

Melville United Church
December 24, 2018
Christmas Eve - 9:00 pm

** Congregation please stand as you are able.*

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding this evening - Rev. Marion Loree

Welcome

Prelude/Centering Time:

Ministry of Music: First Noel/Pachelbel's Canon -arr. Michael Clawson

Call to Worship:

The people who walked in deep shadows have seen a great light.

Those who lived in deep shadows, on them light has shined.

Let us sing a new song.

Let the seas thunder! Let the trees shout for joy!

Breathe deep of the starlight, the animals, the child.

Let us ponder all these things in our heart.

Glory to God, and peace on earth!

For Jesus Christ is born!

***Hymn:** O Come, All Ye Faithful **VU 60** (vs 1,3,5)

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.

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.

**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.

Opening Prayer:

Holy One, as we gather around the manger, hold us in the glow of your love. May this light give us new vision and greater spiritual clarity, that as we marvel at the mystery of this moment, we will remain in the eternity of your love. This is our prayer. Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

(As the first candle is lit)

On the first Sunday of Advent we lit a candle for Hope.

(As the second candle is lit)

On the second Sunday we lit a candle for Peace.

(As the third candle is lit)

On the third Sunday we lit a candle for Joy

(As the fourth candle is lit)

On the fourth Sunday we lit a candle for Love.

This night, this blessed night, we light the candle that brings all of these together.

Tonight we light the Christ candle.

This is what we have waited for.

This is the hope, born of Mary,

This is the Peace, lived on earth,

This is the Joy of God's love shown in human life,

This is the Love that wraps us, holds us, sustains us and gives us life.

Tonight we celebrate Christ's light born again into the world!

With all of God's creatures we sing Hallelujah! Joy to the World!

(The Christ candle is lit)

This is the candle of Christ, a light to the world.

In its glow, we are blessed.

In its glow, God's love is revealed.

Hymn: A Candle is Burning **VU 6 (vs 1-4)**

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
 a candle of hope in December's dark night.
 While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
 our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
 a candle to signal that conflict must cease:
 for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
 a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
 a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
 Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
 as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

A candle is burning, a candle of love,
 a candle to point us to heaven above.
 A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
 for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

Prayer of Confession and Affirmation:

On this day of celebration, Great Mystery,
 we take a moment to confess our frailties:
**the times we have not gone the second mile,
 as you invited us to do;**
 the times we have not shared our cloak
 or poured the cup of water;
**the times we have let fear be our guide,
 rather than faith.**

Search each heart O God,
and receive our prayers... (silence)
 Hear the good news! Tonight, love comes close.
The love that created us.
 The love that lives in us. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

Hymn: Away in a Manger **VU 69**

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.

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.

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

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing **VU 48**

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!'

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
 Christ, the everlasting Lord,
 late in time behold him come,
 offspring of a virgin's womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
 hail, the incarnate deity,

pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'

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!'

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20

Reading: Sitting on the Hillside

- Joyce Rupp

*Hymn: While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks

VU 75 (vs 1-4)

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

'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
'glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and humankind.

'To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid.'

Reading: Against Our Better Judgement

- Ann Weems

Hymn: Still, Still, Still

VU 47

Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.
The Christ child in his crib lies sleeping,
angels round him watch are keeping.
Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.

Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep,
while Mary sings and gently holds you,
safely in her arms enfolds you.

Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus softly sleep.

Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!

For through God's holy incarnation
Christ is born for our salvation.

Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!

Our Christmas Prayers: The Point of the Process

(Bruce Sanguin - *If Darwin Prayed*)

The Prayer of Jesus:

Ministry of Music: Blessing of Aaron

- N. Ramsey, W. Rodby

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion:

Call to Give Thanks:

Glory to God in the highest!

And on earth, peace to all!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give thanks and praise.

Communion Prayers:**Words of Institution:****Sharing of the Elements:**

(people to come forward to form a circle- we will serve each other saying)

"The gifts of Christmas are yours"

Post Communion Prayer

Before "Silent Night" *(each person is invited to take a candle from the baskets)*

Hymn: Silent Night*VU 67**

(As we sing candles are lit)

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.

Blessing:**Parting Song: Joy to the World VU 59**

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.

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.

Postlude: Hallelujah Christmas (Cohen/Cloverton) Marion Loree