

NEW MARYLAND UNITED CHURCH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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December 24th, 2023 10 pm
CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD
A Christmas Eve Service of Candlelight and Communion

Welcome and thank you for joining in our worship this holy night! 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 Christmas Night!

THE GATHERING

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

THE GATHERING & WELCOME

THE COMING OF THE CHRIST LIGHT & CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Here in the darkness, a light shines.

ALL: And the darkness shall not overcome it.

One: Throughout the season of Advent, we lit the candles of Hope, and Peace, and Joy and Love.

ALL: The Light shines in the darkness, and draws us all near,

One: That we might share in the wonder of Christmas: for unto us a child has been born, who is Christ the Lord. [*Light the Christ Candle*]
Merry Christmas!

ALL: Merry Christmas!

*HYMN#62 VU Once In Royal David's City

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Wonderful Counsellor, Light of Light, Prince of Peace: be born in us again this night.

**Still us, that we might hear the angels sing, the footfall of shepherds,
and the cry of a newborn, who has come to save us all.**

**In wonder, we 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.**

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 2:1-20

REFLECTION

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

OFFERING & OFFERTORY (#55 VU, v.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.**

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

***HYMN#76 VU See Amid The Winter's Snow, v.1, 2 and 5**

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

+++++++*We Share the Feast*+++++++

Prayer After Communion:

**Fed and filled at this table,
Fed with bread and cup and stories,
We head now into this dark and holy night,
And this we know: We carry emmanuel with us,
we carry his heart in our heart.
Amen.**

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Someone will come down and light the candle of the person at the end of the row. They will say: *The Light of Christ!* 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.* (*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: *Away In A Manger* (#69 VU, v. 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.**