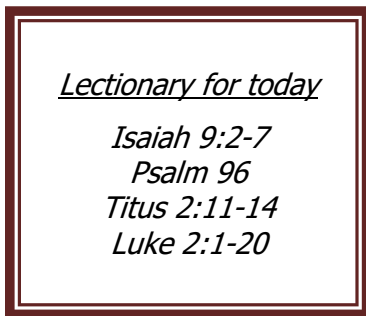


The United Church of Canada  
Bathurst Pastoral Charge  
First United Church, Bathurst  
[www.firstunited-bathurst.ca](http://www.firstunited-bathurst.ca)  
December 23, 2020 – 7:00 pm

**Minister** Rev. Neal Palmer      **Music Director** - Martha Vickers  
**OfficeAdm** Margaret Payne-Chenard      **Greeters** - Nancy & Allan Jagoe  
**Custodian** - Steve White      Gayle Ferron

*All musical selections reprinted under license #4-606499, Onelicense for Churches*



*The asterisk \* identifies those times in the service where the congregation is invited to stand as able.*

*This evening we welcome Emma Vickers as guest vocalist and Helen & Brooke Knowles as our Advent Candle Lighters and Scripture Readers. Thanks so very much for sharing your gifts!*

**GATHERING**

**CAROLS AS WE GATHER**

- "What Child Is This" – VU #74
- "Angels We Have Heard on High" – VU #38 (Verses 1&3)
- "Away in a Manger" – VU #69
- "O Little Town of Bethlehem" – VU #64 (Verses 1-3)

**WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

...We come out of the deep night to see the light of Christ transform the world.

*(The first Advent Candle is lit.)*

**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*

**PRAYER OF HUMILITY** *(Adapted from Titus 2:11-14) (responsively)*

We, Holy One, don't feel ready.

**We don't feel ready**

to forgive others who trespass as we have trespassed before others.

**We don't feel ready**

to share the good news of Christ's birth and deliverance for the world.

**We don't feel ready**

to live into a new life that lets go of our broken pieces.  
Work with us, we pray

**work with us.**

**WORDS OF AFFIRMATION** *(responsively)*

...Jesus' birth affirms the good news of the gospel that relief is there for everyone!

*(The second Advent Candle is lit.)*

...We are forgiven! We are known! We are renamed!

**Amen**

*ENGAGING*

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*Helen & Brooke Knowles*

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 *(responsively)*

...For those who lived in a land of deep shadows –

**Light! Sunbursts of light!**

*(The third Advent Candle is lit.)*

...The joy of a great celebration, sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

**Light! Sunbursts of light!**

...The gift of a son – for us!

**Light! Sunbursts of light!**

*(The fourth Advent Candle is lit.)*

...The zeal of God will do all this.

**Thanks be to God! Amen!**

*Scripture from The Message by Eugene H. Peterson, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used with permission of NavPress Publishing Group. All rights reserved.*

*Moving into the Christmas story...*

Luke 2:1-20

**SPECIAL MUSIC** – "In the Bleak Midwinter" *Emma Vickers*

**REFLECTION**

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**SPECIAL MUSIC** – "O Holy Night" *Emma Vickers*

*RESPONDING*

**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**\*OFFERING PRAYER** *(in unison)*

**Holy One,  
thanks for the gift of your love  
that helps break through the most difficult of times.  
May these gifts be used  
to show Christ's light in the world  
beyond our imagination.  
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.**

...We bless you, for this Good News of great joy, and join with the  
angels singing and the shepherds rejoicing to proclaim your praise:

**"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' integrity unto death, the Easter hope of resurrection,  
and the promise of justice and compassion.**

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for 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 king  
We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year

Please bring us some figgy pudding (3X)  
And a cup of good cheer

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.)*

## **What Child Is This**

What child is this, who laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

### *Refrain*

*This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.

### *Refrain*

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.

### *Refrain*

## **Angels We Have Heard on High**

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!*

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

### *Refrain:*

## **Away in a Manger**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The starts in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

## **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the ever lasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.