

St. James United Church

Christmas Eve ~ 7 PM



Worship Leader – Rev. Catherine MacDonald
Music Director – Dean Bradshaw

181 Portland Street
Dartmouth
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902-464-8852



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

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome & Introductions

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF CHRISTMAS!

Lighting the Advent Candles

Tonight we light the candle of hope.
Hope has been our travelling companion
through the waiting days.
It has whispered to us that the story is not finished,
that even in shadowed places,
a light is preparing its way.
**O Holy One, kindle hope in us,
that we may see the world as you dream it to be
and join in its healing.**

We light the candle of peace.
Peace is not the absence of struggle;
it is the presence of a deeper calm—
a stillness we glimpse in a stable,
where heaven leans toward earth in tenderness.
**O Holy One, shape peace in us,
that we may become instruments of compassion
in a world that longs for calm and justice.**

We light the candle of joy.
Joy is the heart's astonishment
that the Holy chooses to dwell among us—
not in grandeur, but in the ordinary places
where we live and work and love.
**O Holy One, stir joy in us,
that we may delight in your presence
and share good news with courage.**

We light the candle of love.
This is the love that reaches across borders,
softens hardened hearts,
and carries us home to one another.
It is love that arrives tonight,
wrapped in the small, warm weight of a newborn.

**O Holy One, awaken love in us,
that we may live with generosity and tenderness
toward all your children.**

At last we come to this moment.
In the deep of night,
when the world seems still enough to listen,
we light the Christ candle.
This is the light that no darkness can overcome,
the light that holds every hope,
every longing, every prayer we have carried.
Christ is born among us.

**O Holy One,
shine in our hearts this night.
May the light of Christ guide our steps,
steady our spirits,
and lead us toward justice, compassion,
and deep, abiding peace.**

▲ We Sing – O Come, All Ye Faithful # 60

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

Ministry of Music – On a Night of Wonder

Ancient Words – Luke 2: 1-6

We Sing – O Little Town of Bethlehem (vs 1) VU # 64

Ancient Words – Luke 2: 6, 7

We Sing – Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (vs. 1) VU # 58

We Sing – Angels We Have Heard on High (v.1, *refrain*) VU # 38

Ancient Words - Luke 2: 8-17

We Sing – Angels We Have Heard on High (v.3, *refrain*) VU # 38

Ancient Words – Matthew 2: 1-12

We Sing – The First Nowell (vs.3 & 5) VU # 91

**WE GATHER AT THE TABLE
WITH OUR GIFTS AND OUR PRAYERS**

The Invitation

▲ Sharing the Peace – The Peace of Christ be with you

▲ We Sing – Come and Gather at the Stable (Tune # 374)

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.

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING PRAYER
& OUR COMMUNITY PRAYERS**

We gather around the manger with gratitude:
In human flesh, Jesus came and humbly lived among us,
**teaching us the wisdom of Love
and bringing hope for a better world to birth.**

We gather around this table and offer gratitude:
for the gifts of love that sustain and nurture us
for this ancient story and the gift of song,
for ordinary blessings of food and drink and shelter
for community, friends and family
for the wonder and delight of simple things...
**We pause to name in gratitude
those particular blessings
that come to mind and heart for us today....**

We pray we may find Love's presence
not only in the warm memories of Bethlehem,
**but take the gifts of peace, hope, love and joy
into our daily living.**

May we be Christ's presence, Love incarnate,
as we offer friendship to people forgotten and excluded,
ease the pain of friends who are lonely and grieving,
care for those who are hurting, ill, lost and afraid...
We name in prayer those situations and people
known to us this day...

**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**

We gather at this table
as a community of love and hope.
**We pray a blessing upon this
ordinary bread and wine:**
Come, Spirit, come.
Fill this bread and this cup with your Presence.
Come, Spirit, come.
Fill we who have gathered with Love.
Together, we sing this blessing:

We Sing – Come and Gather at the Stable (Tune # 374)

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.

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

(Our bread is gluten free

*Communion will be served in the pews,
please wait till everyone is served before eating and drinking)*

Prayer after Communion

For bread and drink that nourishes us

For community that sustains us

we give thanks.

May Christmas be born again

not in a manger, but in us.

May our lives be a Bethlehem,

where Love is revealed

and all things and all people are made new.

Amen

We Sing – Come and Gather at the Stable (Tune # 374)

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.

Invitation to Generosity

We Sing Our Offering – What Child Is This?

1. What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain

*This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

2. Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. R
3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him. R
4. So send us out to do his work
with arms stretched out to others.
Bring peace and joy and hope and love
to all our sisters and brothers. R

Prayer of Dedication

THRESHOLD INTO GOD'S WORLD

▲ Silent Night # 67

▲ Blessing

MUSIC TAKES US INTO THE WORLD

▲ Joy to the World # 59

*Communion Liturgy adapted from material created by Rev. Dr. Shawn Redden
Candle Lighting Liturgy – Rev. Catherine MacDonald
Photo – Rev. Catherine MacDonald
Last verse of What Child Is This? – Rev. Catherine MacDonald*



Merry Christmas!

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



There's a Crack, a Crack
in Everything...

That's how the

Light

gets in...

The Music & Theology of
Leonard Cohen

Series Starts January 4, 2026



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