

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

Dec 24, 2017
Christmas Eve

Clergy Rev. Blair Lewis **Organist** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Isabel Clouston **Greeters** Nancy & Allen Jagoe
Custodian Alan Wilcox

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GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

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



Organ Prelude:

Declaration of Good News:

Processional Carol:

'O Come, All Ye Faithful' **#60 VU**

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

Call to Worship:

One: Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
Uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

All: longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

One: Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
Gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

All: that this world can change for the better.

One: Here, in the stillness of a winter's night,
We gather to share the light of Christ,
A light that shines in the nightfall.

**All: We gather in the wonder of this night
To share our joy and thanks for new life.**

Lighting of the four Advent Candles:

One: Advent, the season of preparing, is nearly over.
Our waiting is nearly finished.
Now is a time of fulfilment and celebration.

All: In the darkness of night, we give thanks for light.

One: We light a candle of hope:
Hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.

We light a candle of peace:
Peace in our hearts, and on earth.

We light a candle of joy:
Joy to the world, and within our whole being.

We light a candle of love:
The promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

And now, the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.

**All: We light the Christ candle,
The light of the world, the light of possibility.
Amen.**

Choral Response: "Hope Is a Star" #7 VU

Christ is the Light that lightens the earth,
Guiding and saving us all since his birth.

Refrain:

*When God is a child there's joy in our song,
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.*

Sign of Peace:

One: Peace be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Carol: 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' #64 vs. 1&2

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 everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth.

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The First Lesson: Genesis 1:26-2:4 Joanne Wiseman

Carol: 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' #1 VU vs. 1,5,&7

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lowly exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

O come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home,
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery

Refrain:

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples In one the heart and mind,
O bid our sad divisions cease,
And be for us the Prince of Peace.

Refrain:

The Second Lesson: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Joanne Wiseman

Carol: 'Once in Royal David's City' #62 VU vs. 1&2

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed,
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
Who, with God, is over all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

The Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-35 Joanne Wiseman

Carol: 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing' #48 VU

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on Earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Off-spring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
Hail the incarnate deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Refrain:

Hail, the heaven – born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.

Refrain:

The Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:1-20 Albert Vickers

Carol: 'He is Born' #50 VU vs. 1,3&4

Refrain:

*He is born, little Child divine;
Play on the reeds while the lutes are strumming.
He is born, little Child divine;
Join the song to announce the day.*

Through long ages of the past,
Prophets have foretold his coming,
Thru long ages of the past,
Now the time has come at last.

Refrain:

Lowly lodged in a stable poor,
Laid on straw for his infant cradle.
Lowly lodged in a stable poor,
God come down to our mortal aid.

Refrain:

*He is born, little Child divine;
Play on the reeds while the lutes are strumming.
He is born, little Child divine;
Join the song to announce the day.*

Jesus, Lord of all the world,
Coming as a child among us,
Jesus, Lord of all the world,
Grant to us Thy heavenly peace.

Refrain:

The Fifth Lesson: John 1:1-14 Albert Vickers

Carol: 'Joy to the World' #59 VU

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make, His blessings flow
Far as the course is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love.
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Reflection: "Hopes and Fears"

RESPONDING IN LOVE

Presentation of Gifts and Self to God:

Choral Response: *(Tune: Praise God from whom all blessings flow)*

Love fills our hearts and overflows.

Love fills our lives, expands and grows.

Loving is how we're called to live.

Loving is how each one can give.

(from Gathering A/C/E 2010 pg .84).

Prayer of the People:

God of star and stable,
you lead us to wonder and to hope.
You gather us together to hear your promise of love.
As we gather, we offer our concerns
And our dreams, our hopes and fear

(silence)

Like the shepherds who sought the stable,
We seek your promise of peace.
We pray for your people broken by violence,
Those who live with fear,
And those who live without hope.
We remember.....
And we pray for your courage and peace..

(silence)

Like the wise ones who dedicated their gifts,
We remember those in need.
We pray for those who are lonely, hungry, or forgotten;
For those who are ill in body and in spirit;
For those who are confused or afraid.
We pray for your joy and love, for all your people,
Especially those we remember now....

(silence)

Holy One, you came as a child,
Offering renewal of spirit and of living.
May our prayers be a new beginning:
For healing, truth and trust,
May we embody love that is forgiving,
Compassionate, and gracious.

May we send back the angels' song of peace and joy.
We pray these things in the name of Jesus
who became the Christ,
Who taught us when we pray to say...

Our Father...

Solo: 'O Holy Night' Emma Vickers

MOVING IN GOD'S WAY

Sharing the Christ Light: :

(Please form a circle around the Sanctuary)

Carol: 'Silent Night, Holy Night' #67VU

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 and Benediction:

From this house to yours,
May you share in the gifts of this season.
May love, the promise of generations, attend you.
Joy, the gift of life together, fill you.
Peace, the desire of neighbor and nations, find you.
Hope, the horizon of faith, sustain you.
And may a very Merry Christmas be yours. **Amen**

Organ Postlude

*May you have
The gladness of Christmas
which is hope;
The spirit of Christmas
which is peace;
The heart of Christmas
which is love.
~Ada V. Hendricks~*

Genesis 1:26-2:4 New International Version (NIV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 New International Version (NIV)

² The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Luke 1:26-35 New International Version (NIV)

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called ^[a] the Son of God.

Luke 2:1-20 New International Version (NIV)

The Birth of Jesus

² In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

² (This was the first census that took place while ^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

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

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

²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

John 1:1-14 New International Version (NIV)

The Word Became Flesh

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

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.