



## Minister's Message

This time of year can feel like one big rush! The Christmas rush is older than we think. There was a last-minute panic in Bethlehem that first Christmas. The people had no choice but to come and be counted, there were deadlines and stress. Mary and Joseph arrive late, amidst the hustle and bustle of Bethlehem. All the rooms are taken. Imagine the scene taking place today, with "no vacancy" signs on all the hotels and motels. An unnerving sight for a desperate young couple. In the midst of people rushing to meet obligations, Jesus was born in the equivalent of a gas station garage next to an old motel.

Jesus was born like any other baby, with a mother in pain and an anxious father stand-

ing by. And who are the first to come celebrate this birth? Poor, unpopular shepherds. Vulnerable people, desperate for good news, see and rejoice that there is a light in the darkness.

Hustle and bustle, stress and deadlines, and "no vacancy" signs, where the most vulnerable are forgotten, is also a contemporary reality.

The powerful message of the Christmas story tells us that, even though there was no room for the parents of Jesus at the inns in Bethlehem, they found a place anyway. On that dark night long ago, God found a place to be born.

As Christians, we proclaim with our hearts and lives that, as on that night long ago, still today God will find a way past all the world's attempts to

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## Holiday Concert for the Food Bank

Join us for a magical afternoon of music in support of Clarington East Food Bank on Sunday, Nov. 23rd at 2:30 p.m. in our church sanctuary. Our own choir will be performing along with the 35-voice strong Bowmanville Older Adult choir. Talented soloists and stories from the Newcastle and Clarington East community will top off the afternoon, making it an event to remember. Come celebrate the spirit of giving and the impact we can make together. All proceeds support CEFB and the vital work they do to help local families in need.

## What's Going On...

### NOVEMBER

**Saturday, Nov. 22**  
**9:00 am - 1:00 pm**

*Holiday Bazaar*

**Sunday, Nov. 23**  
**2:30 pm**

*Holiday Concert benefiting Clarington East Food Bank. Featuring our own choir and the BOAA choir.*

**Sunday, Nov. 30**  
**10:30 am**

*Advent I; Sacrament of Communion*

### DECEMBER

**Sunday, Dec. 7**  
**10:30 am**

*Advent 2*

**Sunday, Dec. 14**  
**10:30 am**

*Advent 3; White Gift Service - collecting gifts for a local family in need*

**Sunday, Dec. 21**  
**10:30 am**

*Advent 4*

**Wednesday, Dec. 24**  
**7:00 pm**

*Christmas Eve Service*

## UCW: United Church Women

All women in our church family are welcome to attend UCW meetings. At 1:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month a number of our ladies gather in the hall for song, reflection and interesting guest speakers, followed by refreshments and social time.

In addition to attending meetings, our UCW keeps busy catering funeral receptions, birthday and anniversary parties. Monies raised through their catering activities support mission & outreach around the world and at home, supporting many projects of our church. Most recently our UCW was proud to be able support website and social media efforts in our church and to host Rev. Elaine's covenanting service lunch.

## Vision 200

Your Vision 200 team has been hard at work! Short-term projects presented at our last congregational meeting are underway and we are now drafting medium-term projects. These will be taken to the Official Board and then on to our congregation's Annual Meeting so together we can decide what we will take on next.

Stay tuned and, please, continue to share your thoughts and ideas. There is now an ideas box at the back of the church, don't hesitate to use it!!

## A year-end message from our treasurer and Official Board

When making your plans for gift giving for the holidays, we ask that you consider a monetary gift to Newcastle United Church. We are blessed with a caring congregation, with so many people contributing to the work and ministry of the church. Your donation goes to support Faith in Motion, staff

salaries, the maintenance of our buildings and so much more.

Please note that Wednesday, December 31st is the last possible day for making donations if you wish to receive a 2025 donation receipt for income tax purposes.

Thank you so much!



## Covenanting Service

Rev. Elaine's Covenanting service was held on Sunday, November 2nd. Combined with our 201st anniversary service, we celebrated her new ministry among us, our connection with the wider United Church of Canada and how we all are called to live out our respective ministries and callings in the world. We covenanted (promised) to work together and support one another as we follow Jesus and do God's work in the world.

Pictured here is Myno Van Dyke presenting Rev. Elaine with symbols that represent our community with the words: "Be present not only among us, but also in our community. Inspire us to live out the love of Christ with our closest neighbours."

## White Gift Sunday

As part of our Faith in Motion program, we try to teach our children about different aspects of faith and what it means to be a community of faith. One of those is outreach and giving.

Last fall I told the older kids about how my childhood church always had a "White Gift Sunday" where everyone would bring food items wrapped in white paper for those in need. They liked that idea but we expanded on it and made it about making collecting gifts for a local family for Christmas. Everyone was so enthusiastic and generous, we thought it would be great to make this an annual event!

The food bank has identified another family who needs our help and we will be posting gift ideas on a board in the hall. To participate, simply take one of the gift ideas off the board, purchase your item, and bring it to service on Sunday, Dec 14th. No need to wrap it in white, any bag or box will do. Rev. Elaine is planning a special service involving the children for that day. See me (Robin) if you have questions.

## Opening Doors

A grant made it possible for us to replace the front doors of the church. Secure and solid but easy to open, they are perfect for welcoming all those who choose to enter in. Many thanks to everyone who made it happen!!



## Bible Study and Advent Meditation

Would you like to learn a little more about your Bible? Consider joining us on Wednesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the church hall. We spend time reading and discussing the scripture readings that will be shared and preached on in the upcoming Sunday service. There is no previous experience needed to join the group.

Also, the sanctuary will be heated and open for silent reflection during the first three Wednesdays in December (December 3rd, 10th and 17th) from 11:00 a.m. to noon. If you wish, a guided art meditation on the characters of the nativity will be available to use during this time.

## Adult Baptism & Membership Classes

Baptism and/or confirmation as an adult is a meaningful moment in your walk with Jesus and in your life as a Christian. Adult preparation classes for adult baptism and/or confirmation will take place over three classes this winter (day and times to be decided) in the hall at Newcastle United Church.

The classes will explore spiritual practices, scripture, church history and what it means to be a Christian today in an increasingly secular world.

All are welcome (even if you have already been baptized!) If you are curious about this step, please do not hesitate to speak to Elaine. Please call the church office to indicate your interest.

## *Gifts with Vision*

*Starting to think about Christmas gift giving? Gifts with Vision is a giving catalogue offered by the United Church, as an alternative to conventional gifts. With Gifts with Vision, you give a gift in honour of friends or family, to support activities that are run by partners of the United Church of Canada.*

*These gifts help create healthy places in which others may live, promote justice, provide social services, and enliven worship. The catalogue is available at [www.giftswithvision.ca](http://www.giftswithvision.ca). A hard copy brochure of the catalogue is at the back of the church.*

# Crockpot Dinners

*On 5 occasions this fall, folks have gathered to enjoy a comforting and yummy meal. From pulled pork, chicken and meatballs to mac and cheese, tex mex, salads and Donna Scott's famous tea biscuits, variety has been the name of the game! Of course, delicious desserts finish off every meal. Donations from attendees to support the work of the church are appreciated. Watch the announcements for our winter dates!!*



## Minister's Message

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keep God out. God's love breaks in. Despite the busy-ness of the season, despite preoccupations with self-preservation and security, despite parties where the vulnerable and hurting are left out, God is still born into the world.

God comes everywhere and anywhere, especially among the humble, in the simplest of circumstances. We celebrate this birth with a renewed awareness that the holiest places in the world may be very close to us. And so, in the name of the Christ child, we welcome the stranger, serve the poor, visit the lonely, and attend to whatever the least of these may require.

A central truth of the Christian faith is that the word became flesh, becoming vulnerable, just as we are. In the midst of the rush, let us be vulnerable this Christmas season, opening our hearts to Christ, so that he may be born in us. And then may we open our hearts to the vulnerable, so that the world may see God's love at work through us. May you all have a very holy, blessed, and joyful Nativity, filled with God's peace and God's power.

In Christ,  
*Rev. Elaine*

## Contact Us

**Minister: Rev. Elaine Hall**

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**Church Administrator: Lynne Jefferson**

*Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:30 am to 4:30 pm.*

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**Church Organist/ Choir Director:  
Donna Barber**

*Choir practice: Thursdays, 3:00 p.m.*



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