



ADVENT-CHRISTMAS 2023

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.
John 1:5

It's getting darker outside. Until December 21st, each day has a little less sunlight. In the growing darkness, even a little bit of light makes a huge difference.

The world is also a mixture of darkness and light, speaking metaphorically. Maybe it's my age, but sometimes the darkness seems to be getting darker with climate change, more overt racism, the gap between rich and poor more prevalent, global pandemic, hatred, violence and wars.

As people living in a privileged part of the world, we have historically been able to cope better than most. But, climate change and the ripple effects of war don't seem to care about national boundaries. Many who are both young and old among us are finding it mentally and spiritually challenging.

The darker things are, the more significant the light is, no matter how small. Even a baby born in poverty and oppression in a manger can give people HOPE! Even when we don't see it, the light is always there, growing, pushing back the darkness.

In the midst of the darkness, we need to remember and hold on to the words of the writer of the Gospel of John: *"the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."*

Advent and Christmas are a time of waiting with hope and preparation. It is a time of anticipating the birth of Jesus; the Light of the world and the way his life and Spirit can transform us and the world. We look back to the past, but also his rebirth in us now and into the future. The word Advent means "coming" and Christ both came and comes to us again and again.

Christmas is Incarnation; The Word of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. We are not alone. "Blessed are those who know and acknowledge their need of God" (the poor and poor of spirit). (Good News translation)

And so, as we celebrate with Joy this Advent, let us give thanks for the Hope, Peace and Love which comes in Jesus!

We want you to invite you to come and celebrate the Light of Christ with us in worship and song this Advent-Christmas season in Old Barns and Hilden United Churches as we flesh out the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of the season.

Happy Advent – Merry Christmas!

Rev. Phillip Kennedy

December Services and Events to Mark on your Calendars

- December 2 7:00 p.m. Old Barns Christmas Family Concert (with Ho Ho Ho)
Freewill Offering and
Auction Fund Raiser for Colchester Food Bank
(at the Old Barns church)
- December 3 9:30 a.m. in Old Barns and 11:00 a.m. in Hilden
Advent 1 – HOPE
- December 10 9:30 a.m. in Hilden and 11:00 a.m. in Old Barns
Advent 2 – PEACE plus White Gift Service
- December 17 9:30 a.m. in Hilden and 11:00 a.m. in Old Barns
Advent 3 – JOY
- December 17 6:30 p.m. at the Archibald-Waugh Farm
"Christmas in the Barn"
A special whole family event with story, music and animals
- December 24 7:00 p.m. in Hilden and 9:00 p.m. in Old Barns
Christmas Eve Service
- December 31 9:30 a.m. in Hilden
Pre-Taped Service from Old Barns available on the website
cliftonpastoralcharge.ca

Out of the silence,
Music



Out of the
darkness,

Light

Out of
uncertainty,

Promise

HOPE
was born that night.