

**Hybrid Worship for December 24, 2022
Christmas Eve**

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Special Prelude: "O, Holy Night"

Centering Music: "Joy to the World" Verse 1

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.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: The quiet of the evening is broken open with angel song,
All: the peaceful night is interrupted with the excitement of shepherds.
One: For this is night we celebrate the birth of God in our midst,
All: this is the night we rejoice with angels and shepherds.
One: Come to the manger, and see God's love wrapped in innocence and vulnerability.
All: We come with hope, with awe and with excitement.
One: Come to witness a humble birth, and touch the mystery of God.
All: We come with hearts and minds and spirits open to the wonder of this time.
One: Let's pray together –
**All: Tonight, O God,
the soles of your feet
have touched the earth.
Tonight,
the back street, the forgotten place
have been lit up with significance
far beyond our wildest dreams.
Tonight,
the households of earth
welcome the Child of heaven.
For you have come among us,**

you are one of us.

**So may our songs rise to surround your awesome mystery
as our knees bend to approach your cradle. Amen.**

Opening Hymn: "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;
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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lighting the Christ Candle

Christmas Eve

One: Tonight, we re-light the Advent candles of hope, peace, joy and love.

the three blue and one pink candles are lit

Two: *Tonight, the circle is complete, and we once again welcome the light of Christ into the centre of our wreath and our lives.*

the centre white candle is lit

Three: The strong light of the centre candle reminds us of Jesus, God's light in the world, shining brightly into all time, and into our time.

One: Thank you, God, for sending the gift of Jesus,
a gift in an unexpected package wrapped in a love bigger than the universe.

Two: *May the Spirit and the Christ who give hope, peace, joy, and love to the world be with us as we gather to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth tonight.*

Three: Let this candle remind us that the light of Jesus,
the light of God's love in human form,
is shining in our hearts and can spread from us to
others when we live in faith.

All: We welcome the light, love and life born anew in us tonight.

Sung Response: "Joy to the World" verse 2 only

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.

Hearing and Experiencing the Christmas Story

Scripture: Luke 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

Reflection/Action: *Think about the places you have lived – the safety and warmth they provide.
Think about the places you have visited – what was special about them?*

Carol: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” VU 64 Verses 1 and 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.

Scripture: Luke 2:6-8

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

Reflection/Action: *If you are joining us on ZOOM, or reading through the service at home,
you might unmute, and offer Christ’s peace to one another, or share with
someone in your household.*

Sharing the Peace of Christ

One: On this night we welcome and celebrate once again our Prince of Peace.
 The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us greet one another with signs of the Peace of Christ.

Music for Reflection: “Silent Night”

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

Reflection/Action: *When have you heard God's message for you?
How do you react to surprises?*

Choir: "The Angel's Song"

Scripture: Luke 2:15-16

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

Reflection/Action: *Think about a time when you have seen something that caused you to
feel awe or wonder – perhaps a new child or grandchild, or a special place or
time like a sunset or sunrise.*

Carol: "Away in A Manger" VU 69 verses 1 and 2

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars 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.

Scripture: Luke 2:17-20

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reflection/Action: *How do you share good or special news with your friends and family?*

Carol: "Angels We Have Heard on High" VU 38 verses 1, 3, 4

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

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.

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

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

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

Invitation to the Offering

One: We celebrate God's gift to us all tonight.
We respond with gratitude and with hope –
offering what we can, and who we are,
as an act of worship and love.

Gift of Music: "A Song, A Star, A Little Child"

Hymn of Dedication: *tune 'Good King Wenceslas'*

**God of light and God of love,
God born in a stable,
here we bring our gifts to share in
loving celebration.
Now we witness Love's rebirth,
hearts and minds rejoicing!
Bless the givers and the gifts,
signs of light and promise.**

Offering Prayer:

**All: May these gifts open others
to the blessings you give this Christmas, God:
the gift of childlike wonder;**

**the gift of radiant hope;
the gift of peace
which passes all understanding;
the gift of joy
which knows no bounds.
With these gifts, we bring ourselves, O God,
in response to the greatest gift of all—
the Babe of Bethlehem.
Amen**

Sacrament of Communion

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

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

One: God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace
to recall your vision of hope for all people and for your world.

Two: Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child.
Through your prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice.
In Jesus, you revealed your way of forgiveness and love.
Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—
your promise for the restoration of all creation.

One: As we gather to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus,
the child born into obscurity, amid fear and uncertainty.
We remember the fragility of that revelation,
as well as the hope he stirred and imagination he inspired, and we sing...

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 1*

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow; snow on snow.
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

Two: We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path
of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern:
temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker;
the author and finisher of our faith.

We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death, and we sing...

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 2*

**Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.**

One: On that night, in the midst of great confusion and fear,
Jesus broke bread with friends, saying,
"This is my body, which I give for you and for all.
When you do this, remember me."

Two: With a blessing, he took the cup and offered it to them saying:
"This cup is God's covenant which is given for all.
When you drink this, remember me."

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 3*

**Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.**

One: Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God.
Bless us, these gifts, and what we do here,
so that we might sing your song of love for your people and for your world.

Prayers of the People

Three: God of All, we pray for your people.
For those who are afraid and oppressed, may you give courage.
For those suffering conflict and fear, may you bring peace.
For those who long for food and water, may they be filled.
For those who long for justice, may it be fulfilled.
Tonight especially we pray for our siblings in Ukraine, in South Sudan,
in North Korea, in Peru, and in all places where justice is scarce
and God's love and compassion are needed.

We pray also for ourselves and our community.
That those in hospital and in care feel your strength.
That those who are alone and anxious feel you near.
That those who are ill in body and in spirit be comforted.

That our friends and family be blessed by healing and love.

Hear our prayers, O God,

All: and in your mercy, answer.

Three: We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 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.

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

(If you are worshipping in the sanctuary, you may come forward to receive the elements. If you prefer to stay seated, they will be brought to you. If you are participating on ZOOM, this would be the time to take bread and juice, and if with another you could serve each other with the words "Jesus Christ the bread of life" and "Jesus Christ the true vine.")

During communion, Sam and Rob Carruthers will be sharing musical arrangements created by Rob.

Prayer after Communion:

All: God of shepherds and kings, you gather us by the light of the star of promise.

You lead us not only to hope for the future,

but to trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place.

Guide us this night, by the light of that same star.

Lead us to the mangers of this world,

where uncertainty is met with the renewal of life

and the transformation of this world is most deeply felt in love, one with another.

Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Communion Liturgy written by Rev. Andrew O'Neil, St. Paul's United Church, Riverview, NB and posted at adventunwrapped.ca Used with permission.

Closing Hymn: "Silent Night" VU 67 (with candles)

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.

Shared Commissioning and Blessing

One: As we go from our worship this night:

**All: May the joy of the angels sing in our voices;
may the hope of the shepherds enliven our minds;
may the strong faith of Mary strengthen our spirits;
and may the love of the Baby shine in our hearts.**

One: God's blessing be upon you all, this holy night and forever.
Amen.

Music for Sending: "Joy to the World" verse 4 only

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.