

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER



PRELUDE Finale from Sonata No. 6, opus 65
(Felix Mendelssohn)

WELCOME & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
Lighting of the Christ Candle

**Acknowledgment of Territory/Every Child Matters/
Rainbow Candle of Inclusion** Martha Bailkowski

INTROIT We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky
(Abundant Life) (Ruth Duck/Marty Haugen)

CALL TO WORSHIP

In unity there is strength.
In understanding there is acceptance.
In acceptance there is growth.
Let us be open to God's people everywhere.
We are part of a community, diverse in its being,
yet connected by its concerns.
**May we see the ways in which
others bless our lives.**
We worship together as followers of Jesus.
We are aware of his message;
We are guided by his example.
**Help us to live with purpose and commitment,
this day and always!**

***HYMN** O God beyond All Praising VU 256

PRAYER FOR RENEWAL

**In these opening weeks of a new year, we admit to
you, O God, the limited ways in which we under-
stand our faith, yet we are aware of the mission of**

**your church and we are free to articulate what we
believe. We often are uncertain as to how to speak
about what is important. When others are ready to
hear a message of hope, faith, and love, we may find
ourselves remaining silent. Help us to voice our beliefs,
each in our own way, and provide us with courage to
do what needs to be done in a world where wars never
cease, hope is often lost, and pain is evident every-
where. When we fail to be all that we can be, Loving
God, give us reason to begin anew. God in community,
Holy in One, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

WORDS OF GRACE

God seeks us out and finds us in our need.
Thanks be to God!

SUNG RESPONSE Arise, Be Clothed in the Light VU 866
Arise, be clothed in the light.
Arise, be clothed in the light.
Your light has come,
your light has come.
Hallelujah! (repeat)

FINDING GOD TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a p.174 Pew Bible OT
(Now you are the body of Christ and each on a part of it.)
Brandon Holmeshaw

ANTHEM Old Church Choir
(Williams/Wedgeworth/Hulse arr. Barrett)
with Steve Falk, David Pilkey and David Price, percussion

GOSPEL Luke 4:14-21 p.61 Pew Bible NT
(‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.’)

Come to the quiet...a time for reflection

SERMON Declarations

***HYMN** Spirit, Open My Heart (R.Duck) MV 79

***Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.***

God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind
and tender. All my coldness and fear to your grace
I now surrender. ***Spirit, open my heart...***

Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal,
my story. In each thought, word and deed, may my
living bring you glory. ***Spirit, open my heart...***

May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of
sister, brother. In the welcome of Christ, may we
welcome one another. ***Spirit, open my heart...***

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY There Is No Rose (arr. Kathryn Parrotta)
Janice Nolan, Lisa Kyriakides, Margaret Heney, Rev. Lorraine

DEDICATION Christ Has No Body Now but Yours
MV 171

**Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER & Prayer Shawl Blessing

PRAYER PRELUDE Let My Spirit Always Sing
MV 83 **Let my spirit always sing,
to your Spirit answering,
through the silence, through the pain
know my hope is not in vain,
like a feather on your breath
trust your love, through life and death.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD’S PRAYER
VU p.910

***HYMN** The Servant Song **VU 595**

***COMMISSIONING**

And now, go as far as your courage takes you—
for we cannot go beyond the reach of God.
Give as extravagantly as you may,
for we cannot spend all the riches of God.
Care as lavishly as you are able,
for we cannot exhaust the love of God.
Keep journeying as a friend,
for God will always be with us.

***SUNG BLESSING** Take Up His Song *MV 213*
**Take up his song of love and go into the world.
Take up his song of love in every moment.
In every moment of the journey,
we’re laying down our lives;
lay them down, in love, lay them down,
and take up his song.**

POSTLUDE Sun of My Soul (*Edward Broughton*)



When Faith Meets Understanding

Grandmothers help pastors learn to do better by connecting their love for their grandchildren to God’s love for all.

In the Rift Valley of Kenya, over 200,000 people are HIV positive, and many will not survive. Grandmothers whose children have died of AIDS are often left alone to care for their grandchildren, and to add insult to injury, their church community condemns them, leaving them without support as they raise their grandchildren. Some pastors in the Rift Valley, as in many other places, believe and teach that faithful Christians cannot contract the disease and that it is a judgment from God—a disease for sexual sinners. “The pastors had little information about HIV and AIDS; to them, and others in the community, it was a strange disease.... [They believed] HIV was a result of sexual sin and was a judgement from God for the sexually immoral,” writes Esther Mombo of the World Council of Churches. In partnership with the United Church of Canada, Mombo and Pauline Wanjuru of St. Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya, led a series of workshops in one Rift Valley community that has been hit especially hard by HIV/AIDS. They invited grandmothers and pastors to connect and learn from each other. One grandmother who attended the workshops was 70 years old. She was raising three grandchildren on her own after losing both her daughter and her son. Instead of stepping up to help, her neighbours refused to visit her because they said her daughter and son had been sexually immoral. Her pastor wouldn’t even attend her children’s funerals because he didn’t want to be seen associating with her family. When she went to church, the pastor preached about the punishment for sexual immorality. At the workshops, this woman bravely told her story to the pastors who attended. She also shared with them how it felt to be shamed for loving her children and caring for her grandchildren. Another grandmother explained that her grandchildren were born with the virus and couldn’t have been involved in any sexual immorality. Yet another spoke of God’s love for everyone. Pastors listened and learned, and moved forward by making a commitment to extend compassion and offer pastoral care to the grandmothers. All of us know from our own life experience that when we know better, we do better. Your Mission and Service gifts gave these grandmothers the opportunity to help their pastors learn to do better by connecting their love for their grandchildren to God’s love for all.



The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.



AURORA UNITED CHURCH



An Affirming Congregation

Church Office 905-727-1935
www.auroraunitedchurch.ca

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar
Music Coordinator—Margaret Heney



EPIPHANY 3
January 26, 2025
11:00 am

We sing of a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ’s presence in the world. We are called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and space. (Song of Faith. UCC)

O God beyond All Praising

O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
for we can only wonder at every gift you send,
at blessings without number and mercies without end:
we lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,
we honour and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

The flower of earthly splendour in time must surely die,
its fragile bloom surrender to you our God most high;
but hidden from all nature the eternal seed is sown,
though small in mortal stature, to heaven's garden grown:
for Christ, your gift from heaven, from death has set us free,
and we through him are given the final victory.

Then, hear O gracious Saviour, this song of praise we sing.
May we, who know your favour, our humble service bring;
and whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,
we'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still:
to marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,
and make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.



We Are Pilgrims (The Servant Song)

We are pilgrims on a journey, fellow travellers on the road;
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

Sister, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

