

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

December 27, 2020

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m.

Email sketchingalong4@gmail.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Hymn: VU 60 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

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. Yes, 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.

Welcome

Welcome – those at home joining worship through our video. Those at home, if you are new here, note that our contact information is at the end of the video, and you might want to visit our website or Facebook page, or email our office manager so you can receive our weekly e-newsletter called the NEWS. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7:00.

Now we prepare for worship – we breathe ... we give thanks to our Creator for the gift of this moment, this sacred space to find connection – with one another, with the Source of Love. Let us worship – (silent moment).

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

This morning we offer our gratitude for the land we are worshipping on. We acknowledge that these lands have been cared for and inhabited by many First Nations people from time immemorial to the present. We gather as a treaty people of Robinson-Huron. We acknowledge the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiatae First Nation, who along with Métis people, have called this territory “home”. We give thanks for the current and historic contributions these and

other Indigenous peoples continue to make and we pray that we may live in peace and friendship, honouring the treaties, seeking justice and walking together in the spirit of reconciliation. Amen.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light this candle to remind us that the light of Christ shines upon us each and every day.

We worship the God revealed through Jesus, in spirit and in truth.

1: According to Luke (Luke 1: 26-38) (Donna Mese)

²⁶ ...God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee ²⁷ with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. ²⁸ The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. ³⁰ Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, ³¹ and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. ³³ He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. ³⁶ Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible for God!"

Call to Worship/Prayer (adapting Isaiah 2: 6-7, CEV)

A child has been born for us. We have been given a child who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.

His power will never end, he will always rule with honesty and justice. But, honesty and justice do not always rule in our world today!

As we begin a new year, closing a chapter on a very challenging time, where do we go from here?

We leave follow holy family, like refugees to navigate through the shadow of uncertainty.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of people living with shadows, but also of God illuminating our path, uncertain as it may be.

Let us be seekers for God's justice and peace, then, knowing that we are never alone.

The Prayer Jesus Taught

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.

Hymn: God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

1. God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.
Remember Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas Day
to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2. From God our Heav'nly Father a blessed Angel came,
and unto certain Shepherds brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by Name.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

3. "Fear not then," said the Angel, "Let nothing you afright.
This day is born a Saviour, a blessed, holy sight,
to free all those who trust in Him from Satan's pow'r and might."
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

4. Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
this Holy Child of Christmas shall fill our hearts with grace:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2: Matthew's Version of Things (Matthew 1:18-25)

This is how Jesus Christ was born. A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David's family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit. Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were soon married...

Time up Front – Making a Journey (3: Luke 2: 1-8)

... Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

4: Luke 2: 9-20

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

"Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God."

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Hymn: VU 74 *What Child is This*

1. What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

2. Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

5: Luke 2 (assorted verses)

Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and presented him to the Lord, 23 just as the Law of the Lord says, "Each first-born baby boy belongs to the Lord."

²⁵ At this time a man named Simeon was living in Jerusalem. Simeon was a good man. He loved God and was waiting for God to save the people of Israel. God's Spirit came to him ²⁶ and told him that he would not die until he had seen Christ the Lord.

²⁷ When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to do what the Law of Moses says should be done for a new baby, the Spirit told Simeon to go into the temple. ²⁸ Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God,

²⁹ "Lord, I am your servant,
and now I can die in peace,
because you have kept
your promise to me.

³⁰ With my own eyes I have seen
what you have done
to save your people,

³¹ and foreign nations

will also see this.

³² Your mighty power is a light
for all nations,
and it will bring honor
to your people Israel.”

Jesus' parents were surprised at what Simeon had said. ³⁴ Then he blessed them and told Mary, “This child of yours will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand. ...

The prophet Anna was also there in the temple... and she was very old. Night and day she served God in the temple by praying and often going without eating.

³⁸ At that time Anna came in and praised God. She spoke about the child Jesus to everyone who hoped for Jerusalem to be set free.

Offering Moment

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 can I give him— give my heart. Please accept these our gifts of treasure, but the greatest gifts, ourselves as workers with you towards your kin-dom vision of justice and peace. Amen

Prayers of the Community

God, we thank you for traveling with us this year. The way has been difficult, with unexpected and unwelcome circumstances that forced us to stop, retreat, and then find new ways to move forward. We have learned so much from these last months of pandemic.

We have learned about the power of hope, that keeps us looking for signs of your good news in our world;

We have been reminded of the need to pray for peace for all people and love our neighbours, with no exceptions;

We have chosen to live with joy, instead of worry and fear, and each day we remembered not to be afraid.

We have learned about love's call and love's power, which stretches us beyond our comfortable ways and invites us to see one another with new eyes.

We have carried faith in tender hands, knowing that we are not alone, that you are with us to the end of the ages.

God, thank you for traveling with us this year. We thank you, especially now, for reminding us that the stable in Bethlehem and the story of Jesus' birth is not the end of the journey, but our new beginning. So, we will travel with you, carrying the gifts of this season into the new year. We pray for strength and courage to make good choices as we walk in your ways. We will follow Jesus, the Light of your glory, the star of your shining, the love of your heart, for he is our way and our truth. Amen.

Hymn: VU 48 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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 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!"

Blessing

On a starry night, a gift, a babe.
Angels sing and hover in love.
A new path now birthed by and with the God of all Creation.
This love abides in each child of God,
a love for us beyond human thought.
Rejoice as we witness God's birth among us,
Then, let Love spread like the stars.

Postlude

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