

“Christmas Eve in Germany”

*The old man became silent,
The children were silent too,
and the room was so still
they could hear the ticking of
the clock in the corner.*

*It was one of those moments of
solemn stillness when it is said
an angel flies through the room.*

They felt the good angel hovering near.

*With lips slightly parted in a smile
and a beaming star over her brow,*

she blessed them and said, --

“Be calm; be hopeful.

*More beautiful than ever before
shall be this Christmas Eve.”*

~C. C. Shackford, c.1870

The United Church of Canada
Bathurst Pastoral Charge
First United Church, Bathurst
www.firstunited-bathurst.ca

December 24, 2021

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Vocalist** Amanda Godin
Custodian Lester Scott

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Lectionary for this evening's service

Isaiah 9:2, 5-7
Colossians 1:15-20
John 1:1-5, 14
Like 2:1-20

GATHERING

CAROLS AS WE GATHER

WELCOME

CHRISTMAS CANDLE LIGHTING - AWE

(Hope, Peace, Joy & Love candles are lit)

Lyrics (Tune O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – VU 1)
(traditional music, lyrics c 2021 Adrian Marchuk)

O come you source of Love unto us all
Enlighten us and help us hear your call
To bear your Love out into the wild
And celebrate God's wondrous holy Child!
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well

Candle Lighting Ritual (Luke 2:1-20) Breanna Lee & Madison Lee

When the world seems predictable
Stuck in patterns of injustice and hurt
The Holy astonishes us with good news
And we find awe

(Christ candle is lit)

Where in the world do we know Awe these days?

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP - "We Light This Candle"

We light this candle in awe.
Await the new life within.
May our hearts now live each day,
So awe can find a way,
So awe can find a way.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsively)*

We come to sing a new song of something that happened long ago
and is still happening even now.

We come to remember what steadfast love feels like in our own flesh.

We come to wander back through time and find ourselves wondering
if there's enough goodness and loving kindness to welcome such
tender hope again.

We come to make a joyful noise for the reflection of God's splendour we see in newborn skin and to believe that somehow that exact imprint of God's very being is in you and me as well.

We come to wander through all that feels calm and bright to wonder
how our meek souls might receive this news then and now.

We come to see all that will be revealed in God's life.

GATHERING PRAYER

GATHERING CAROL – “O Come, All Ye Faithful” – VU #60

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:
come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin’s womb;
very God, begotten, not created:

Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:

Refrain

See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;

Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

Refrain

SHARING A STORY *(with those of all ages)*

Carter Lavigne & Jennifer Oliver-Lavigne

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Wayne Lord

Isaiah 9:2, 5-7

CAROL – “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” – VU #75 *(Verses 1-4)*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread
has seized their troubled mind;
“glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and humankind.

“To you in David’s town this day
is born of David’s line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

“The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid.”

SCRIPTURE READING

Wayne Lord

Colossians 1:15-20

CAROL – “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” – VU #58

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is born for all. Christ the babe is born for all!

Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you!

SCRIPTURE READING

Wayne Lord

John 1:1-5, 14

CAROL – “Angels We Have Heard on High” – VU #38

Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?

Refrain

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain

See him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.

Refrain

Moving into the Christmas story...

SCRIPTURE READING

Breanna Lee & Madison Lee

Luke 2:1-20

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC - “O Holy Night”

Amanda Godin

RESPONDING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER (*in unison*)

Holy One,
bless these gifts with your presence.
May each shared dollar and cent
bring good news of great joy.
Amen

COMMUNING

COMMUNION HYMN – “Come and Gather at the Stable”

[Tune Beach Spring] © Catherine MacDonald 2005

Come and gather, at the stable
They have journeyed far from home
Mary, Joseph, young and able
Travelled ways as yet unknown
With a dream of untold promise
That great things would come to pass
In the sureness of God's blessing
They found peace and rest as last.

Come and gather, round the manger
Where the Christ child gently lays.
Open up our hearts to wonder
At the glory of that day.
Visit him with thanks and promise,
Peace and hope and love and joy
Take them daily into living
Wrapped up in a baby boy.

Come and gather, at the table
Where we seek him once again
Let us enter into mystery
Needed now as much as then.
In the breaking of the sweet bread
In the pouring of the wine,
We meet him again among us
With a love so dear, divine.

Come and gather, in his footsteps
We will tread where he once went
With the lost and lonely people
Now to them we're also sent
Loving, working, tending, caring
In our Saviour's name we pray
In our work and in our worship
We find hope in every day.

GREETING ONE ANOTHER *(responsively)*

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

INSTRUCTIONS

INVITATION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *(responsively)*

Glory to God in the highest!

And on earth, peace to all!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give thanks and praise.

...With that, we bless your Holy Name, joining with people of every time and place, and with angels and archangels proclaiming the holy birth ...

"Holy, Holy, Holy" – MV #203

***O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heaven, creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes and bears your name
always!***

...Spirit God, through this bread and cup, we remember Christ and share in the mystery of your being, your bliss, and your purpose.

"Great Amen" – MV #205

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and Amen!

Amen, amen, O Holy One, Hosanna and Amen!

Friends, we remember Jesus:

On Good Friday he died.

On Easter he rose again.

And today, he lives forever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER – VU #921 *(in unison)*

**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, the power, and the glory forever
and ever.**

Amen.

Jesus Christ, the bread of life.

Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Congregational Response – "Amen" or "Thanks be to God"

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *(in unison)*

At Christmas, Holy One, we celebrate Love Incarnate in the gift of the Christ Child.

At Easter, we celebrate Love Arisen in the gift of Jesus' resurrection.

In communion, we celebrate Love Shared in bread broken and juice poured out.

May the depth and breadth of your holy gifts fill us and sustain us, so we may reach the heights of true discipleship.

All this, we pray, in faith.

Amen

GOING OUT (as God's people)

SHARING THE CHRIST LIGHT

CLOSING CAROL – "Silent Night, Holy Night" – VU #67

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

BLESSING

(The Christ Candle is extinguished.)

POSTLUDE - "We Wish You a Merry Christmas"

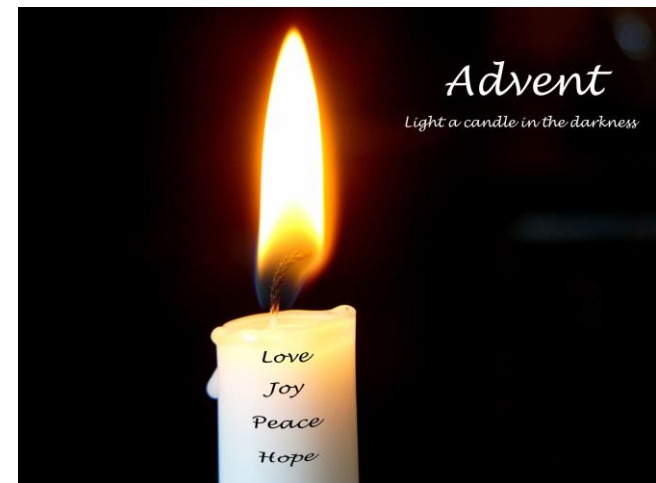
Refrain

*We wish you a Merry Christmas (3X)
And a Happy New Year*

Good tidings we bring, to you and your kin
We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year

Refrain

(The Advent Candles are extinguished.)



SCRIPTURE READING – NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

ISAIAH 9:2, 5-7

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;

16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.

17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

JOHN 1:1-5, 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being

4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

LUKE 2:1-20

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace!"

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.