



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 24, 2022
Minister: The Reverend Karen Ptolemy-Stam
Music Director: Victoria Warwick
Readers: Shaun McIntosh, Peggy Wallace

Welcome and Call to the Gathered

Opening Carol: VU#60 "O Come All Ye Faithful" vs 1, 3

1 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!**

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, in the highest:

Refrain

Opening Prayer: Read by Shaun McIntosh

Holy One, on this Christmas Eve we come with expectant hearts into the stillness of the night to glimpse the baby Jesus. As we enter the stable may we warm to the love and joy we find there. May we be as dismayed as the shepherds hearing good news from angels. May we be humbled as wise ones who sense the presence of the Divine before them. May we, this Christmas Eve, once again find you not only in a stable but in our hearts. May we

kneel before you, knowing that you will change our lives and our world. Amen.

Acknowledgment of the Land

Anthem: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" from the cantata "Have You Heard" by Joel Raney

Lighting Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love and Lighting the Christ Candle:

One: Hope, peace, joy, and love. Four candles, four promises continually offered to us by God, and all of them manifest in this one we light tonight: the Christ candle. In Christ we find the hope of transformation, the peace that follows justice, the joy of self-fulfillment in community, and the love that encompasses us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own unique contribution to this world. In Christ we find light and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his call and following in his footsteps.

Sung Response: "Light a Candle"

Light the candles of hope, peace and joy.
Light the candle of love in the world.
The Christ candle shines in the dark.
Light a candle, open your heart.
Light a candle and open your heart.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY:

(Please remain seated during the singing of these carols)



JESUS IS BORN

Luke 2:1-7a read by **Peggy Wallace**

A reading from the gospel of Luke telling of Mary and Joseph's arrival in Bethlehem.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, they found there was no room at the inn and they were housed in a stable. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger as there was no room for them at the inn.

Reflection

Tableau: Mary, Joseph and Jesus

Carol: VU #69 "Away in a Manger"

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.



ANGELS TELL GOOD NEWS

Luke 2:8-14 **read by Shaun McIntosh**

A reading from the gospel of Luke where shepherds are told astonishing news from angels.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this

day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, [£] the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, [£] praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” [£]

Reflection

Tableau: The Angels

Carol: VU #48 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (1, 3)

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn 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!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

3. Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

Hail the Sun 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.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”



SHEPHERDS COME TO SEE JESUS

Luke 2:15-20 read by **Peggy Wallace**

A reading from the gospel of Luke where shepherds go to Bethlehem to find the child

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reflection

Tableau: The Shepherds

Carol: "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks" VU#75 vs 1-2

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.

2. "Fear not!" said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind,
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and humankind."



WISE ONES COME SEEKING JESUS

Matthew 2:1-12 read by Shaun McIntosh

Reflection

A reading from the gospel of Matthew where wise ones in the East quest for God's presence in the world.

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi, wise ones[£] from the East came to Jerusalem² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,[£] and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah[£] was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd[£] my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi, wise ones[£] and learned from them the exact time when the star had

appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,[£] until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped,[£] they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road,

Tableau #4 The Wise Ones

Carol: "We Three Kings"

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar;
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O Star of wonder, star of night. Star with royal beauty bright,
still proceeding, westward leading, guide us to thy perfect
light.

Reflection:

Carol: Joy to the World VU#59 (1, 2, 4)

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.



2. 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.

4. 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.

Presentation of Our Offering and Offertory Prayer

Prayers of the People/Lord's Prayer read by Peggy Wallace
This prayer was written by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Let us pray

Holy One, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise ones.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the

blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas Eve make us happy to be your people, with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen

Please join me in the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father/Mother who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
now and forever.
Amen**

Commissioning and Benediction

Carol: VU #67 "Silent Night"

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.

Postlude

Thank you to all who participated in the service this evening.
The congregation of St. Paul's United Church wish you a Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the babe in the manger
dwell as Christ in your heart and lives.