

Melville United Church
December 24, 2019
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: Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming **VU 8**

Call to Worship:

Welcome, everyone, on this holiest of nights.

As Mary readied herself to give birth to Jesus,

let us prepare ourselves

to welcome new birth into our own lives.

As a child prepares to open a special gift,

let us prepare our hearts

to receive the wonder of God's love.

As heaven and Earth sing of great joy,

let us sing our joyful praises to God.

Come, let us worship God together.

***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:

O God, we come filled with excitement

to hear the Christmas story again,

on this holiest of nights.

Open wide the crowded inns of our hearts,

that we may see with new eyes,

what happened that night so long ago.

Open our ears that we may hear your voice

in the voices of those around us.

Fill us with wonder and mystery

that we may experience your presence with us now. Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

For the past four Sundays, we have lit the Advent candles,

one by one, as we traveled toward this night.

The first candle was the candle of hope. *(1st candle is lit)*

Hope leads us to pray for peace,

acting peacefully to cultivate harmony in all our relations.

The second candle was the candle of peace. *(2nd candle is lit)*

Peace transforms into joyful celebration:

walls torn down, chasms filled,

barriers leveled, valleys bridged.

The third candle was the candle of joy. *(3rd candle (pink) is lit)*

Joy inspires us to dance with abandon.

Joy embraced fosters love that makes all things new.

The fourth candle was the candle of love. *(4th candle is lit)*

The deep meaning of love shared shows us the Christ.

We now light the Christ candle, in celebration of God's most precious gift to us:

A fragile baby who brings hope, peace, joy, and love into the world.

And into the hearts and minds of each one of us. (*The Christ candle is lit*)

ALL: The Christ comes, still completely vulnerable, yet filled with promise.

Hymn: Hope is a Star

VU 7

Prayer of Confession:

Give us, Holy Presence, the reassurance of the angels

stilling the fear that is within us.

Give us, Great Mystery, the peaceful chorus of the angels,

countering all that is at war within us and our relationships.

Give us, Source of Love, the perception of the shepherds,

to search for the highest good in ourselves, and in others.

Give us, Ground of Being, the gentleness of Mary,

that we may live in the way of peace and love. Amen.

Words of Affirmation:

in the light of Christ, our darkness is exposed,
confronted, rejected, and dispelled.

We are forgiven people, people of the light!

God's peace is yours!

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Introduction to Scripture:

Many, many years before Jesus was born, there lived a prophet called Isaiah. Isaiah was sad about the kings and leaders in his time who had forgotten God's way. Isaiah dreamed of a time when God would send a new leader, a king who would be fair and loving and would show people God's way once again. He described the coming of this new leader in this way:

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

Reflection:

Hymn: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

VU 44

Scripture: Luke 2:1-6

In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole Roman world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All the people were instructed to go back to the towns of their birth to register. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to "the city of David" - Bethlehem, in Judea, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, he went to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her delivery. She gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn.

Reading: The World Still Knows

(Ann Weems - Kneeling in Bethlehem)

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 2:8-16

There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid.

The angel said to them, "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you - news of a great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David's city, a saviour - the Messiah - has been born to you. Let this be a sign to you: you will find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in high heaven! And on earth, peace to those on whom God's favour rests."

Reflection: Holding (Ann Weems - Kneeling in Bethlehem)

Hymn: Angels We Have Heard on High

VU 38

Scripture: Luke 2:17-20

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reading: Later (Ann Weems - Kneeling in Bethlehem)

***Hymn:** Go, Tell It on the Mountain

VU 43

Our Christmas Prayers: The Point of the Process (Bruce Sanguin - *If Darwin Prayed*)

The Lord's Prayer:

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion:

Know that this is the table of Jesus the Christ who welcomes all. There are no divisions here. There are no restrictions on God's love and acceptance. All who wish to live with honesty and integrity, compassion and love are welcome to participate.

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: *(we will serve each other saying)*
"The gifts of Christmas are yours"

Post Communion Prayer

Intro to "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

We do not take up an offering during the Christmas Eve service but if you feel moved and would like to make a donation to the church there are baskets near the back.

Welcomers: Mark Andrews, Mary Lloyd, Isobel Glennie, Ralph Rainford