

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

Dec 24, 2015
Christmas Eve
Communion

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

Vocalists: Kurt Hadley and Emma Vickers
Violinists: Rob and Kathleen Weary

All musical selections reprinted under licence #606499, LicensSing for Churches.

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

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

Organ Prelude:

Processional Hymn: '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

Our Christmas Candles: Carter, Grace & Jennifer Lavigne
(First four candles are relit)

One: Over the Sundays of advent
 we have been lighting candles
 to mark the approach of Christmas.
 The candles have served to remind us
 of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love
 Gifts God has promised to us in the birth of Jesus.

All: **Each week another candle has added to the glow,**
and the light has shone more brightly.
We lit the candle of Peace,
recalling God's desire
that peace be within us and among us.

One: We lit the candle of Hope,
 praying that the flame of hope may always burn within us.

All: **We lit the candle of Joy,**
anticipating the coming
of God's justice and peace with joy in our hearts.

One: We lit a candle of Love,
 singing praise for God's love and goodness
 expressed in the world.

All: **The weeks of waiting are now over.**
Tonight we light the Christ candle
to proclaim that the child is born
who will be a light to the world.

One: The Christ candle is placed
 it at the centre of the advent wreath.
 It is a reminder to us
 that Christ is meant to be the centre of our lives.
 With the lighting of this candle,
 may we welcome the holy child into our hearts.

(The Christmas candle is lit)

Advent Candle-Lighting Hymn:

'A Light Is Gleaming' #82 VU

**A light is gleaming,
Spreading its arms throughout the night,
Living in the light.
Come share its gladness,
God's radiant love is burning bright,
Living in the light.**

Call To Worship:

One: Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.

**All: For out of God's own being,
Jesus has come to bring light and love to all people.**

One: Jesus is Emmanuel, God-with-us,
come to gather our tears and laughter,
our work and our play, into God's loving embrace.

**All: Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.**

Prayer of Approach:

One: God, our Creator,
the One who comes in your name comes again
with grace and power,
with forgiveness and strength,
with truth and imagination,
with gentleness and love.

**All: May the Coming One enter our hearts
As we wait with quiet expectation
for all that is good and holy and just. Amen.**

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PROCLAIMED

Hymn:

'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks' # 75 VU vs 1&2

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
Had seized their troubled mind;
"glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and human-kind

The Prophecy

Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6

'A Prophet Foretold the Gift'

The Annunciation

Luke 1: 46-56

"Mary's Song of Praise"



The Birth of the Christ Child

Luke 2: 1-7

'God's Greatest Gift'

Luke 2: 8-20

'Shepherds Keeping Watch'

***Hymn: 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks' # 75 VU vs 3-6**

"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."

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Address their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good will to all from highest heaven
Begin, and never cease."

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

A Musical Offering: 'Christmastime'
Kurt Hadley and Emma Vickers

Presentation of Our Gifts:

Choral Response: *'In the Bleak Midwinter'* **#55VU** vs.4
*What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,
Yet what I can, I give him, give my heart.*

Prayer of Dedication: (in unison)

**As we prepare, O God,
for the festival of Christ's birth,
help us to give in expectation of his return.
May our gifts be used to prepare the world
for Christ's coming,
when all creation shall sing your praise. Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF THE TABLE

An Invitation to the Table:

Hymn: 'Come Touch Our Hearts' #12 MV Vs1&5

Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
From failing embers build a blazing fire;
Love strong enough to overturn injustice,
To seek a world more gracious,
Come touch and bless our hearts.

Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,
To break the bread and share the cup of peace;
That we may love you with our heart, our soul,
Our mind, our strength, our all,
Come touch us with your grace.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer:

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

One: Blessed are you, gracious God, Creator of light, Giver of all life, Source of love. We bless you for all your gifts. We praise you for this holy night of hope and for the wonder of this time of joy on this Christmas Eve.

All: We praise you, O God.

One: We thank you for those who, like Mary, woman of promise, have the strength and the courage to give birth to your love in the world and for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem.

All: We thank you, O God.

One: For Jesus Christ, in whom you gather the hopes and fears of all the years, we bless your Holy Name. Joining now with all your people of every time and place, and with the angels and archangels, who proclaim the holy birth:

Choral Response: (*Sanctus and Benedictus* # 942VU)
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might;
holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heav'n and earth are full, full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

One: We remember on the night before Jesus died,
he had supper with his disciples: he took bread;
thanked you, as we have thanked you; broke the bread;
and gave the bread to his friends, saying,
Take this, all of you, and eat it.
This is my body, given for you.
Each time you do this, remember me.

After supper he took the wine; thanked you for it,
and passed a cup of wine to his friends saying,
This cup is the new promise
God has made with you in my blood.
Each time you do this and drink from this cup,
remember me.

Remembering his death and celebrating his resurrection, we await with hope his coming again to bring peace and justice to the earth.

And so, we affirm the mystery of our faith:

All: Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

One: Send, O God, your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here; that we, and these gifts, touched by your Spirit, may be signs of life and love to each other, and to all the world.
Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forever.
We gather these and all our prayers, thankful that we may now turn to you in one voice,

All: Our Father, Who art in heaven..... Amen

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup:

Sharing of the Bread and Cup:

Communion Musical Offering:

'A Christmas Communion Hymn'

Our Christmas Prayer:

**All: For the bread we have eaten,
for the wine we have tasted,
for the life we have received,
we thank you God.
Grant that what we have done
and have been given here,
may so put its mark on us
that it may remain always in our hearts.**

One; May your joy be with us,
the joy of Christmas friendship
and the love we experience in our lives.
Challenge awaits us,
the challenge of sharing
the just and holy light of Jesus Christ
with those we meet.

**All: Peace awaits us,
the peace of your love of God
that comes at Christmas as a little child,
the peace that is in us.**

Solo: *'O Holy Night'* Emma Vickers

Blessing and Sending Forth: (in unison)
**We go out into the darkness of this Holy Night
with the assurance of the Love of God revealed
in the birth of Jesus.**

**When we awake on Christmas morning
we will open our eyes to the new hope
that comes with the birth of the Christ child.
With God's help may we accept the gift of love,
and pledge to be the gift of love to others.**

***Closing Hymn** *'Silent Night, Holy Night'* **#67VU**
Violinists: Kathleen and Rob Weary

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.

Organ Postlude

Christmas Joys

*Evergreen boughs that fill our homes
With fragrant Christmas scents,
Hearts filled with the loving glow
That Christmas represents;*

*Christmas cookies, turkeys stuffed,
Festive holly berry,
Little faces bright with joy,
Loved ones being merry;*

*Parties, songs, beribboned gifts,
Silver bells that tinkle,
Christmas trees and ornaments,
Colorful lights that twinkle;*

*Relatives waiting with open arms
To smile and hug and kiss us;
These are some of the special joys
That come along with Christmas.*

By Joanna Fuchs

The Prophecy

Isaiah 9:2-4, 6 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.
³ You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
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.

The Annunciation

Luke 1:46-56 New International Version (NIV)

Mary's Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:
"My soul glorifies the Lord
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors."
⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then
returned home.

The Birth of the Christ Child

Luke 2:1-7 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.

Luke 2:8-20 New International Version (NIV)

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.