

**ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH**  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 9:00p.m**  
Welcome to Worship

**Prelude: *O Holy Night***

**Hymn: VU 60 *O Come All Ye Faithful, vv. 1, 3, 5***

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.

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.

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.

**Inviting Holy Light**

**O God of the Baby of Bethlehem, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting One,  
Prince of Peace, be born to us, and in us, tonight.**

**Be our great light and bring endless peace to this world. You are our good news and our  
great joy.**

**We are here; we are ready, O God!  
Let the light shine in us tonight.**

*[lights candle]*

**Sung Response: VU 64 *O Little Town of Bethlehem, vv. 1, 2***

1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary;  
and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all on earth.

### **Acknowledging Traditional Territory & Safe Space**

Long ago, all of this land was covered by ice,  
**clothed in a winter without end.**

But God our Creator brought back the warmth,  
**pulling back the ice and revealing this land.**

Plants and animals returned to the land;  
**and it was good.**

Then God gave to the land many peoples,  
**and many peoples to the land;**

to care for one another,  
**to live together.**

And in this time, we celebrate the gifts of the Robinson Huron Treaty and the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek who call this land Home.  
**We celebrate all who make this place a home today.**

We celebrate together with the God of justice,  
**as a people called to love and serve others,  
called to seek justice.**

We eagerly await the day where the heavens are glad and the earth rejoices,  
**where all will share our abundance together.**

We work and wait for that day, when all will live together  
**in hope, peace, joy and love. Amen.**

### **Welcome**

#### **Call to Worship**

Welcome, everyone,  
on this holiest of nights.  
Welcome to the tired,  
too exhausted to take another step to Bethlehem.  
Are you here?  
**Creator and Christ-child, we are here.**

Welcome to the jubilant,  
so ready to sing with the angels.  
Welcome to the curious,  
still not so sure what could have happened in Bethlehem.

Are you here?

**Creator and Christ-child, we are here.**

Welcome to you, dear child,  
who needs to hear the old, old story told again,  
and find the courage to believe that love has been born again.  
Are you here?

**Creator and Christ-child, we are here.**

Welcome, everyone,  
to worship on this Christmas eve.

### **Opening Prayer**

Here, the faithful come that we may adore you, God-who-is with us.  
Here, the lonely come to find you and your family, God-who-gathers us to your heart. Here, little children look with wide-eyed wonder, God-who-comes in wonder.  
Here, older folks listen for comforting words, God-who-is-our-story.  
Here, we join with those who watch, God-who-works-night-shifts.  
Here, we join the animals gazing at new life, God-who-renews-creation.  
Here, we welcome all who have travel in this season, God-who-shares-our-journey.  
Here, we sing our carols of joy and grace, God-who-is-our-songwriter.

Here, we gather on this holy night, to adore you, God in Community, Holy in One, even as we pray as we were taught:

### **Traditional 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Anthem: *Long Time Ago*** arranged by Aaron Copland  
*Debby and Graham Laporte*

### **Scripture (Maureen McGuinness)**

#### **Luke 2:1-20 – New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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 in their room.

Now in that same 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 Savior, who is the Christ, 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, goodwill among people!”

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, and 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, just as it had been told them.

**Message: *Telling the Good News Story Again***

*Message will be posted on the website when it is available.*

**Anthem: *The Beautiful Mother*** by John Foley, S.J.

Jen Bruneau and Suzanne Nykilchyk

**Reflection Prayer (Marilyn Hurst)**

**Every Year** by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

My heart and I have an agreement.

Every year we show up here—

here in the sanctuary,

here with the candles and the tall ceilings,

here with the creaky church pews

and the songs of silent nights.

My heart and I have an agreement.

Every year we show up here—

at the end of the year,

after another 12 months

of humanity, of me trying to

keep it all together, trying to

keep my head above water,

trying to keep up appearances.

Every year we show up here.

We drop it all.

We leave it at the door.

We come into this space

and I could swear it feels different.

Maybe it's God. Maybe it's hope. Maybe it's love.

But whatever it is, I need it every year,

so we show up here.

Tell us again the story of tonight.

My heart needs it.

**Prayers of Community**

We pray for those in this community and throughout the world who are poor and houseless.

We pray for refugees whose children are still being born in stables, tents, and whatever shelter can be found.

We think of those who are not able to be with loved ones this Christmas, for those who work in hospitals and aged-care facilities, and for other essential services so we may be safe and secure.

And we remember those who are sick or lonely this Christmas.

Pour out the warmth of your love upon them, Source of Love, and grant them peace this night.

We know that your kin-dom has not come, yet. There is violence and pain, inequity and tyranny, still in our world, just as we hear it was when the Christ child was born. We pray in silence now for the people and places that need your peace and love tonight...[silence]

Be with all of us, we pray.

Bless our homes and celebrations.

Keep us safe in your love.

Empower us to share this love with those that most need to find light. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: VU 59 Joy to The World, vv. 1, 2, 3**

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground:  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

**Candle Lighting Ceremony**

Each family will be invited to come forward to receive a votive candle (scentless, soy, non smoke, in glass - purchased by us). We will light them using the Christ candle. They will then return to their place and we will sing together, "Silent Night".

**Blessing Hymn: VU 67 Silent Night**

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, loves 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**

Let us leave this place as those who have prepared a place for the coming of the Christ. In our hands lies hope, which may blossom forth in abundant life. May the melodies of peace hover over the world this night, the heralds of love speak into the hearts of all people and the longing of the creation for its Christ be fulfilled with the dawn.

### **Credits**

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**Acknowledging Traditional Territory and Safe Space** is from Advent 2019 at Lanigan-Nokomis Pastoral Charge, Treaty 4 Territory, and the Homeland of the Métis Nation.

**Opening Prayer** written by Thom Shuman, [lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com](http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com), © 2018.

**Inviting Holy Light, Call to Worship, Prayers of Community, Blessing** from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2022–2023 © 2022 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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**Reflection Prayer** written by Rev. Sarah Speed | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

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