

NEW MARYLAND UNITED CHURCH

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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December 24th, 2020 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. Let us pause to remember that in this region we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territories of the Wabanaki peoples—predominantly the lands of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Passamaquoddy. May we live with respect on this land, and live in friendship with its people. Grace and peace to you all on this Holy Night!

T H E G A T H E R I N G

GATHERING CAROLS

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The joy of Christmas be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Let us worship the Lord together!

HYMN# 60 VU O Come All Ye Faithful (verses 1, 3 and 5)

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 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 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

THE CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY:

Voice 1: On Christmas Eve, we gather to celebrate Jesus' birth,
Voice 2: this tiny baby, born long ago, in a village far away.

People: The One called Emmanuel, "God with us."

Voice 1: Every Christmas story, ancient or modern, includes the
'poor ones and humble,' the glorious and well-appointed, and the
ordinary folks attending to the work of the day. Into their intimate
family gathering, Mary and Joseph welcomed them all.

People: To become human, is to become welcoming.

Voice 2: And so we light a Candle of Hope, that we might find
ourselves welcomed into the Christmas story tonight.

(Light First Blue Candle)

Voice 1: Every Christmas story, ancient or modern, includes someone
bringing gifts to the Christ child.

Voice 2: As if our impulse to give is evidence in itself, of the presence
of the Holy.

Voice 1: Holy is the giver. And holy is the receiver.

People: And in the giving and the receiving, there is peace.

(Light Second Blue Candle)

Voice 2: Such a mystery was the birth of this Emmanuel. A mystery
celebrated by the very heavens and earth.

Voice: 1: Donkeys hooves and stars a-glowing; resting sheep and cattle
lowing.

People: All creation together proclaiming: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Voice 2: And so we light a Candle of Joy.

(Light Third Candle, Pink)

Voice 1: And because there was no room in the inn, Mary and Joseph made their way to the stable, and prepared a borrowed manger.

Voice 2: In spite of challenge and uncertainty, together they prepared the way.

People: To become human, is to become love in action.

Voice 1: And so we light a Candle of Love.

(Light Last Blue Candle)

Voice 2: The time came, as it was, and is, and evermore shall be, for Mary to deliver her child.

People: Emmanuel. Babe of Bethlehem. Prince of Peace.

Voice 1: And so we light the Candle of Christmas – the Candle of Christ.

(Light The Christ Candle)

Voice 2: Let us pray:

**All: As we recall the old, old stories of your birth, Lord,
we look for new stories, written in the lives of all humanity.
Open our lives to your Spirit. Be born in us, today.**

***HYMN #59 VU Joy to the World (verses 1, 2 and 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.**

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.**

MUSIC: Moon Joyce: *Love Is Christmas* *S. Bareilles*

A RESPONSIVE READING OF THE GOSPEL: Luke 2: 1-16 KJV

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in

swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

A CHRISTMAS STORY: *THE STORY OF SILENT NIGHT*

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.