

NEW MARYLAND UNITED CHURCH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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December 24th, 2017 7 pm
CHRISTMAS EVE

Welcome and thank you for joining in our worship! If you are visiting, or new to the congregation, we hope you feel at home in our midst. Grace and peace to you all on this Holy Night!

Thought for Meditation:

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he or she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

Maya Angelou

THE GATHERING

*Please rise in body or in spirit for sections marked with an asterisk.

*Hymn# 60 VU O Come All Ye Faithful

Verse 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;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ The Lord.

Verse 2:

God of God, light of light,
Lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten not created:
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ The Lord.

Verse 3:

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

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ The Lord

Verse 4:

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 let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ The Lord

Verse 5:

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 let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ The Lord

***WELCOME**

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: The joy of Christmas be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Let us worship the Lord together!

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE:

***HYMN #59 VU Joy to the World**

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.**

**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**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.**

**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.**

THE CHRISTMAS STORY: *A Tale of noise, chaos, and unexpected holiness*: Luke 2: 1-16

ANTHEM: *A Great Light!* L. Larson

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER Ending with THE LORD'S PRAYER:

We ask for your blessing O God, on the shepherds in the field,
whatever the field, on all those who are keeping watch this night:
doctors and nurses, police and fire fighters, military personnel – all
those who, for the sake of us all, are apart from their loved ones.

Bless them and keep them, O God.

A blessing upon all who are suffering this night.

For a light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.

A blessing upon all those who, like the angels that holy night, call us to new life and adventure; blessings upon those who lead us to surprises, and those who sing us home.

May the heavens ring with our thanks for them!

A blessing on this gathering, and upon all whom we love – those in life, and those in loving memory.

[a pause to remember]

The grace of God has appeared among us.

The Spirit of the Lord has been poured out richly upon us.

A blessing on the whole world, O God!

Let all the earth rejoice – for unto us, a child is born!

A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, and who taught us to pray together, saying:

Our Father 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,

For ever and ever. Amen.

OFFERING: Solo– Carolyn Hatt

OFFERTORY: (#81 VU, v.3)

As they offered gifts most rare, at that manger crude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King!

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

A choir member will come down and light the candle of the person at the end of the row. They will say: *The Light of Christ has come!* The response may be: *Amen!* This continues as you light the candle of the person next to you, and so on. When everyone's candle is lit, we will sing together: *Silent Night* – words are printed in bulletin.

(Note: slide the cup down the candle for the purpose of lighting. Once lit, slide the cup up to fully enclose the flame. The person with the lit candle should hold it upright, and the unlit candle can be tipped to receive the light.)

*HYMN# 67 VU 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.

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BLESSING: While Shepherds Watched (#75 VU, v. 6)

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

POSTLUDE