

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 24th, 2023

Christmas Eve

3 PM

This service is our family-friendly service, and we are glad you have chosen to join us this year. While following some of our regular liturgy, this afternoon's service will involve participation and lots of singing as we share the story of Jesus' birth. While this is a Holy Night, we do not expect it to be a silent night nor for all to be still. If your child needs to move around, we just ask that you stay with them as the heat registers around the sanctuary can get very hot and we don't want anyone to get hurt. Your active participation is encouraged this evening as we journey together to Bethlehem. If you need bathrooms they are through the door to the left of the pulpit and up the stairs and to the left. If you need a changing table, it is in the men's washroom on this floor and the women's on the second floor. Our nursery while not staffed this afternoon. We hope that this service will be a blessing as you celebrate Christmas this year.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

~ Green Family

Since the beginning of December have prepared for this night.

We prepared our hearts and our homes.

We waited and watched for God to show up,

we have kept our eyes open for signs of God at working in the world.

Each week we lit one candle as we focused on God's:

Hope (Light purple hope candle),

Peace (light purple peace candle),

Joy (light pink joy candle),

Love (light purple love candle).

Tonight is the night we have been waiting for.

The night that Christ comes.

The night that Jesus is born!

Tonight, we light the candle right in the middle of it all.

The one that is surrounded by hope, peace, joy, and love.

(Light the Christ)

We light the central candle for Jesus.

SUNG RESPONSE: *Will You Come and See the Light*

VU 96 vs 1

Will you come and see the light from the stable door?

It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.

It will be your guiding star,

it will show you who you are;

will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

CALL TO WORSHIP

*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.*

OPENING PRAYER: *(Repeat After Me Style)*

**God of shadows, God of light,
Come be with us on this night.
We find your baby in the hay,
With songs of joy, we sing "Hooray!"
We tell your story of way back when,
We love you, Jesus! Thank you! Amen!**

THE GIFTS UNDER THE TREE AND OUR GIFT

HYMN: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

*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.*

*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.*

*How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessed gift of heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.*

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

UNWRAPPING THE STORY

*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.*

*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.*

THE STORY CONTINUES

*Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around him stood,
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.*

*'I,' said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
'I carried the mother uphill and down,
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;
I,' said the donkey, shaggy and brown.*

*'I,' said the cow, all white and red,
'I gave him my manger for his bed,
I gave him hay to pillow his head;
I,' said the cow, all white and red.*

*'I,' said the sheep with curly horn,
'I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I,' said the sheep, with curly horn.*

*'I,' said the dove, from the rafters high,
'I cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed him to sleep, my mate and I;
I,' said the dove, from the rafters high.*

*Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Like the wise men of old,
we come before you, strong and bold.
Bless the gifts we give today,
Let them help us live your way!
From Fredericton to Bethlehem,
Send your blessings, Great I am. Amen!

HYMN: *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

VU 48 vs 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!'*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LIGHTING OF CANDLES: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

VU 67

*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.*

*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.*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:

What amazing things we have seen.

Mary and Joseph were so keen,
Angels, shepherds, a bright star.

All help to tell us who we are.
In the manger we did fine,

The one who wants to shape our mind.
He came to bring us light and love.

So, we can fly like doves above.
Jesus did not hesitate.

So, this night we celebrate!
Go now into the darkening night,
We go with joy for Christ is light.

CHORAL CLOSING: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

VU 43

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

POSTLUDE

¹ *The Participation Story created by Paul Osborne*

Scripture Reader: Brad Webb
Greeter: Erin & Brad Webb **Audio Visual:** John Davis

**Bulletins placed in Loving Memory of Shirley and Dr. E.H. Sutherland and Vernon G. Green by their granddaughters
Claire, Kate, and Ella Green.**

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

December 23rd – January 1st ~ Office CLOSED for Holidays

December 24th ~ Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service followed by Communion at 7pm

December 31st ~ Christmas 2 Service at 10:30



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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