

*The United Church of Canada*  
*Bathurst Pastoral Charge*  
**First United Church, Bathurst**  
[www.firstunited-bathurst.ca](http://www.firstunited-bathurst.ca)

**Dec 24, 2017**  
**Christmas Eve**  
**4pm**

**Clergy** Rev. Blair Lewis **Organist** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Isabel Clouston **Greeters** The Lavigne Family  
**Custodian** Alan Wilcox

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**THE COMMUNITY GATHERS**

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

**Organ Prelude:**

**Gathering Words, Christmas Eve:**

**Leader:** Christmas is a time of anticipation.

**People:** **We can hardly wait.**

**Leader:** Christmas is a time of giving.

**People:** **We are ready to receive.**

**Leader:** Christmas is a time of hope and promise.

**People:** **We are looking for it.**

**Leader:** Could it be? Is it here? Let us come and see.

**People:** **Let us open ourselves to the wonder of it all.**

**The lighting of the Advent candles and the Christ candle:**

One: This is Christmas Eve.

In the Sundays of December,  
we have been lighting the Advent candles  
in our advent wreath  
as we have waited for this very day  
when we are ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus.  
First we lit the candle of hope:  
the promise of hope born in Jesus tonight.

*[The first candle is lit]*

Next we lit the candle of peace:  
the promise of peace born in Jesus tonight.  
*[The second candle is lit]*

Then we lit the candle of joy:  
the promise of joy born in Jesus tonight.  
*[The third candle is lit]*

Finally we lit the candle of love:  
the promise of love born in Jesus tonight.  
*[The fourth candle is lit]*

**All: We live in a world longing for God,  
the God who will be our guide  
when the path is unclear;  
the God who will be our courage  
when we are scared of what comes next.  
The God who will be our wisdom  
when we don't know which way to turn;  
the God who will be with us now and always.  
We have a need for God in our lives  
and in our worship  
we light this candle as a symbol that God is with us,  
born in Jesus this night.**

*[The Christ candle is lit]*

**Choral Response:** 'Hope Is a Star' #7 VU

*Love is a flame that burns in our heart,  
Jesus has come and will never depart.*

**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.*

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

**Refrain:**

**Hymn:** *'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,  
Offspring 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:**

**Call to Worship:**

Leader: Come! Hear the news of great joy!

**People: A child is born to us this day!**

Leader: Great joy for all people of the earth.

**People: A child is born to us this day!**

Leader: A Savior, the Messiah, the Lord!

**People: Glory to God in the highest!**

**Christmas Litany:**

Leader: Christmas! The full Light of God is among us.

**People: Noel! Noel! The news is good!**

Leader: In the midst of the world's night,  
the morning breaks in bright array!

**People: Noel! Noel! The news is good!**

Leader: Love's pure Light shines forever.

**People: Noel! Noel! The news is good!**

Leader: Noel!

**People: Noel!**

Leader: The news is good!

**People: Thank God! The news is good!**

**"The Christmas Story from the Children's Bible"**

**Musical Offering:** *"Away in a Manger"*  
The Children of the Sunday School

**Christmas Eve Prayer:**

**All: God of light and love,  
shine upon us this Christmas Eve  
and in the year ahead.  
Guide us out of darkness  
and into your joyous light.  
May our lives reflect your glorious love,  
that others may see your Christmas Spirit in us,  
each and every day of our lives.**

**The Lord's Prayer:----- Amen**

One: May God's Son, born this night,  
come into your hearts and lighten your darkness.  
May God's Son, born this night,  
guide your footsteps, and lighten your burden.  
May God's Son, born this night,  
bring you joy and give you peace,  
now and ever more.

**THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS**

**Presentation of Gifts and Self to God:**

**Choral Response:**

*(Tune Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)*

**Hope in our God so filled with love,  
Peace in the symbol of a dove,  
Joy in the coming of the Son,  
Love fills us up and makes us one**

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

**\*Prayer of Dedication:**

## THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH

**\*Closing Hymn:**    *'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.

### **Benediction:**

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!  
We have celebrated this wonderful gift of God this day.  
As we go forth, let us expect great things  
to happen in our lives and in our world,  
for the One who is coming as the Savior of all is almost here.  
As we go, may we share the good news with all we meet!  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Organ Postlude:**

*May Peace be your gift at Christmas  
and your blessing all year through!*  
~Author Unknown~

