



**Sunday December 24, 2023**  
**Festive Christmas Eve Worship – 10:30 pm**  
**St. Paul's Anglican Church, Uxbridge**



**Prelude**

**Welcome & Service Information**

If you are a visitor, we appreciate your time and presence with us. Relax, you are among caring people. It is our wish that the music and inspired readings will bring hope, peace, joy and encouragement to you at the great news of God's amazing love.

To congregants/ parishioners, it's always wonderful to see you in worship, and we are grateful for your presence.

A warm St. Paul's welcome and blessings to all on this special, holy night.

**Following could be some helpful thoughts:**

- Participate in the service as you feel comfortable.
- There is an activities table at the back. If you and/ or your youngster wish to spend time there, at any time during the service, please feel free to do so.
- During times of prayer, please assume the prayer posture (kneel, sit, stand) that you are comfortable with.
- We have an Open Communion. That means that you do not have to be a member of this church, the Anglican Church, or any church at all; everyone is welcome to share the meal at God's Table of unconditional, liberating love.
- If you wish to receive communion, just follow people as they walk up to the Altar railing. If it is difficult due to physical concerns, for you to come to the Altar please signal to a greeter, and the server will come to you.
- If you do not wish to drink from the Common Cup, you can touch its base.
- If you do not want communion, you are welcome to come to the Altar for a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest and the server will know.
- Personal hearing devices are available. Please speak with a greeter.
- Also important, the washroom is on this floor in the hallway.

*Know that we are blessed to have you with us for this service.  
We trust that the time spent together in worship and community  
will also be a blessing to you.*

.....

## **Carol Sing**

**Prelude** *Joseph and the Shepherds* Beaudion

**Opening hymn:** *Oh Come all Ye Faithful* (verses 1-4) **CP 118**

## **Opening Prayer**

### **We gather:**

**One:** Like the shepherds, we come to the stable, uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

**All:** **Longing to hear a word of peace and joy.**

**One:** Like the wise ones who come later, we have journeys to make, gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

**All:** **That this world can change for the better.**

**One:** Here, in the stillness of a winter's night, we gather to share the light of a new born, a light that shines in the nightfall.

**All:** **We gather in the wonder of this night to share our joy and thanks for new life.**  
(UCC.ca)

**Hymn:** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* **CP 121**

**Hymn:** *Shepherds in the Field Abiding* (verses 1,2,4) **CP 135**

**Reading:** Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

**Hymn:** *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* **CP 140**

**Hymn:** *The First Nowell* **CP 139**

**Reading:** *What If Tomorrow Were Christmas?*

### **If tomorrow morning you woke up**

and there were no Christmas lights, no household decorations,  
no Christmas trees or presents, no family gathered for special meals...

### **If tomorrow morning you woke up**

and there was no jolly old St. Nicholas, no Rudolph, sleigh, or reindeer'  
no dream of festive fruit and food, nor bottled Christmas cheer...

### **If tomorrow morning you woke up**

and all you had was only this story, a Jewish baby born in a first century hovel, another illegitimate child in Bethlehem, “the love of God embodied in a baby”...

### **If tomorrow morning you woke up**

and on your lips were only the simple words “for unto you is born this day, in the midst of our living one in whom you can experience God”...

### **Would it be enough?**

Would it be enough to know that you are in the midst of all that God is...  
would it be enough to know that you are a part of God’s justice that might yet be...?

### **To see God through the window of this stable**

to know the spirit of God in the birth cry, to feel the breath of God in the whimper  
to see the earthiness of God in the straw, to experience the presence of God in flesh and blood... ...

### **Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!**

It must be more than just the straw tickling a baby’s toe, it must be more than a stable full of animals settling for the night  
it must be more than a manger holding new life, it must be more than carols and candles...

### **Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!**

What a unique and privileged experience this is, free to wander in unafraid, [talking], and laughing, stories of God and faith, hope, peace, joy, love, and one called Jesus...

### **Here on Christmas Eve for many reasons!**

A wonderful and wonder-filled time, a time of God’s desire not to be separated from a time of God’s desire to be intimately acquainted with the women and men, the young and old of this world...

### **Would it be enough?**

Would it be enough to know that you are in the midst of all that God is...  
would it be enough to know that you are a part of God’s justice that might yet be...?  
**“For you have nothing to fear!...”**

I come to proclaim good news to you— news of a great joy to be shared...newness is born... Glory to God...And on earth, peace....” God’s will to all!

**Let us come and see... Let us experience what God is making known.**

*(Dave Denholm, Stettler U.C., Stettler, Alta.)*

Hymn:

*What Child is This?*

CP 137

Hymn:

*While Shepherds Watched their Flocks*

CP 136

11:00 pm –

**Fanfare**

Hymn:

*Once in Royal David's City*

CP 123

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Light shines in shadowed places.

**Hope abounds where once there was fear.**

God's chosen One is born into our hearts.

**We honour the child with gifts of devotion, love, and commitment.**

We

worship with gladdened hearts.

**Collect of the Day**

Holy and gracious God, we come tonight with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives. We hear the names “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Prince of Peace,” and we are in awe. You have touched the earth this night with your unconditional love. Touch us—our hearts and minds and souls. May we never tire of this story. May we never take it for granted. May we know and celebrate the gift of your incarnation among us in the child of Bethlehem. **Amen.**

**First Reading:**

*The Risk of Birth* by [Madeleine L'Engle](#)

This is no time for a child to be born,  
With the earth betrayed by war & hate  
And a comet slashing the sky to warn  
That time runs out & the sun burns late.

That was no time for a child to be born,  
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;  
Honor & truth were trampled to scorn—  
Yet here did the Savior make His home.

When is the time for love to be born?  
The inn is full on the planet earth,  
And by a comet the sky is torn—  
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.

**One:** Words of inspiration.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Gradual Hymn:**

*He came Down*

**CP 368**

**Holy Gospel:**      **Luke 2:1-20**

**Reader:** The Lord be with you

**People:** And also with you.

**Reader:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Luke

**People:** **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel. There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him. As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed. Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told! *(The Message)*

**Reader:** The Gospel of Christ.

**People:** **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Reflection:** Rev. Randy

**Contemplative Pause**

**People:** **God we hear and receive your words of hope and encouragement and with thoughtful gladness we sing.**

*Lord, We Hear Your Word with Gladness (vs 1)*

**CP 447**

*"Lord we hear your word with gladness: you have spoken – we rejoice:  
Words of love and life and freedom – help us make their truth our choice!  
Now in holy celebration for your Word we worship you;*

*Spoken, written, known in Jesus, ours today to prove anew."*

**Anthem:**

***Torches***

Joubert

## **The Prayers of the People**

**Officiant:** Let us pray to God, who came among us in the birth of Jesus:

**Intercessor:** Gracious God, as a star rose, and drew people from great distances to Bethlehem that they might greet the Christ-child; Draw us, your Church, and all of your people to you – that we might be the Church and the People who you call us to be.

**Loving God hear our prayer.**

As you gave Mary your Holy Spirit, filling her with the delight of your Presence; Fill us with your Spirit, and renew our lives.

**Caring God hear our prayer.**

As angels sang 'glorias' to you and proclaimed peace on earth, and goodwill among all peoples; Bring us your peace, and bring an end to and terror and strife.

**God of peace, hear our prayer.**

As Jesus was born in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn; be especially present with those who have no shelter, those who are vulnerable, those who are hungry, [those who are searching].

**Compassionate God hear our prayer.**

As the holy family gathered together in Bethlehem, and travelled together to [a different place]; Bless all families, [and friends celebrating this time], and protect those who travel.

**Merciful God, hear our prayer.**

As your son came to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of Life Eternal, [God of unconditional love, we accept that gift;] **hear our prayer.**

Let us pause to pray for our own needs and those of others.

[Parent] God, may the Light and Hope of this night and season, and of your Son's Incarnation, reassure our hearts that you are among us, that you hear our prayers, and that you will be with us always, even to the end of the age. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth we pray. **Amen.** (<http://www.rickmorley.com/archives/191>)

## **Confession and Absolution**

Friends in Christ, let us confess to God the faults and shortcomings of our world; its pride its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for all humanity.

**Merciful God, we confess that we have not given you the things that are yours. We quibble over technicalities and argue over questions that do not lead us to love you, ourselves, or our neighbors well. We ignore your goodness that is all around us, and we do not allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit who empowers us to live as people who glorify you. We do not recognize your holy touch in the world around us, and we neglect our responsibility to treat all things and all people as sacred. Forgive us, we pray, and free us to live in love and peace with you, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation. Amen.**

*(Dr. Lisa*

*Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2023)*

## **The Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you tonight and always.  
**And also with you.**

## **The Celebration of the Eucharist**

**Offertory Hymn**      *Angels from the Realms of Glory* (verses 1,2,3,5)      **CP 135**

## **The Prayer over the gifts**

Source of light and gladness; accept all we offer on this joyful feast. May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours; for He is Lord now and forever. **Amen.**

## **The Eucharistic Prayer**

**One:** Our God is here.

**All: God's Spirit is with us.**

**One:** Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to our God.**

**One:** Let us give thanks to our God.

**All: it is right to give thanks and praise.**

Living God, Parent of light, hope of nations, friend of sinners, builder of the city that is to come. Your love is made visible in Jesus Christ. You restore the lost and give dignity [to the marginalised] and despised. In the face of Jesus Christ your light shines out, flooding lives with goodness and truth, gathering into one a divided and broken humanity. With people from every race and nation, with the Church of all the ages, with the apostles, evangelists, and martyrs, we join the angels of heaven in their unending song:

## **Sanctus**

**CP 722**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness. Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving

us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

On the night he gave himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

**Therefore, we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb. We rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.**

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption God, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kin-dom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Parent, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us join in prayer with confidence.

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting [Parent], Prince of Peace—hallowed be your name. Immanuel, God with us—hallowed be your name. In us, through us, and around us, your kin-dom come, where the wolf will live with the lamb and the lion will feed with the calf.**

**Bread of life, feed us with your truth. For our indifference to the wonder of your coming, forgive us. Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day. Word who became flesh and lived among us, we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth.**

**As You come to us now, and You will come to us again in glory, when we will join all heaven and earth in giving you blessing and honor and glory and might forever! Amen.**

([www.minnesotaumc.org](http://www.minnesotaumc.org))

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

We break the bread of life, that life is the Light of the world.

**All: God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Communion:**

**Hymns during communion:**



**Prayer after Communion**

Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, so that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

**Doxology**

Glory to God,

**whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more, than we can ask or imagine.**

**Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Blessing**

Do not be afraid. Go into the world with courage; share the good news; proclaim tidings of great joy! A savior has been born. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you, those you love and all whom you serve this joyous Christmas night and always. **Amen.**

**Hymn by candlelight**

*Silent Night*

CP 119

**Sending Song**

*Go, Tell It On The Mountain*

**Refrain:**     *Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.*

1     While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.

**Refrain**

2     The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

**Refrain**

3     Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born,

and God sent our salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.

***Refrain***

**Dismissal**

Go now in wonder. Go to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find no joy, magic to a world steeped in realism. Go with the songs of angels in your ears, and the love of God in your hearts. Go and spread the word—the babe of Bethlehem is born for all.

**Thanks be to God.**

In appreciation:

- Stuart for the music ministry in this church.
- Mariana for her ministry of dance in presenting *The Shepherds* so creatively,
- the Altar Guild for your continued amazing work over the year, but specifically for Christmas
- Evelyn our Office Administrator for her work throughout the year, but especially we recognise her during high holy seasons such as Christmas in producing Orders of Service
- to all of you. Our worship experience tonight could not have happened if you were not here.

Prayers and wishes for a blessed Christmas.  
Rev. Randy

**Please check us out on our website <https://stpauls-uxbridge.ca/>**

**Announcements:**

**Today** December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Christmas Day

10:30 am – Holy Communion with continued carol singing. Join us!

12:00 pm - Community Christmas Dinner at The Senior's Centre

**Postlude**

***In Dulci Jubilo***

Bach

## **CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS**

*In loving memory of **Merilyn Woods** by The Woods Family*

*In loving memory of **Roland & Evaleen Hudson** by Shelagh Carroll  
& Brian Logan*

*In loving memory of **Audrey & Catherine Taylor** by Stan Taylor*

*In loving memory of **Bud Fitzgerald** by Jan & Babs Fitzgerald*

*In loving memory of **my grandparents and my father** by Kathleen Carroll*

*In loving memory of **Patty Taylor** by Dorothy & John Haines*

*In loving memory of **the Jones, Pooley and Bond Families** by Roger Jones  
& Marilyn Bond-Jones*

*In loving memory of **Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Williams** by Rev. Randy*

*In loving memory of **Hank Verwoerd and Laurence & Georgina Towner**  
by Gail Verwoerd*

*In loving memory of **Kerim Sarij, Audrey Taylor and Paul Tratnik**  
by Sharon Taylor & family*

*In loving memory of **Robert Pogue & other loved ones** by Evelyn & Susan Pogue*

*In memory of **loved ones** by Beth Crook*

*In loving memory of **loved ones** by Al & Marj Martin*

*In loving memory of **loved ones** by Gerry Collyer*