



**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH  
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – 7:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, December 24, 2023**

**Minister: The Reverend Karen Ptolemy-Stam**

**Music Director: Victoria Warwick**

**Readers: Neal Foot, Shaun McIntosh, Peggy Wallace**

**Tech Team: Glenn Erwin, Gabriela & Rick Dell, Bruce Wilcox**

**WELCOME AND CALL TO THE GATHERED**

**OPENING CAROL:** VU#62 "Once in Royal David's City" vs 1, 2

1. 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.
2. 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.

**OPENING PRAYER:** read by Neal Foot

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE LAND**

**Anthem: "You Are Lord"** from the Cantata Lead Me Back to Bethlehem by Pepper Choplin

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

**Carol:** "Light a Candle"

1. Light a candle for hope in the darkness. Minds at rest, we know you are near;  
Advent watching and waiting for Jesus, God with us, redeeming the years.  
Emmanuel, hope is here; hope is here!
2. Light a candle for peace in the darkness. Souls content, we know you are near;  
Advent watching and waiting for Jesus, God with us, resolving our fears.  
Emmanuel, peace is here; peace is here!
3. Light a candle for joy in the darkness. In each trial we know you are near;  
Advent watching and waiting for Jesus, God with us, is wiping our tears.  
Emmanuel, joy is here; joy is here!
4. Light a candle for hope in the darkness. Minds at rest, we know you are near;  
Advent watching and waiting for Jesus, God with us, redeeming the years.  
Emmanuel, hope is here; hope is here!
5. Light a candle for Christ born among us. Grace of God most fully revealed.  
Advent watching and waiting is over. God with us, humanity healed.  
Emmanuel, God is here; God is here!

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY** (Please remain seated during the singing of these carols)



### **JESUS IS BORN**

Luke 2:1-7a read by Peggy Wallace  
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  
Anthem: "Fear Not" from the Cantata Lead Me Back to Bethlehem  
Reflection  
Tableau: The Angels come up to Hark the Herald on piano solo



### **SHEPHERDS COME TO SEE JESUS**

Luke 2:15-20 read by Peggy Wallace  
Reflection  
Tableau: The Shepherds

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  
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,  
westward leading, still proceeding, 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.



**GIVING OF OUR GIFTS:** The offering this evening will be for our Benevolent Fund which is used to provide compassionate assistance to those in need.

### **SUNG REPONSE: VU# 55 (V. 4) followed by Offertory Prayer**

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.

### **Prayers of the People/Lord's Prayer** read by Neal Foot

This prayer was written by Robert Louis Stevenson.

### **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.

## Commissioning and Benediction

### 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.