8852



(▲ Rise in body or in spirit/Responses in bold)

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome & Introductions

Call to Worship

In those days, in the beginning,
Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem.

He was to be registered,
and she was expecting a child.

The time came for Mary to give birth,
so she delivered her child,

wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

**And the angels sang,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth,
peace to all whom God favors.”**

Let us worship our with-us God.

Let us sing songs of praise!

Candle Lighting Liturgy

In a weary and worn world,
how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

Let us begin with hope.

Let us begin with peace.

Let us begin with joy.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love,
for surely love knows your name.

Today, in addition to the candles of hope,

peace, joy, and love,
we light the Christ Candle.

For surely God is in this place.

Surely the Spirit is near.

Surely love knows our name.

May we rest in that good news.

Unto us a child is born.

**A light shines in the darkness and the
darkness cannot overcome it.**

Glory to God in the highest heaven! Amen.

Candle Lighting Song - Candle Light, Sacred Light
Tune – Silent Night

**Candle light, sacred light.
Mystery flames, burning bright
Hope, joy and peace
are the gifts of this night.
Love poured out over all within sight.
Shine your light in our world;
shine your light in our world.**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

You Are a Blessing

Scripture & Reflection

To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary # 14

We Can't Go It Alone

Scripture & Reflection

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks # 75

Do the Good That Is Ours to Do

Scripture & Reflection

Angels We Have Heard on High # 38

Hope Is Worth the Risk

Scripture & Reflection

The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy # 73

Love Knows Your Name

Scripture and Reflection

Ministry of Music – A Tiny Child Will Come

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

▲ PASSING OF THE PEACE

▲ Communion Hymn – Come and Gather

Come and gather, at the stable
They have journeyed far from home
 Mary, Joseph, young and able
 Travelled ways as yet unknown
 With a dream of untold promise
That great things would come to pass
 In the sureness of God's blessing
 They found peace and rest as last.

Come and gather, round the manger
Where the Christ child gently lays.
 Open up our hearts to wonder
 At the glory of that day.
Visit him with thanks and promise,
 Peace and hope and love and joy
 Take them daily into living
 Wrapped up in a baby boy.

Come and gather, at the table
Where we seek him once again
 Let us enter into mystery
 Needed now as much as then.
In the breaking of the sweet bread
 In the pouring of the wine,
 We meet him again among us
 With a love so dear, divine.

Come and gather, in his footsteps
We will tread where he once went
 With the lost and lonely people
 Now to them we're also sent
Loving, working, tending, caring
 In our Saviour's name we pray
 In our work and in our worship
 We find hope in every day.

Communion Prayer

On this holy night,
as we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
we remember that love knows our names.

From the shepherds in the fields
to Mary in her strength,
from Joseph who stood by her,
to the shepherds
who were the first to respond,
God's love called each by name.
And tonight, God's love calls you.

**We come to the table
where love meets us,
knows us, and welcomes us.**

This is Christ's table,
open to all who seek the way of love.

No matter who you are
or where you come from,
love knows your name
and makes space for you here.

Great Thanksgiving

God is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

On this holy night,
we give thanks for the gift of Jesus,
who was born into the world
to show us that love is not distant but near—
near enough to call each of us by name.

**We thank you, O God,
for your love that spoke
creation into being,
for your faithfulness
through prophets and promises,
and for your presence in the life of Jesus,
who taught us how to love and be loved.**

With angels singing and shepherds rejoicing,
we join the heavenly chorus:
**Holy, holy, holy God,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**
Hosanna in the highest!
**Blessed is the one
who comes in the name of the Lord.**
Hosanna in the highest!

Telling the Story

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Distribution

Prayer After Communion

**Holy and loving God,
we give you thanks for this holy meal
that reminds us we are never alone
and always known.
Strengthened by your love,
may we carry the light of Christ
into the world,
calling others by name
and sharing your grace wherever we go.
Amen.**

Invitation to Generosity & Prayer of Dedication

THRESHOLD INTO GOD'S WORLD

▲ Silent Night # 67

▲ Commissioning & Blessing

MUSIC TAKES US INTO THE WORLD

▲ Joy to the World # 59

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*Liturgy – A Sanctified Art  
Communion Liturgy/Candle Lighting Song/Communion Hymn  
~ Rev. Catherine MacDonald*

## "Hey Love"

My grandmother was strong.  
That's what they tell me.  
She played piano and clipped coupons.  
She raised four kids.  
One was sick.  
One never would, never could grow up.  
But she loved them all.

And when life fell apart in brand new ways,  
she bought books.  
She went back to school.  
She started over again.  
She was the kind of strong  
that reminds you of a live oak.  
The kind of woman, the kind of tree,  
you'd want to crawl up into and whisper,  
"Tell me how you did it.  
Tell me how you survived the storm."

She was fifty-one when a vessel in her brain burst,  
blood coloring outside the lines,  
blood stealing large swathes of her strength  
with every pulse.

After that, she never did play piano,  
read, or clip coupons.  
After that, she never could find the words.  
Nouns became things to point out.  
Names became numbers.  
Conversation creaked and slowed,  
but one word stayed.

The name of my baptism never crossed her lips,  
but when my grandmother saw me,  
she'd say—Heeeeey Love.  
My grandmother and God have this in common.  
Both know my name.  
Both call me Love.

*For Nana: Margaret Are ~ Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed*

# *Merry Christmas!*

On behalf of everyone at St. James,  
thank you for worshipping together on this joyous nights



**LESSONS AND LAUGHTER!**  
**DECEMBER 29TH @ 10 AM**  
**Potluck Breakfast Worship**  
**In the**  
**Lower Hall**



**SIX STONE JARS**  
*Filled With Abundance!*

New series starts January 19th



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to tell us what you thought  
of the service. Just three questions.  
We promise not to spam you!