

Merry Christmas

Have a Special Christmas and Happy New Year



75 Cruickshank Street, Shallow Lake, ON N0H 2K0



A Message from your Minister

Merry Christmas Everyone!

I sincerely mean that. In spite of the fact that for the 2nd year in row Christmas isn't the same. Even here at Shallow Lake United Church, we've had to cancel our Christmas Candlelight Communion Service. Nevertheless, Merry Christmas.

So often we associate Christmas with decorations, feasts, presents, music, gatherings, and even Christmas Eve Services. And as wonderful as all those things are, they are not Christmas. Christmas is a naked baby born into our world.

Christmas has never been easy. It wasn't easy for Mary and Joseph. Mary ostracized for being pregnant outside of marriage. Joseph, in spite of the shame, staying with her. It was a hard world. Roman occupation and foreign rule. Outside forces forcing them to travel, more than 100 miles, probably walking, even though Mary was pregnant. Then forced to sleep and give birth in the back of a filthy stable. Why, because they kept saying yes in spite of all the obstacles. Faith, Hope, Love in all those yeses. And so, Love was born in the dark of a stable that night. A naked Baby. And they said yes once again, and bundled the child in swaddling cloths, and our world has never been the same. It was a Merry Christmas.

And so, in the midst of all the uncertainties you are experiencing, and the uncertainties in the larger world, COVID, a Planet in Crisis, Uncertain Economy, Superpowers vying for Power..., are you able to say yes like Mary and Joseph did? Are you able to let Faith, Hope and Love guide you? There is a little naked child, yet unborn, saying yes you can. Will you let that child into your life/ world, and let him grow? Merry Christmas.

God Bless - Rev. Ed Laksmanis

P.S. - Thank you for your faithfulness, and the many ways you have been Mary and Joseph, birthing God's Presence in you, your home, and the world. And thank-you for the many ways you have supported Shallow Lake United Church in its efforts to do the Same.

May All Your Days Be Merry and Bright

A TIME FOR RELECTION ON THE PAST YEAR:

As we are entering into the Christmas Season, we take time to reflect on how things went during this past year. COVID-19 has been foremost in our minds for most of us. Back in July Shallow Lake UC made the decision to remain closed until September 12th. We are now open for worship services and we are following the COVID-19 rules and regulations as mandated by the various health and government agencies. And hopefully we will be able to resume our regular activities soon.

As we look ahead to Christmas and the end of another year, we think about those in need, especially at this time of the year. There are many in our neighbourhoods who are in need of affordable housing, good food and our prayers. There are children waiting in anticipation for their wishes to come true on Christmas morning and parents who want to provide Christmas dinner to their family. The Warton Food Bank (under the guidance of the Salvation Army) provides this service to our area and endeavours to ensure every family in need has a food basket and gift for every child at Christmas. This year our Church will be contributing "jam" for the Christmas Food Baskets.

Additionally, you should be aware that we are supporting the Food Grain Banks Canada with a donation of love and labour from the Kirk Family, who planted beans this year, a donation of the seed from Pioneer Seed and a donation for drying and handling the harvest from Don Curry & Family. This can generate anywhere from \$3500 to \$5000 which is matched four times by the government.



A Donation Form is attached for your use, if you so desire. Thank you for keeping your church and church family in mind at this time of the year. We very much appreciated it.



Here at Shallow Lake UC we do offer the PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) service. There is no cost to you. Complete the PAR Authorization Form (attached) and mail it to us. You can indicate on the form how much your gift to your community of faith will be.

A dependable flow of contributions helps keep the church, and most importantly the good work the church does, on financially stable ground. Thank you for your gift!

You can ensure that your community of faith and those who are helped through Mission & Service or the Food Bank, can count on your support by giving monthly through PAR. Through an automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account, PAR allows you to give what matters to you most.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PAR?

Sometimes life's agenda takes over our best-laid plans. With PAR, you don't have to worry about writing a cheque or forgetting to donate because life has thrown you a curveball. By signing up for PAR, you make a clear statement of what is important to you. You also give the recipients of your gift the peace of mind that comes with knowing your help is stable and reliable.

Merry Christmas and God Bless

Advent

The Season of Hope and Expectation



The Season of Advent

We are at a beginning of a new Christian year. Happy New Year. It's Advent. Advent means waiting. We are waiting for a new birth. Advent is also the root word of Adventure. We are starting an adventure...a journey.

One of my favourite songs is "Life is a Highway". I love road trips. I find the trip as important, if not more important than the destination. All that stuff we learn and observe along the way, and the anticipation. All of that adds to the experience of the destination.

That is the Season of Advent, a journey to the stable – So often people equate Advent with Christmas, and reject the journey, the waiting, and are frustrated that we don't sing Christmas songs like everyone else. Well, I don't know about you, but those songs, which have already started in the malls weeks ago, get old by the time we get to Christmas. For Christmas to be real, the journey must be a part of the experience. Just as it was for Mary - the in-between space between the annunciation and the birth.

Advent is a journey and adventure. Consider this, Adventure means never being fully prepared, but not letting that stop you.

Next Sunday, is the second Sunday of Advent – We light the candle of PEACE or 'Preparation'. Preparation means to 'get ready'. "Help us to be ready to welcome You, O God!" (Luke 3: 4-6). This is also the Sunday we bring in our Jam for the Wiaraton Food Bank – referred to as White Gift Sunday also.

December 12th is the third Sunday of Advent – JOY – The third candle is pink and symbolizes joy. It is called the "Shepherd's Candle" and is pink because rose is a liturgical colour for joy. The third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday and is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent.

December 19th is the fourth Sunday of Advent – LOVE – Since we will not be hosting a Christmas Service (due to COVID-19) we will also celebrate the lighting of the "Christ Candle" along with Communion. On the fourth week of Advent, we light the final purple candle to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of our Savior. The final candle, the "Angel's Candle" symbolizes peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." We light a white candle in the middle of the wreath; this is a beautiful modern adaption. The white candle is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ. The colour white is for purity – because Christ is our sinless, pure Savior.

Please know that you are most welcome to join us for all or any of these Advent Sundays. You are always welcome.

May the God of Advent go with you every day – Rev. Ed.



PAR AUTHORIZATION FORM

- For registration of new PAR donors
 or
 For banking changes for existing donors

FOR USE BY PAR ADMINISTRATOR	
PAR congregational number:	_____
Church PAR administrator:	_____
Phone number:	_____
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Donor name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____

E-mail _____ Envelope# _____ Gift amount \$ _____

Name of local church: _____

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This gift to the above church is to benefit

Local church: \$ _____ Mission & Service: \$ _____ Other: \$ _____

Please attach a VOID cheque.

I/We request/authorize The United Church of Canada to debit my/our account on the 20th of every month, starting the 20th _____ of, 20_____. I/we also recognize and agree to the following:

- I/we may change the amount of my contribution at any time by contacting our church PAR contact.
- I/we have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAR agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.
- I/we waive my right to receive pre-notification of the amount of pre-authorized remittance (PAR) and agree that I do not require advance notice of the amount of PAR before the debit is processed.

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Cut Here to use One time Donation Only form

DONATION FORM



75 Cruickshank Street
Shallow Lake, ON N0H 2K0

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Please accept my one time donation to the Shallow Lake United Church in the amount of:

\$250.00 \$200.00 \$150.00 \$100.00 \$75.00 \$50.00 \$25.00 Other: _____

Thank you for your generous donation to Shallow Lake United Church. Your support and dedication to the ongoing work of God's people is so very much appreciated. Thanks.

Thank you for your generosity.