Strathmore United Church

November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent, Holy Communion

Rev. Maria Szabone Berces

Greetings & Welcome:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

and also, with you. *Based on 2 Cor. 13:13*

Announcements:

♫♪ **Centering:** *Prepare the Way of the Lord* ***VU#10**

Advent Candle-Lighting:

One: God loves us always. Because of that love, we have hope that God is always with us, even when our lives become challenging.

All: God lives in each one of us. When life is tough, we care for each other, sharing hope for better days, sharing strength to endure. May the lighting of this candle remind us of the hope that lives within each one of us. May we bring Gods hope to one another.

Written by Susan Girard and Brian Jackson; Gathering, Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2026/27 page 68. Used with permission

♫♪ **Song:** *I Am Walking a Path of Hope* ***MV#221**

Call to Worship:

Come people of God for it is Advent time!

What is Advent?

It is a time to prepare and wait to empty out our spirits and open up our hearts.

Why would we do that?

Because Jesus is going to be born very soon and wants your spirits and hearts open.

Okay! Let's get ready for Jesus!

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Opening Prayer:

You gather us together, God of hope.
We ask You to bring renewed hope into our hearts.
You gather us together, God of peace.
We ask You to bring peace into this world.
You gather us together, God of joy.
We ask You to bring joy into the midst of doubt and despair.
You gather us together, God of love.
We ask You to ignite the flame of your love at the centre of our lives, not only today and during this Advent time but always. Amen.

Written by Carman McClelland: Gathering, Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2026/27 page 28. Used with permission

♫♪ **Hymn:** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* ****VU #333***

Welcoming a New Member: *Wale Sadare.*

Congregational Commitment:

Dear Friends in Christ, Let us pledge to *Wale* our support and care: **As your brothers and sisters in Christ,**
We rejoice in the gifts you bring to us.
We pledge to you our love and our support.
With God's help, we will together live out
The mission and ministry of Christ's Church.

THE NEW CREED:

We are not alone, we live in God's world.
We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Welcome; Prayer for the Candidate and Blessing:

♫♪ **Hymn:** *Halle, Halle, Halle* ***VU #958***

Prayer of Confession:

Creator God, you made us in your image, filled with possibilities and with hope. Your hope continues to dance within us and through us.
Sometimes we do not feel that we are enough, yet you've given us the gifts to make your dream possible.
We ask, as we gather, that you remind us that we are well equipped for the work of hope you have in mind for us.
We ask for your forgiveness when we do not dare to hope and for the times when we failed to serve others as you have called us to do. Prepare us for the birth of new life in our midst so that we may be good parents of the light born on a cold December night. Amen.

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Words of Assurance:

Written by Roger West; Gathering, Pentecost 2 2023; page 34; Modified; Used with permission

♫♪ **Hymn:** *Hope is a Star* ***(VS 1)*** ***VU #7**

Prayer of Illumination:

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Reading of Scripture **Isaiah 64:1–9**
1 Corinthians 1:3–9

L: A Word of God that is still speaking,
P: Thanks be to God.

Message:

♫♪ **Hymn:** *All Earth Is Waiting* ***VU #5**

ADVENT HOLY COMMUNION

Today, we are going to have the special Advent Holy Communion liturgy developed by Rev. Bob Root and Rev. Richard Bott. It will include singing the verses of Hymn VU # 1, please, remain seated as we sing these single verses during the liturgy.

L: *All journeys begin with careful preparation:*

what to take, what to leave behind, thoughts of who we will meet along the way and what we will see….
…. And we are welcome here because we gather at Christ's invitation. So come to his table and set your sights on Bethlehem.

Written by Bob Root; Gathering, Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2015-2016 page 63. Used with permission

<u>Great Thanksgiving:</u>
Leader: *God is with you.*
People: And also with you.
Leader: *Lift up your hearts.*
People: We lift them up to God.
Leader: *Let us give thanks to the Lord, Our God*
People: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

♫♪<u>Hymn</u> VU # 1 - Verse 1: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

L: *God, Most Holy, we do give thanks as we gather at Christ's table, as we remember your love, holy and whole, a love that has held us from the beginning of the beginning, and a love that will hold us for as long as time exists.*

♫♪<u>Hymn</u> VU # 1 - Verse 2: "O Come, O Wisdom…"

L: *We need your Wisdom, God. We need your guidance. We need your invitation – your calling – your whispers and your shouts – through the voices of prophets and priest, grandmothers and grandfathers, children and infants, all who listen and speak your love.*

♫♪<u>Hymn</u> VU # 1 - Verse 3: "O Come, O Come, Great God…"

L: *Because we didn't always listen, because we don't always listen; you gave to us Christ, alive in the world!*

♫♪<u>Hymn</u> VU # 1 - Verses 4-5: "O Come, O Rod of Jesse's Stem"

L: *Wholly God and wholly human, a tiny baby, a youth an adult, a teacher, a healer, a challenger, a Saviour;*
He laughed with those who laughed and cried with those who cried, but most of all he loved us with a love that never, ever

ends, A love that surpasses even death, a love that brings new life – not only to us ... but to all creation! Hallelujah!

♫♪Hymn VU # 1 - Verse 6: "O Come, O Dayspring, from …"

L: *On the night before he was taken to his death on a cross, Jesus gathered with his disciples.*
Well… he blessed the bread and broke it saying:
"Take this and eat it. This is my body given for you. Each time you eat bread, remember me."

As the meal drew to a close, he blessed a cup of wine and passed it onto them, saying:
"Take this and drink it. This is my promise in my life's blood that sins are forgiven. Each time you drink, remember me."

So, we eat, we drink, and we remember!
Holy God, send your Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts, that they – and we – might truly be Christ's body and blood alive in the world!

P: Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forever. Amen

♫♪Hymn VU # 1 - Verse 7: "O Come, Desire of Nations"

L: *We pray all these things to you, God – Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer – because we know that you are like a mother who gives us life. You are like…*

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, forever and ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD / LIFTING UP OF THE CUP

Leader: *The gifts of God, for all Creation!*
People: ***Thanks be to God!***

Prayer after Communion:

With this taste of the bread of Life, with this taste of the cup of Love, send us into the world, God –so that we might whisper your coming, so that we might sing your Advent, so that we might live your birth, now and forever. Amen

Written by Richard Bott; Gathering, Advent-Christmas-Epiphany

The Offering Invitation:

Written by Bill Steadman; Gathering, Pentecost 2 2017; page 38; Modified; Used with permission

M&S Story:

Be aware! Keep alert! For you do not know when an opportunity will come to be generous, and you must be ready to respond.

♫♪ **Dedication:***Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow****VU #541**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Prayer of Dedication:

Our gifts will bring hope as we anticipate the coming of Jesus.
Loving God, bless our gifts and use them.
Our gifts will bring peace as we emulate Jesus the peace-bringer.
Loving God, bless our gifts and use them.
Our gifts will bring joy as we worship and work compassionately.
Loving God, bless our gifts and use them.
Our gifts will bring love in this community and beyond.
Loving God, bless our gifts and use them. Amen.

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♫♪ **Hymn**: *Once in Royal David's City* ***(Vs. 1,4)*** ***VU #62**

Commissioning and Blessing:

We have lit the first candle in our Advent wreath.
Our Advent journey has begun.
We have gathered with friends in faith.

Our service in Christ's name continues.
We have received the good news of God's great hope in each of us.
We go into the world to make a difference.
May the generosity of God be with you in the coming week. May the blessedness of Jesus Christ give you strength as you live out your faith. May the delight of the Holy Spirit wrap around you and help you reach out to others with compassion and love, this day and forevermore. Amen

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♫♪ Choral Response: *Amen* ***VU #974**

Passing the Peace of Christ
L: May the God of Peace go with you.
P: And also with you.

Please, join us for coffee and fellowship after the service.

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