

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

Fredericton, N.B.

191 Years of Glorifying God through Worship, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and serving others in Christ's name

Dec 17th, 2023

Advent 3 ~ Joy

10:30 AM

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." ~ Luke 2:25-32

GATHERING AS GOD'S OWN

PRELUDE: Polish Carol ~ Tucker

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY ¹

~ Cull-Wilby Family

Hope gives us the courage to keep journeying.

Even when we are not sure where we are going and the path seems impossible, hope lights the way.

(Light HOPE Candle)

Peace is found in knowing that God is with us.

It is that deep sense of calm and assurance that grounds and holds us even in chaos and strife.

(Light PEACE Candle)

We were created in joy and delight, to share this life with God and each other.

We were created to live in community, to be in relationships, and when we come together joy multiplies.

Joy is being a mirror to reflect God's love light on the world,

In responding to Christ's call to serve others, in giving of ourselves eagerly as we take action to manifest the kingdom right now, our lives ring with gladsome notes.

Christ is the fountainhead of our joy,

in Him and through him we discover an unending stream.

(Light JOY Candle)

We light this candle because our Joy in the Lord is overflowing,

Our wonder and awe are transformed for Christ is alive in us and Christ is being born anew.

*A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.*

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(Responsive)*

When joy and hope seemed illusive, God made a way.

From distant lands and exile God bought His people home

From near and far we come together as God's people

We bring our songs and stories, our struggles, and sacrifices.

To build the church, not of bricks and mortar as of old, but with our selves, the living stones.

In worship we shout with our ancestors, "God is good, for his steadfast love endures forever"

And experience the comfort and joy that comes from God's presence.

So come, for now is the time to worship!

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING HYMN: *People, Look East*

VU 9

*People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the guest is on the way.*

*Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the rose is on the way.*

*Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled;
even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the bird is on the way.*

*Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the star is on the way.*

*Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.*

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

STORY TIME FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM: Huron Carol ~ Traditional ~ arr. Robert Lehman

MESSAGE

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

HYMN OF RESPONSE: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

VU 2

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free:
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.*

BRINGING FORWARD OUR GIFTS FOR GOD

Offerings are collected at the door to the sanctuary, or via e-transfer to stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com. To set up Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) monthly contributions, please contact Meghan in the office.

DEDICATION VERSE: *In Gratitude and Humble Trust*

VU 544

*In gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best today
to serve your cause and share your love
with all along life's way.*

*O God, who gave yourself to us
in Jesus Christ, your Son,
teach us to give ourselves each day
until life's work is done.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: *(In Unison)*

God, your trust in us is amazing and your faithfulness is beyond belief. Into our midst, you came as a baby, dependent on human hands to provide your every need. To your church, you have entrusted the ongoing ministry of Christ. Such faith you have in us. Today, in our offerings, we rise in response. Accept the gifts we give, the time, the use of our talents, and the financial resources. Bless what is given, that in their deployment, you will be seen, your hope, peace, joy, and love experienced. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

GOING FORTH WITH GOD

CLOSING HYMN: *Joy To the World*

VU 59

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION

CHORAL CLOSING: *Take Up His Song*

MV 213

*Take up this song of joy and go into the world.
Take up this song of joy in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey, we're laying down our lives;
Lay them down, in joy, lay them down, and take up this song.*

POSTLUDE: Fantasie sur Picardy ~ Bedard

¹ Fredericton Narrative Lectionary Clergy Collective 2023

Scripture Readers: Narrator – Carole Peacock, Edict – Debbie Allison, People - Jane Banks
Greeter: Carole Peacock **Audio Visual:** John Davis

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME TO EVERYONE! May this worship service be a blessing in your day as we continue to worship together each week in person and by Zoom.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

On the Longest and darkest night of the year, we gather to worship at 7pm. This service is a quiet and reflective service, designed for those who may be struggling with grief, loneliness, or just not connecting with the joy so prevalent this time of year. In the darkness of the night, we hold each other and find hope that Christ is coming, a light in the darkness. You are invited to join us 7pm on **December 21st**, here at St. Paul's for this years' service.

ANNUAL REPORT SEASON IS COMING!

If you are a chair of a committee or group, it is time to start thinking about your annual report. This is the official record of what has happened in the life of our congregation during 2023. We are asking for all reports to be submitted to Meghan by January 17th, and if you could keep your report to a 2 page maximum, it would be greatly appreciated. Now is a great time to begin reflecting on what you did in 2023.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be **closed December 21st for the holidays and reopen on January 2nd**. Should you require pastoral care during this timeframe, please call Rev. Michelle at 506-259-7602.



St. Paul's United Church
Christmas Services

Dec 17th ~ Advent 3 Service at 10:30am
Dec 21st ~ Longest Night Service at 7pm

December 24th, 2023

10:30 am ~ Advent 4 Service
3pm ~ Family Christmas Service
7pm ~ Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service followed by Communion

Dec 31st ~ Christmas 2 Service at 10:30am

Everyone Welcome!



DON'T MISS THE DONATION TAX DEADLINE!

Donations deadline for the 2023 tax year is December 31st. While our office will not be open from December 22 through January 1st, you can still get your donations in by visiting the office before December 21st or by using the secure locked drop box which will be checked while the office is closed. You can also bring them to any of the December 24th services or the December 31st service.

CHURCH ENVELOPES ARE HERE!

Church envelopes are available in the Narthex over the holidays and then at the office in the New Year. Please pop in to pick yours up!

WHEELCHAIR WANTED

St. Paul's is in search of a gently used wheelchair to help our congregants to attend services. If you or someone you know has one to donate, please reach out to Meghan in the office.

Offering Envelopes



FELLOWSHIP HOUR SERVERS NEEDED!

Fellowship Hour is a way to serve your community and enter into the spiritual practice of hospitality. For each Sunday in the new year, we are looking for teams of 3 or more to host fellowship hour. You will bring treats and whole milk, set up before church and make tea & coffee, serve, and clean up. Sign up as individuals, with your friends or as a committee. A sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Don't worry if you don't have experience, help is always nearby!



MINCEMEAT

The UCW has 4 bottles of mincemeat available for sale. Each 450 ml jar will be \$15.00 Please stop by the office or contact Cathy Davis if you would like one.

WARM CLOTHING DONATIONS NEEDED!

Our clothing cupboard is running low on winter boots and warm jackets. Also needed are warm socks and mittens. If you have any gently used items to donate, please drop by the office. Many thanks for helping keep things warm!



BROWN BAG LUNCH PROGRAM

This week, the program needs **proteins with flip top lids, juice boxes, and pudding cups**. Thank you for your continued support and generosity of this program.

PANTRY PROGRAM

The Pantry program needs the following items this week: white sugar, chicken noodle soup, ketchup, coffee, Cheez Whiz, icing sugar, cake mix, Corn Flakes, soda crackers, chunky soup, juice, Hamburger Helper, jam, molasses, vinegar, salt, and laundry & dish detergent. Thank you for your continued support of this increasingly busy outreach program!



UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

December 17th ~ Advent 3 Service ~ Fellowship Hour hosted by Rachel & Stephanie Lavigne & Beth & Shawn Meister
December 21st ~ Downtown United Longest Night Service at St. Paul's at 7pm
December 23rd – January 1st ~ **Office CLOSED for Holidays**
December 24th ~ Advent 4 Service at 10:30
December 24th ~ Family Christmas Service at 3pm
December 24th ~ Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion at 7pm
December 31st ~ Christmas 2 Service at 10:30

GOD'S STORY, OUR STORY

Pick up this reflection guide at the back of the sanctuary to use as a home devotional or with your friends.

BIBLE STUDY ON SUNDAY READING

Tuesdays from 10:45am-11:45am in the Board room. Can't make it in person, Join by Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81736183320> Meeting ID: 817 3618 3320 Passcode: 750844

EVENING SMALL GROUP FAITH EXPLORATION

Thursdays from 6-7pm in the Parlor. We hope you will join us.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

224 York St., Fredericton, NB E3B 3P1

Web: www.stpaulsunited.ca | Tel: 506-458-1183 | Email: stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com

Minister: Rev. Michelle Armstrong | **Organists:** Dr. Sharon Pond & Alexis Ervin

Church Administrator: Meghan Roebuck | **Custodian:** Rusty Blakely