



**December 24, 2021**

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church**  
**December 24, 2021**  
**Christmas Eve**

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Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

**Welcome**

I greet you in the name of the infant Christ, the babe in the manger, our Saviour.

*We gather in community today – December 24, 2021 virtually and in person. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person.*

*As we gather on this holy night, we mark the hope, peace, joy and love that has come in God's incomparable gift of the Incarnation, God becoming flesh in the person of Jesus, and living among us. Not so that God might know this human life, but so that we humans might know God and God's love.*

**Announcements**

- **2021-2022 Gifts with Vision** catalogues are out. These gifts are perfect for those difficult to buy for people. There's no going out, no standing in line, no wondering if the item you ordered will be here in time for Christmas, no wrapping. And you will be helping out those in need near and far. Items address healing and reconciliation, leadership, counter racism, wellness and safe spaces, education, poverty and hunger, the future, Mission & Service. Gifts range from \$5 to \$140. Gifts include food for the north, help build a well, purchasing Covid vaccines for the Global South and East, and much more. You can find the full catalogue at [www.giftswithvision.ca](http://www.giftswithvision.ca).
- We continue to **collect items for the food bank**. A list of the most needed items was sent out, and if you need a printed copy, just let someone on the Social Justice team or Rev. Lynda know, and we will get it to you. In addition to non-perishable food items, the food bank is also looking for personal and feminine hygiene products as well as fresh vegetables, apples and oranges.
- There are a few remaining **Church calendars** for sale for \$5 each.
- **Calling for Your List of Favourite Hymns** – We are looking for your favourite hymns from Voices United, More Voices or any others. Please complete the list on the handout and place it on the offering plate, return it to Lynda the office administrator, Rev Lynda or someone on the Worship and Music Committee.
- **Upcoming Services:**  
December 26 – Boxing Day – 11am – Casual Service

*I invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.*

**Acknowledgement** *Peter Chynoweth, Gathering: Pentecost 2, 2021, p.25. Used with permission.*

Land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship to the land is sacred and holy.

Our relationship with each other on this land is sacred and holy.

It calls for respect and appreciation.

And so we offer our appreciation, our thanksgiving, and our respect

that we can gather in this place and on this land

as a result of the welcome that comes through the Haldimand Treaty and the Simcoe Patent -  
Treaty No. 4,

which allow for peaceful and respectful living on this land.

Thanks to the

Petun,

Haudenosaunee,

Anishinabewaki,

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation,

Odawa and

Mississauga people

who have lived on and walked these lands for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that we are connected with the people who have lived here for all these years  
because of the treaties.

Because we are treaty people, we must honour the responsibilities that come with it.

May we be people who remember this with gratitude and respect.

### **Advent Candle Lighting**

Enter, with your vulnerabilities and with your whole self just as you are.

**We come seeking hope.**

*The first blue/purple Advent candle is lit.*

Come, with your brokenness.

**We come seeking peace and healing.**

*The second blue/purple Advent candle is lit.*

Come, with your desire for new life.

**We come seeking joy.**

*The pink Advent candle is lit.*

Come, with your desire to love and to be beloved.

**We come seeking love. We come to prepare the way of love.**

*The last blue/purple Advent candle is lit.*

Come at God's invitation this night.

**We come to welcome the Christ child.**

**Tonight, hope, peace, joy and love are found in a manger and throughout the world.**

*The white Christ candle is lit.*

**Sung Response: Hope Is a Star v.5** *Kent Chown, Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2016-17, p.54. Used with permission.*

Christ is the Light that lightens the earth,  
guiding and saving us all since his birth.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

**Call to Worship:** *Diane Trollope, Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022, p.36. Used with permission.*

*Listen... Pay attention...*

The angels are singing, and small animals are peeking out to watch for the signs of this night of nights:

the star that they can follow to honour the wee Child, poor, homeless,  
yet asleep surrounded by love,  
part of a family who will be on the run for their lives.

**Praise God, for Love is coming in person as always to be everywhere we cannot be.**

Let your heart dance!

Let your heart sing!

**God is love unbounded and freely given.**

**God's love is everywhere we cannot be.**

**Alleluia! Amen!**

**Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful**

**VU 60** *accompanied by Kaillie Rawn on trumpet*

- 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.
- 2 God of God, light of light,  
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;  
very God, begotten, not created:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
- 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.
- 4 See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
- 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.

**Opening Prayer:** *Diane Trollope, Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022, p.36. Used with permission.*

Far from home and at risk from the threatening and powerful, Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph.

**We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus, your chosen one.**

Far from home but embraced by God's light and love, Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph.

**We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus, your chosen one.**

Far from home but celebrated by heavenly angels,

Jesus is born to Joseph and Mary.

**We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus, your chosen one.**

Far from home but sought out by humble shepherds, Jesus is born to Joseph and Mary.

**We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus, your chosen one.**

Far from home and close to home,

**we welcome the birth of the Christ child**

**this Christmas Eve. Amen.**

**Ministry of Music:** "Caribbean Carol" *Caribbean Folk Song arranged by Patrick M. Liebergen – Melville Choir accompanied by Colleen Weber on piano and Mercedes Weber on flute and Luke Parkin on maracas*

**Call to Reconciliation** *Thom M. Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies: Christmas Eve liturgy with communion*

<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>. *Used with permission.*

This is the night we are reminded that God loves to be with us.

Yet all too often – by our choices, our words, our silence – we choose not to be with God.

Join me as we pray on this holy night to the One who was born to gift us with mercy and hope.

**Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation** *VU 63*

God of stable, stars, and surprises,

of light and hope and new life:

**open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;**

**forgive our obsession with property and possessions;**

**forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.**

Open us to your grace,

**that we might hear again the song of the angels,**

**and respond with a song in our hearts,**

**and in our lives. Amen.**

**Words of Assurance** *The United Church Publishing House, Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of Canada. Copyright 2000. Used with permission.*

God comes in Jesus, son of Mary,

to show us Love incarnate.

In Christ, God forgives us,

encourages us,

and frees us to love others.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**"...In the Midst"**

On a Snowy Night

May we find God in the midst of all our days.

**Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**VU 48 *accompanied by Kaillie Rawn on trumpet*

- 1 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!'
  
- 2 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!'
  
- 3 Hail, the heavenborn 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:****Prayer** *Laura Rousseau, **Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022**, p.38. Used with permission.*

Holy God of angels and shepherds, of magi and of refugee families, we pray to you today:  
prepare our hearts to receive the hope of the Christmas story. Amen.

**Isaiah 9:2-7 (NIV)***A child has been born for us*

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.  
You have enlarged the nation  
and increased their joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as people rejoice at the harvest,

as warriors rejoice  
when dividing the plunder.  
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered  
the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.  
Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.

**Scripture: Luke 2:1-14, (15-20) (NRSV)**

*Jesus' birth*

*The Birth of Jesus*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus  
that all the world should be registered.  
This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.  
All went to their own towns to be registered.  
Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea,  
to the city of David called Bethlehem,  
because he was descended from the house and family of David.  
He went to be registered with Mary,  
to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.  
While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.  
And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth,  
and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*The Shepherds and the Angels*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields,  
keeping watch over their flock by night.  
Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,  
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,  
and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid;  
for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.  
This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven,  
        and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'  
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,  
the shepherds said to one another,  
'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place,  
which the Lord has made known to us.'  
So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.  
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.



**Reflection: Rebecca's Story** *inspired by the song "The Innkeeper" by Lennie Gallant*

Good evening. My name is Rebecca. You likely don't know me, but I have a part to play in a story I'm sure you've heard. It seems to have spread around quite a bit in these last years. And you probably know my husband, Benjamin, better than me. He seems to be the one most people think of when they hear the story. But really, at least some of what happened, for good or ill, happened because of me.

It was a very unusual time, a time ripe with possibility in a way that hadn't happened for a long time. And we knew, Benjamin and I, that we had to act carefully, to be shrewd. Oh well look at me!



Getting ahead of myself! Of course you haven't been to Bethlehem, so you wouldn't know us or have chanced upon our establishment: Benjamin's Inn in Bethlehem.

It is, I will concede, a modest operation, but we're working on trying to get it to grow. And that's why the census was such a golden opportunity – an opportunity we badly needed. You see, we had no children, no strapping young men or energetic young women to help us with the many chores required to keep an inn.

...

We did have children, once upon a time, a beautiful boy and girl, they were the apples of our eyes. They were strong and good with smiles that lit them up, shining through them from deep within. But no matter how good or beautiful they were, or how radiant their smiles, they were no match for the disease brought by a ragged traveller. He came into our inn coughing and sneezing and wheezing, and before we knew it, first Isaac, our boy, and then little Miryam, were coughing too. We tried everything, but no matter who we consulted, or how much we were willing to pay for medicines, they were both gone in a matter of weeks.

So, now we had to work extra hard to save up a nest-egg for the days which would surely come when we could no longer manage the inn ourselves, and there was no one to carry it on for us. That's partly why the census was so important. Having this big crowd of people forced to stay in Bethlehem meant we might be able to develop some future business for the inn. But it also meant being careful about who we booked into the inn. We couldn't look to the very best clientele. They might deign to stay with us in a pinch, but next time, they'd choose somewhere more to their taste and style. And we didn't want riff-raff – they're bad for business – and after losing our beloved children to the diseases of a thread bare wanderer, we were very clear **they** weren't welcome in our inn.

Which is why it is so remarkable that we ended up having anything to do with the young man and woman who appeared at our door during the census. There they were, dusty, threadbare, looking more than a little shabby, not the sort of clientele we were hoping to cultivate. And that was before I even realized that the young woman was **very** pregnant. She must be ready to have that child at any moment! And in fact while they were standing there, asking about a room, I saw her grimace a time or two in a way that suggested things were starting to happen, if you know what I mean. Well, I have to tell you, by the time I had sized up this much about them, I knew they were not for us. It was a supplier's market and we could choose to let our rooms to whomever we wanted. And these two, **these** we did not want. They were not traders who would be back and forth along the road very often, likely never. They were clearly only travelling for the census.

And then there was this impending birth. I did **not** need to disturb my other paying guests, whom I was hoping **would** return, with all the noise and carrying on of a woman in labour. No, I was adamant; they would **not** be staying in our inn.

So I was clear: they needed to move on. But it turned out they encountered Benjamin as they prepared to carry on. He always did have a bit of a soft spot for people in distress – I can tell you it hasn't helped our books much – and all the more so since Isaac and Miryam died.

Anyway, about a half hour after I had shooed them on their way, I found this couple out in the back, in the stable – really more of a cave dug into the side of the hill. And there was Benjamin. I caught him red-handed, sweeping out the stall, and laying some reed mats on the dirt floor, and piling up some straw for the young woman to rest on. And she needed a place to rest. It was obvious things were advancing now and the child was on the way. Benjamin even emptied out the food trough for the animals and lined it with straw and some clean rags for the babe when it arrived.

I just shook my head, but I took a moment to help him get everything straight. You know some things just need a critical eye and a second pair of hands to make them just right. And then I caught myself, and tsked under my breath; I really had better things to do with my evening! But the young woman looked up at me, and even through the pain that was clear on her face, she looked so

grateful, and gave me a look of such compassion – **me!** – in the midst of her **own** turmoil, that I felt strangely moved.

I stood there for a moment, transfixed by what I was feeling, a sense of something breaking open. I didn't know what it was, but it seemed to be connected to the way she looked at me...

And then there was a shout from in the inn, and the young girl who was working for us appeared at the door. I looked at Benjamin again. Maybe he was bewitched by the spell of this young girl, and would while away the hours making a nest for her and her husband, but I had an inn to run. And I put away flights of fancy and headed back inside to manage the next crisis.

It was a long evening, with many calls for drink and food, and more guests to get settled. But I kept finding myself listening with half an ear, pausing to glance out in the direction of the stable, wondering what was happening out there. Benjamin came in after a bit, clearly embarrassed to be in the presence of a girl in labour. The young man came to the back door a couple of times, to ask for water and another couple of rags, but otherwise, he remained with the girl in the stable.

Finally, I felt a keen sense that I just had to know what was happening. I couldn't focus on my customers and the noise inside was becoming unbearable. I stepped outside, just to get a breath of the fresh night air, and to just listen. It really was all I meant to do. But there was a sudden hush, and expectant silence, like the whole world holding its breath, and I couldn't stop myself from moving to the stall to see what was happening. Just as I got there, the young woman groaned, gathered her energy, and gave a mighty push. And the child was born.

I stood there frozen, caught up in the miracle of new life. But more than that ... feeling again that sense of breaking open, of something significant within me shifting. Then the man saw me and beckoned me to help, to bring the fresh rags from the makeshift crib over to them, so they could clean off the babe, and then have something to wrap the little one in. The baby was by this time crying, reaching for his mother – for it was a little boy. And she cradled him close, crooning to him, and offering him her breast.

I wanted to give them some privacy, so I gathered up the dirty rags and left. But that sense of something opening, of something lifting off my soul was so powerful that I kept finding excuses to wander out to the back of the inn. Something always called me back inside, but gradually as the night worn on, I felt drawn again to this little family in the stable. I had to see the child again, so I made my way hesitantly back out to them.

I found Benjamin hovering on the edge of the yard as well, and we made our way cautiously toward them, nestled together in the straw. The young woman looked up, with such peace and joy and radiance that I was humbled. The man looked tired, but content, caring for his young family. And as I edged forward, to wish them well, and offer a bit to eat and drink, the child opened his eyes and looked at me. It was a look of such wisdom and knowing, such insight – I felt he was looking into my very soul.

And in that moment, something **big** shifted, shifted profoundly within me. All the hurt and pain, all the hardness and self-seeking, that had dominated my days, my actions for so long ... receded. It didn't disappear, but I could feel it shifting to the background. And I felt able to **breathe** again in a way I hadn't for a **very** long time...

Something did shift that night. There was a weight that has now been lifted; something hard and unyielding that **cracked** in the light of that baby's penetrating gaze. When I look back on it, I realize now that although I told that young couple there was no room in our inn, what was **really** going on was that there was no room in my heart, in my soul. It was filled with bitterness and sorrow. But the presence of that child, his wise gaze into the midst of me, broke me open in a way that **made** room, that allowed **light** and **love** to enter in.

There is now room in my life. Room to love, room to care, room to take a chance and not to have to worry about protecting **me** and looking out for my interests alone.

I'm sure you've heard the story of that night, and you know who that baby is, who he was and who he has become.

I must go now, I can't leave the inn for long, but my wish for you, as we come around again to the anniversary of that night, is that you might venture out into the dark night, to respond to the urging that comes to your heart, and in the process, that you might discover that there is room in **your** heart, in **your** soul, room you may not have known, for the one who comes, who brings hope and peace and joy and love.

...

Yes, Benjamin, I'm coming, I'm coming!

### **Hymn: Once in Royal David's City VU62**

- 1 Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattleshed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed.  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.
  
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven  
who, with God, is over all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall.  
There among the poor and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.
  
- 3 For he is our lifelong pattern;  
daily, when on earth he grew,  
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,  
tears and smiles like us he knew.  
Thus he feels for all our sadness,  
and he shares in all our gladness.
  
- 4 And our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love;  
for that child who seemed so helpless  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.

### **Joys and Concerns**

#### **Preparation for Prayer**

Let us practice the art of Praying with our Eyes Wide Open, that in seeing the world and those within it we are called to tend we may be *opening the eyes of our hearts to all in need around us* (Lamont Koerner '81 MDiv God Pause for Thursday, September 16, 2021 from Luther Seminary):

## **Prayers of the People**

In this most holy season, we have gathered, O God,  
to celebrate the birth of the Christ child;  
to join our voices with the choirs of angels;  
to come with shepherds to the stable  
and wonder at this Christmas miracle.  
With us we bring the hurt and the hopes of our world.  
In this season of excess,  
we remember all who are empty.  
We remember neighbours who are unemployed,  
whose dreams have been shattered,  
and whose futures have been frustrated . . . .  
In this season of carols,  
we remember all in our midst who have little to sing about,  
all who are lonely, depressed, anxious, or sick . . . .  
In this season of festivity,  
we remember all who face the harsh reality of oppression:  
prisoners, refugees, exiles, all facing torture . . . .  
Yet through the shadows of our world,  
shines the light of your promise;  
the angels' heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world.  
We pray for the church of Jesus Christ,  
that we may be bearers of your light, singers of the angels' song,  
and messengers of goodwill to all on earth.  
We pray for all in power and authority,  
that they may be open to hear the glorious song of old,  
with its message of justice and peace to all humankind . . . .  
For ourselves, we ask strength and purpose,  
to live the love of Christmas . . . .  
Emmanuel, God-with-us, abide with us;  
we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Offering Invitation** *Laura Rousseau, **Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022**, p.38. Used with permission.*

Christmas pageants and nativity scenes usually include the wise men from the east.  
In church, we usually commemorate their visit during our celebration of Epiphany on January 6.  
Nevertheless, the image of visitors bearing gifts is very much a symbol of Christmas.  
In this time of sharing and generosity,  
our offering is collected to be shared with the wider community to bring help, healing, and hope.  
Our offering also helps to sustain this place of worship,  
so it can continue to be a place where everyone is welcomed  
and where hope, peace, joy, and love are nurtured and continue to grow.

***The offering plate will now be passed for anyone who wishes to make a donation at this time.***

**Offering Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter**

**VU 55 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.

**Offering**

If you would like to do your part by making a monetary donation to Melville United Church, there are several ways to do that.

1. By leaving your offering envelope on the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary.
2. Cheque (post-dated cheques are welcome): made payable to Melville United Church-which can be mailed to the church at P.O. Box 41, Fergus ON N1M 2W7 or put in the mail slot beside the parking lot door.
3. Donate online through the Canada Helps website  
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church>
4. Call or email Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).
5. E-transfer directly from your bank. E-mail to [secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com)

Thanks to all of you who continue to contribute so much to make Melville the caring community of faith that it is. May you be blessed.

**Offering Prayer** *Laura Rousseau, Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022, p.38. Used with permission.*

God of stars and stables, of wealthy sovereigns and homeless youth,  
we each bring our gifts as we are able,  
knowing that the strength of community will bless each gift.  
Our community is empowered by your love, to work toward peace on earth.  
We pray to you, O God, bless these gifts,  
which are our expression of care and concern for each other. Amen.

**Sharing the Light of the World**

*We will now light our tapers from the Christ Candle in the Advent wreath. An usher will light their candle, and then will come down the aisle to light the candle of those closest, who will then pass the light to the next person in their pew and so on.*

**Hymn: Silent Night VU 67**

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

3 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.

**Commissioning** *Gill Le Fevre, **Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2021-2022**, p.39. Used with permission..*

Go out into this Christmas night,  
comforted by the warmth of God's welcoming love growing in your heart  
and renewed by the strength of God's healing love,  
filling us and making us whole through the gift of the Christ child. Amen.

**Blessing** *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1**. Copyright 2012.*

May Christ be your light,  
this night and forevermore.

**Household Prayer: Morning** *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1**. Copyright 2012.*

God of small things,  
you came among us as a tiny and vulnerable baby  
open to all who met you.  
Teach us to care for the quiet and tender places  
in our hearts and in those of others  
as we nurture your compassion in our world. Amen.

**Household Prayer: Evening** *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1**. Copyright 2012.*

Creator of the stars of night,  
we give you thanks for the love  
you have shared with us this day  
in the celebration of the birth of Christ.  
Blanket us in peace this night as you comfort all in need. Amen.