

☆☆☆ God With Us:
A Story of Belonging



Central Presbyterian Church
Christmas Pageant

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAMILTON

165 Charlton Ave. W. Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8

December 21, 2025 10:30 a.m.



Christmas Pageant 2025

Welcome to Worship at Central this morning!

Worship Leaders: Rev. Hannah Lovalgio, Dr. Marcus Scholtes, Kristel Forcier, Paula Grove

Lighting the Christ Candle at Christmas: The Umezie Family

Faith Finders Pageant Players:

Zechariah - Caspian

Elizabeth - Abi

Gabriel - Jack

Mary - Juniper

Joseph - Sam

Shepherds - Miriam, Fisher, Willa

Angels - Patrick, Fred, Jack Finn, Flora

Simeon - Caspian

Magi - Kene, Gregoire, Risa

Herod - Tristan

Readers: Jack, Kene, Sam, Risa, Gregoire, Caspian, Duncan, Abi, Juniper, Sicily

Greeters: Jim & Myrna Evel

* *Indicates standing, as you are able.*

PRELUDE *Wexford Carol*

Irish Trad. Arr. by M. Wilberg

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

INTROIT *People in Darkness* #124 vs. 1

People in darkness are looking for light. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ.

People with blindness are longing for sight. Come, Lord Jesus Christ.

These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of love.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Reader 1: In every act of courage and compassion,
God whispers, "Do not be afraid,"
and love draws near.

Reader 2: As hearts open and the world leans toward wonder,
we come again to this small, brave act:
we light a candle and dare to call it love.

Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are lit.

Reader 1: Love that does not hurry past our pain,
Love that stays when answers are hard to find,
Love that makes a home among us.

Reader 2: Love that is patient and fierce,
tender and resilient,
love made flesh and given freely.

Congregation: Draw near, God is here.

Reader 1: May this flame guide our waiting and our waking,
and teach us to notice love abiding close at hand.

Congregation: Draw near, God is here.

Reader 2: Let us worship God with gladness!

IN THE BEGINNING WAS JESUS THE WORD.

* HYMN - Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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1. Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH

THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY

CHOIR ANTHEM *Mary's Magnificat*

A. Carter

*Softly a light is stealing, Sweetly a maiden sings, Ever wakeful, ever wistful.
Watching faithfully, thankfully, tenderly her King of kings.*

My soul doth magnify the Lord: And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

*Mary her song to Jesus Softly, serenely sings:
I will love you, I will serve you, May my lullaby glorify, magnify my King of kings.*

Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby.

GABRIEL VISITS JOSEPH

MARY AND JOSEPH TRAVEL TO BETHLEMEN

* CAROL – Silent Night 154 – Verse 1 Faith Finders, Verses 2 & 3 ALL SING

Faith Finders: Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright;
Round yon virgin mother and child, holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

**All: Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born! Christ, the Saviour is born!**

**All: Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS

* CAROL: Away In A Manger 149 - Verse 1 Faith Finders, Verse 3 ALL SING

Faith Finders: Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

**All: Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

MARY, JOSEPH AND JESUS SEE SIMEON AT THE TEMPLE

THE OFFERING

CHORAL OFFERTORY "What Child Shall Come?"

Arr. by P. M. Liebergen

An Advent Anthem on "Ukrainian Bell Carol" and "What Child Is This"

*What child shall come that lonely night and bring God's love forever?
Will all behold the shining light and sing with joy together?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

Sing we noel, Sing we noel!

*What child shall come to set us free, the promise of salvation?
And bring for all eternity God's peace to all creation?
Emmanuel, the Lord and King! Emmanuel, rejoice and sing!*

Sing we noel, Sing we noel!

*What child shall come that night? Come to dwell?
Sing we noel! The Lord, Emmanuel.*

* THE DOXOLOGY AND PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *In The Bleak Mid-Winter* 145 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.*

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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,
and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen**

THREE WISE MEN

* CAROL: Hope Is A Star

Words by B. A. Wren, Music by J. C. Fogg 119

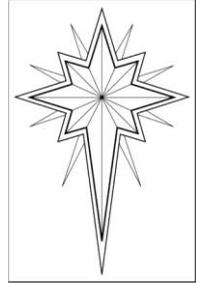
Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright.

*Refrain: 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.*

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth. (*Refrain*)

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born. (*Refrain*)

Love is a flame that burns in our heart. Jesus has come and will never depart. (*Refrain*)



THIS IS YOUR STORY TOO

SONG: Glory

By Matt Maher; Led by Faith Finders, please join on the chorus!

One star burns in the darkness, shines with a promise, Emmanuel.
One child born in the stillness, living within us, Emmanuel.

*Chorus: We're singing Glory, glory.
Let there be peace, let there be peace.
We're singing Glory, glory.
Let there be peace, let it start with me.*

Verse: One voice speaks for the voiceless, hope for the hopeless, Emmanuel
One love brings us together, now and forever, Emmanuel

Chorus

Bridge: Do not be afraid, his love is strong enough to save us.
Nothing stands in the way, His love is strong enough to lead us. (*Repeat*)

Chorus 2x

* CLOSING PRAYER & BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Follow Him" Medley M.T. Pettit, S. McBurney, C.W. McMaster, Arr. by S. D. Nelson
(Subtitle: *I am a Child of God, Come Follow Me, Teach Me to Walk in the Light*)



Welcome to Central. If you're new today, we're glad you've come.

We're a community seeking to live with courage, kindness, and grace. We don't have all the answers, but we trust God is with us as we learn and grow together. There's a place for you here.



Please stay to enjoy coffee and cookies in the Fellowship Hall following today's worship.

If you would like to get to know Central better, please introduce yourself to an usher and/or spend some time going through our Website (www.cpchamilton.ca). If you would like to be added to our email list, please inform Helena (helena@cpchamilton.ca or 905-522-9098 ext. 0).

For any pastoral concerns, please contact the Rev. Lois Whitwell (905-522-9098 ext. 2 or lois@cpchamilton.ca). Central's Prayer Team is available to receive needs in confidence. Contact Pam Carpenter at 905-526-0631 or carpenterfamily@sympatico.ca.

Children's Ministry

Join us Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. for Faith Finders, a children's ministry where we grow together in our faith! Children SK to Grade 8 gather for a time of Bible activities, and discussion as we discover our place in God's story!

Nursery

Our staffed nursery is open on Sunday mornings from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. for young children, infants to JK. Faith-based activities for the youngest children. Parents are welcome to visit the nursery with their children before dropping them off.

Youth Ministry

Youth Group Activities for Grades 6 to 12 will resume in January. Please contact sara@cpchamilton.ca if you are interested in participating.



Come Sing With Us . . .

Add your voice to the chorus of praise that lifts our songs in worship at Central! The choir of Central Presbyterian Church seeks singers with good music reading abilities to join our regular weekly ministry. We also welcome additional singers to join us temporarily for special events in the Christmas and Easter seasons.

For information, please contact Dr. Marcus Scholtes, at music@cpchamilton.ca

Statement of Welcome and Inclusion
Central Presbyterian Church
God's Love Includes Everyone

We strive to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving, and supportive community unified in Jesus Christ. As an inclusive congregation, we joyfully affirm and honour the diversity of God's creation. Our community is richer when we include people of all ages, gender identities, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, economic circumstances and family configurations. We proclaim this statement of inclusion to all who have experienced the pain of exclusion or discrimination by the church and society. All are invited to join a body of believers, to participate fully in the life, leadership, witness and ministry of Central Presbyterian Church. We acknowledge we are imperfect and in different stages of our faith journey.



No matter who you are, how you identify, whom you love, or where you are on life's journey: know you are welcome here, and you are loved by God.

CPC Statement of Welcome: www.cpchamilton.ca/statement-of-welcome-and-inclusion/

The Mission Committee of Central has identified areas of need that you are invited to donate to this Advent season.

Thank you for your generous support towards *Giving Hearts of Hamilton* last week on White Gift Sunday.

You are still invited to contribute to the PWS&D's Gaza Response.



PWS&D is responding to the crisis in Gaza, with our ecumenical networks and partnerships at ACT, Alliance and Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide food and other humanitarian assistance where and whenever possible. Donations may be given through PCC's "Giving Tree Ornaments." **The ornaments will be sold, through donation, at fellowship time** for those who wish to contribute to the PWS&D's Gaza Response.

[Support PWS&D's Gaza Response - Presbyterian World Service & Development](#)

Central has raised **\$860.00** towards the PWS&D's Gaza Response
→ **Help us reach our \$1000 goal today.**

Central Presbyterian Church Calendar

- ~ Sunday, December 21, 10:30 a.m. **Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service
& Children's Christmas Pageant**
- ~ Sunday, December 21 after worship **Giving Tree Ornaments in support of Gaza crises**
(Fellowship Hall)
- ~ Monday, December 22, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **H.O.O.T.C. Café** (Fellowship Hall)
- ~ Sunday, December 24, 8:00 p.m. **Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship Service**
- ~ **Paused:** Thursday, December 25 & January 1 **H.O.O.T.C. Meals To Go**
- ~ Sunday, January 4, 10:30 a.m. **In Memoriam Service**
- ~ Tuesday, January 6, 10:00 a.m. **Knit & Knatter Group** (Guild Room)
- ~ Thursday, January 8, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. **H.O.O.T.C. Meals To Go** (Forecourt)
- ~ Thursday, January 8, 7:30-9:30 p.m. **Central Choir Rehearsal**
- ~ Sunday, January 25, 3:00 p.m. **Music@Central: Jonathan Oldengarm & Charlton String Quartet**
- ~ Tuesday, January 27, 7:30 p.m. **Central Book Club** (Allan Room)

From Our Church Family

We commend to God the life of Margery Cuddie, a longtime member of Central, who died on December 16, 2025. We hold her family and loved ones in our prayers.

Central Presbyterian Church – Land Acknowledgement *

We acknowledge with gratitude and respect that Central Presbyterian Church is located on the traditional territories of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee peoples. This land is protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to share and care for the lands, air, and waters around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We recognize that we must learn about the rich history of this land to better understand our role as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers. We are all treaty people.

* Our website has a guide explaining the above Land Acknowledgement
<https://www.cpchamilton.ca/land-acknowledgement/>

Congregational Givings

OFFERING in support of the worship and mission of Central

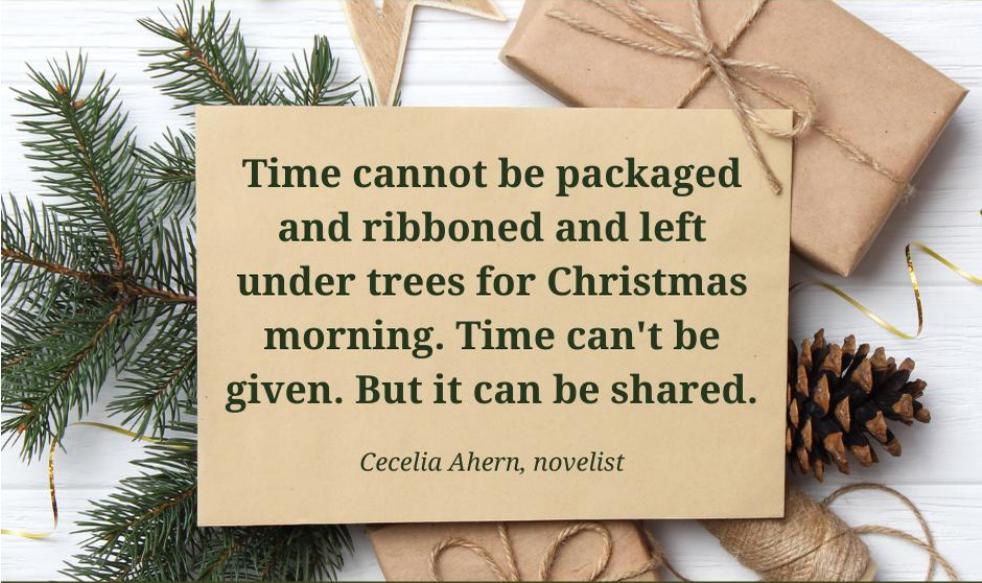
You can support this good work by donating in various means. You can place a gift on the offering plate, use pre-authorized remittance (PAR), donate online, send money via Interac E-Transfer, to bookkeeper@cpchamilton.ca or send a cheque.

Please make sure to include your envelope number or mailing address for tax receipt purposes. For ways to give, visit cpchamilton.ca/giving Please ensure your information is up-to-date with your elder or the church office, if you have moved, are moving, or have changed any of your contact information



Income Tax Receipts: To have your offering included for 2025 income tax purposes, it must be received at the Church or postmarked, *no later than Wednesday, December 31st*. Please ensure your contact information is up-to-date with your elder or the church office. This is very important in keeping our church records up to date in preparation of the 2024 income tax receipts.

Stewardship Moments: *Inspiring Generosity*



**Time cannot be packaged
and ribboned and left
under trees for Christmas
morning. Time can't be
given. But it can be shared.**

Cecelia Ahern, novelist



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

presbyterian.ca

Tonight, the night is long.

December 21 marks the winter solstice - the longest night of the year. The darkness reaches its deepest point, and daylight feels most fragile and scarce. From here, the light will begin to grow, almost imperceptibly at first.

For many, December is filled with sparkle, music, joy and the delight of young believers. But for others, this season can feel heavy. Grief is often sharper when traditions return only now without those we love. Loneliness can feel louder when the world insists on mistletoe. Anxiety, exhaustion, illness, or strained relationships don't press pause simply because it's Christmas.

And yet, this is precisely when the story begins.

God does not wait for the darkness to lift before entering the world. Jesus is not born at noon, under a bright and confident sky, but into vulnerability, uncertainty, and night. The Word becomes flesh in a nearly forgotten corner of the world.

So tonight, when the night is long, rest knowing this is not the end of the story, only it's beginning. Hope can be present before it is felt. Light is light, even when small.

I'll close with the prayer Rev. Lois' provided in this month's Contact newsletter. May it hold close all who need it:

*Merciful God,
In this season of rejoicing, we come to you weary and grieving
In this season of fasting, we hunger for healing and relief
In this season of light, our hearts are veiled in sorrow and shadow
Will this season ever end?
"Yes." We hear your, "Yes."
Those who are weary will find rest
Those who mourn will be comforted
Those who hunger will be filled
The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness will not overcome it.
Amen*

- Rev. Hannah



For the Fourth Sunday in Advent,
by Rev. Thom M. Shuman

*Then Mary said,
'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'*
- Luke 1:38

Here am I –
show me how
and where
and who
I may serve.

***As you leave this place today,
you're reminded that no matter
who you are,
or what your past may be,
you are a beloved child
of the Living God.***

***As you now live
your life from day to day,
don't forget who
– and whose, you are;
So that you may indeed be light
and salt to this world.
In the name of Jesus the Christ.***

*Minister – The Rev. Hannah Lovaglio
Director of Pastoral Care – The Rev. Lois Whitwell
Minister Emeritus – The Rev. Dr. Alan M. McPherson
Director of Music Ministries – Dr. Marcus Scholtes
Nursery and Faith Finders Coordinator – Kristel Forcier
Bookkeeper – Michelle Fربول
Office Administrator – Helena Bootsma
Custodian – David Lewington
Nursery Coordinator – Brenda Ziemann
Sunday & Special Event Custodian – Geoff French*
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