

**December 29, 2019**



Melville United Church

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Melville United Church  
Sunday, December 29, 2019  
Christmas I

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*\* Congregation please stand as you are able.*

**Bold print invites congregational response.**

Presiding today: Ruth Cooke

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Sharing the Light**

**Prelude/Centering Time**

**Call To Worship:**

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.

**For out of God's on being,**

**Jesus has come to bring light and love to all people.**

Jesus is Emmanuel, God-with-us,

Come to gather our tears and laughter,

Our work and our play, into God's loving embrace.

**Glory to God in the highest,**

**And on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.**

**Opening Prayer:**

**Blessed are you, O Christ child,**

**That your cradle was so low that shepherds,**

**Poorest and simplest of earthly people,**

**Could yet kneel beside you,**

**And look, level-eyed, into the face of God.**

**Blessed One, we come to you in reverence. Amen.**

**\*Hymn:** All Poor Ones and Humble

**VU 68**

**Call to Confession:**

**Prayer of Confession:**

**Holy God, you offer us new life in the baby at Bethlehem, but we confess that we have made something trivial, something sentimental, out of Christmas. Your light comes into the world, and we see only the pretty lights on trees. You shine in the darkness, but we turn away from the darkness of our world, and miss you. Your Word is made flesh, but we would like something nicer, more spiritual, than the humanity of God with us in the flesh.**

*(We reflect in silence...)*

**Words of Assurance:**

Fear not, I bring you tidings of great joy for all people!  
Christ, our Saviour, is born.  
As Jesus enters fully into our lives, we are forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**A Time for the Young & Young at Heart**

**Children's Song:** Jesus, Our Brother

**VU 56**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 63:7-9 (The Message -MSG)

I'll make a list of GOD's gracious dealings,  
all the things GOD has done that need praising,  
All the generous bounties of God,  
his great goodness to the family of Israel—  
Compassion lavished,  
love extravagant.  
He said, "Without question these are my people,  
children who would never betray me."  
So he became their Savior.  
In all their troubles,  
he was troubled, too.  
He didn't send someone else to help them.  
He did it himself, in person.

Out of his own love and pity  
he redeemed them.  
He rescued them and carried them along  
for a long, long time.

**Psalm:** Psalm 148

**VU 871**

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 2:13-23 (The Message -MSG)

After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him."

Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: "I called my son out of Egypt."

Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age from information he'd gotten from the scholars.) That's when Jeremiah's sermon was fulfilled:

A sound was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and much lament.  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Rachel refusing all solace,  
Her children gone,  
dead and buried.

Later, when Herod died, God's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: "Up, take the child and his mother and return to Israel. All those out to murder the child are dead."

Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother, and re-entered Israel. When he heard, though, that Archelaus had succeeded his father, Herod, as king in Judea, he was afraid to go there. But then Joseph was directed in a dream to go to the hills of Galilee. On arrival, he settled in the village of Nazareth. This move was a fulfillment of the prophetic words, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Meditation:** “What Does the Nativity Story Really Tell Us?”

**\*Hymn:** ‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime **VU 71**

**Offering:**

**Offering Song:** What Can I Give Him **VU 55 (v4)**

What can I give him poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I bring him—bring my heart.

**\*Offertory Prayer: (Unison)**

**O God, you birth abundant life! We thank you for the birth we celebrate today. In response to your great labour of love, we offer our gifts. As we open ourselves to you, may your love be born in us this Christmastide. Amen.**

**Celebrations and Concerns:**

**Prayer Prelude:** Still, Still, Still **VU 47 (v1)**

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.

## **Prayers of the People:**

### **Prayer of Jesus:**

**\*Hymn:** The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

**VU 73**

### **Blessing/Sending Forth:**

For unto us in Aklavik is born a child,  
in Attiwapiskat, Gaspé, Cornerbrook

**And a son is given**

**in Wetaskiwin, Bella Coola, Flin Flon.**

And the future of the whole earth  
is placed upon the shoulders of the daughter of  
Tuktoyaktuk, Tignish, Swan Lake.

**And the place of their birth is called**

**Vermilion, Temiskaming, Picture Butte, Nain.**

And the saviour of the world is

**Indigenous, Immigrant, Refugee.**

Go forth, and see the face of the Christ child  
in every face you see. **Amen.**

**\*Parting Song:** Go Tell It on the Mountain

**VU 43 (v3)**

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lonely manger, the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent our salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

### **Postlude**

**Prayer for the Week:**

**Thank you, scandalous God, for giving yourself to the world, not in the powerful and extraordinary, but in weakness and the familiar: in a baby; in bread and wine. Thank you for offering, at journey's end, a new beginning; for setting, in the poverty of a stable, the richest jewel of your love. Amen.**

**Partners in Prayer:** Elora Canadian Reformed Church, Elora

**Western Ontario Waterways:** Bloomingdale

**Prayer Tree Captain:** Alison Rainford

**Welcomers:** Doreen and Larry Broome, Joan and John Cuming

**Counters:** Larry Broome and David Gohn