

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Advent 1 ~ Hope

10:30 AM

*Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."*

*~ Mark 8:27-29*

## GATHERING AS GOD'S OWN

**PRELUDE:** Basque Carol ~ arr. Tucker

**WELCOME**

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY:** <sup>1</sup>

Hope isn't about knowing what's coming,

**It's about not knowing and trusting anyway.**

It's about watching the leaves fall and trusting that the cycle of the season will bring new life,

**It's about waiting through the long nights for the coming dawn.**

Hope is rejoicing in the Lord even when we are burdened,

**because we know that life is a blessing.**

*Light HOPE Candle*

We light this candle to symbolize our Hope in the Lord,

**the one who never fails to bring us from what is into what might yet be.**

**SUNG RESPONSE: *A Candle Is Burning***

VU 6 vs 1

*A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
a candle of hope in December's dark night.*

*While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,  
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** *(Responsive)* <sup>2</sup>

We await the coming of Christ,

**At his birth and at the end of time.**

We await the coming of Christ.

**With hope in our hearts, we wait.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

*'Twas in the moon of wintertime,  
when all the birds had fled,  
that mighty Gitchi Manitou  
sent angel choirs instead;  
before their light the stars grew dim,  
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:*

*Refrain:  
Jesus your King is born,  
Jesus is born,  
in excelsis gloria.*

*Within a lodge of broken bark  
the tender babe was found,  
a ragged robe of rabbit skin  
enwrapped his beauty round;  
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,  
the angel song rang loud and high: R*

*The earliest moon of wintertime  
is not so round and fair  
as was the ring of glory on  
the helpless infant there.  
The chiefs from far before him knelt  
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. R*

*O children of the forest free,  
the angel song is true,  
the holy child of earth and heaven  
is born today for you.  
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,  
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy: R*

### **LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD**

#### **STORY TIME FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART**

#### **THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY**

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:** Jeremiah 33: 10-12, 14-18

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM:** Gabriel's Voice ~ Higginson

## MESSAGE

### RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

**HYMN OF RESPONSE: *In the Bleak Midwinter***

VU 55

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.*

*Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel which adore.*

*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.*

### **BRINGING FORWARD OUR GIFTS FOR GOD**

Offerings are collected at the door to the sanctuary, or via e-transfer to [stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com](mailto: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:**

God, your trust in us is amazing and faithfulness is beyond belief. Into our midst, you came as a baby dependent on human hands to hold you tight. To your church, you entrusted the ongoing ministry of Christ. Such faith you have in us. Accept these gifts that we give, as our commitment to you and your way. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

### **COMMUNION LITURGY: <sup>3</sup>**

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

In the rich and Dark winter, God makes an astounding promise:

“I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up” (Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for

The Refiner’s fire, repair and renewal,

The promised birth (and rebirth) of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise,

Mary sings ancient trust – the song of generations -

That God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble.

She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples:

Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear that the kingdom of God is near.

In the deep of our own winter, we look for them;

Bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope,

You, O Wisdom, O Endless love, O radiant Dawn, are there,

Keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight,

That valley’s peace be lifted up and mountains might brought low,

So that all God’s people might rejoice together, saying:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God, of vulnerable power and love’s might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night,

As humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable

And we witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared

In food and story with all whom he met.

We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,

Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said,

“Take, eat. This is my body, which I gave for you. When you share it, remember me.”

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks said,  
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me.”

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all. With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

**Bless us, O God, and these your gifts.  
Encourage us to share your life and love,  
which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.**

Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children:  
Those who feel alone or afraid...  
Those whose souls and homes are broken by violence...  
Those who will face hunger, thirst, and the cold tonight...  
Those who long only to hear that they are ...

God make known in Jesus Christ,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray these things, trusting in God’s faithfulness revealed:  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**SING: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel***

**VU 1 vs 1**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lowly exile here  
until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

## **SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger.  
At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always,  
That we might welcome hope, joy, and love into our lives,  
And become hosts to God’s presence and people.

God of love, guide us to the stables of our world,  
Where the lonely and longing gather.  
Lead us to the mangers of our time,  
Where hope and renewal are born again.

**Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen**

## GOING FORTH WITH GOD

CLOSING HYMN: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VU 1 vs 2, 4, 1

*O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who orders all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show,  
and teach us in her ways to go.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,  
from every foe deliver them  
that trust your mighty power to save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lowly exile here  
until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

### COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION

CHORAL CLOSING: *Take Up His Song*

MV 213

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

POSTLUDE: Toccata ~ Reger

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted Fredericton Narrative Lectionary Clergy Collective 2023

<sup>2</sup>Clergy Stuff, December 3, 2023.

<sup>3</sup>Adapted from Rev Andrew O'Neil

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**Scripture Readers:** Reader #1 – Jane Banks, Reader #2 – Cathy Davis  
**Greeters:** Mary Stickles     **Audio Visual:** John Davis

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## 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.

## BECOME A CHRISTMAS SECRET PEN PAL

Advent is quickly approaching and while there may be a whirlwind of planning and activity, we are inviting folks to become a part of a Christmas secret pal connection over the four weeks of Advent. This is an exciting connection between Wilmot and St. Paul's and it is open to all! What we ask is that you provide your REAL name and address to the office of either church. These will be collected and sorted by the Wilmot Faith Formation Team with folks who wish to participate. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, you will receive your secret pal's name and address and for the next four weeks we encourage you to send one note or card or letter each week of Advent. The great reveal will take place on Christmas Eve via email. Here are some suggestions as to what you might wish to consider in your questions or responses: Please note age-appropriate responses matter. Please tell your secret pal a little about yourself using your nickname. *What is your favorite part of the Advent season? Can you share a Christmas memory that you love? What do you hope for this year?* ~ Rev. Mary Tingley and Mary Lynn Cameron



### BROWN BAG LUNCH PROGRAM

This week, the program needs **proteins with flip top lids, granola bars, 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: orange juice, chili, pudding cups, Rice Krispies, canned tomatoes, white rice, canned milk, fruit cups, canned meats, Ritz crackers and white sugar. Thank you for your continued support of this increasingly busy outreach program!



## Faith Formation

### 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 own small group of 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.

## FUNDSCRIP ORDERS DUE TODAY!

Countdown for Christmas! Deadline for the next gift card order... and the last before Christmas... is **Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Convenient for last-minute shopping and welcome gifts for family and friends! If you usually purchase grocery store or gas cards, you may want to order extra cards in December as there will not be an order in January. The first order in the new year will be in February. Order forms are available in the church office, in the Narthex or click here [December 3<sup>rd</sup> FundScrip Order Form](#). New supporters always welcome! Remember: *Shopping is fundraising for St. Paul's.*



## MEMORIAL TREE LIGHTING SERVICE

McAdam's & Oromocto Funeral Homes know that for many among us, the approach of the holidays will bring bittersweet memories of those who won't be with us at this special time of year. As families gather, thoughts of loved ones who have died will often bring both smiles and tears. Though they may be gone they are very much alive in our hearts, especially during the holidays. Once again, we are pleased to host an evening of comfort and remembrance in our chapels, as we pause to reflect on the season and those who have shared seasons past. The annual Memorial Tree Lighting Service will be held at Oromocto Funeral Home on **Dec 5<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm and McAdam's Funeral Home in Fredericton on **Dec 6<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm.

## ADVENT CAROL FESTIVAL RETURNS!

For years it has been the musical event that marks the start of the Christmas season in Fredericton! **Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**, the Annual Advent Carol Festival returns to St. Paul's. Beginning at 7:30 p.m., the program will feature both new and familiar Christmas selections. Ten church and community choirs will take part, each singing a favourite carol or seasonal song. The choirs will also unite for a mass sing and the audience will be invited to join in the festive singing, too! Come enjoy the music of the season in our beautifully decorated sanctuary and show your appreciation to the choirs, their directors and event organizers for over 30 years of commitment to this annual tradition. A freewill offering will be received for the CBC's Feed a Family Campaign to support area food banks. Donations in past years total more than \$100,000.

## A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

Fredericton Choral Society presents Benjamin Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" at St. Paul's United Church on **December 9<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$20 General/\$10 Student. Tickets are available online, at the door and from choir members Jane Blakely & Debbie West.



## SONGS OF JUBILEE ORGAN RECITAL

Please join Dr. Sharon Pond, organist at St. Paul's United Church, for an organ recital at the church on Sunday, **December 10<sup>th</sup>** at 2:00pm. *Songs of Jubilee* will feature music of joy in a variety of genres: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, post-Romantic and contemporary... half of it being Christmas selections. Freewill offering will be received to support the music program at St. Paul's. A reception will follow in the church hall.



## UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ Advent 1 Service with Communion ~ Fellowship Hour hosted by  
Brad & Erin Webb

**December 6<sup>th</sup>** ~ Advent Carol Festival at 7:30pm

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** ~ Advent 2 Service ~ Fellowship Hour hosted by  
Mel & Barb McGuigan & Debbie Allison

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** ~ Songs of Jubilee Organ Recital at 2pm

**December 17<sup>th</sup>** ~ Advent 3 Service ~ Fellowship Hour hosted by  
Rachel & Stephanie Lavigne & Beth & Shawn Meister



## ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

*191 Years of Glorifying God through Worship, Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and Serving Others in Christ's name*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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