

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

7 PM

PRELUDE: O Holy Night ~ arr. Bish

GREETING

HYMN: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

VU 64 vs 1,3

*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.*

*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.*

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY ¹

~ Simpson Family

Where hope once sputtered dimly,

It blazes within and around us, for tonight, hope is born anew.

(Hope candle lit)

We searched the whole world for peace and were left wanting,

Because true peace comes to us in a child, a prince, a king!

(Peace candle lit)

Brought low by the world's problems, we were overwhelmed with despair and frozen by fear,

then we heard the angels' song, and we started to dance for the joy of the world.

(Joy candle lit)

Bound by chains of isolation, we were lost and lonely,

But a love that will not let us retreat into ourselves breaks into our world to set us free.

(Love candle lit)

And now we wait as God does something new and amazing among us.

We have waited and are waiting expectantly.

(Silent Pause)

This is the light we have been waiting for.

This is the light we have been searching for.

Born in us and the world this night, the divine comes.

To live with us, to laugh with us, to support us, to save us.

SUNG RESPONSE: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

VU 38 vs 1-3

*Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.*

Refrain:

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song? R*

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. R*

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(Responsive)*²

We gather,

**People of faith and no faith,
People of hope and no hope,
People of peace and no peace,**

We gather,

**with the longing to be made whole again,
even if just for this moment, here and now.**

We gather,

**with a prayer, however vague and tenuous,
hoping that despite the absence of virgins and angels,
wisemen and shepherds,
that we will still witness the birth of love.**

We gather as ready as we'll ever be,

eager to hear this story of faith unfold.

HYMN: *Come All Ye Faithful*

VU 60 vs 1,3,4

*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;*

Refrain:

***O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***

***Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest: R***

***See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; R***

OPENING PRAYER

TIME FOR ALL AGES

HYMN: *Away in a Manger*

VU 69 vs 1,2

***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.***

***The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.***

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20

MESSAGE

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

HYMN: *Joy to the World*

VU 59 vs 1,2,4

***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.*

OFFERING

DEDICATION VERSE: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

VU 55 v4

*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.*

DEDICATION OF OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SHARING OF THE LIGHT

HYMN: *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

If you wish to partake in communion this evening, please gather your elements while the sanctuary clears. The liturgy will start shortly.

CHORAL CLOSING: *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

VU 43 vs 1

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

POSTLUDE: Presto from variations sur un Noel ~ Dupre

¹ Fredericton clergy collective, December 2023

² Adapted from Cheryl Lawrie as found on <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>

Scripture Readers: Narrator – Andrew Steeves, Angel – Chris Grant, Multitude – Patty Trail, Shepherd – Carole Peacock
Greeter: Chris Grant & Steeves Family **Audio Visual:** Murray Simpson

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

Flowers today are placed in loving memory of Marg and Murph Allen by Kelly, Kurt and families



St. Paul's Contact Information:

224 York Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 3P1
Tel: 506-458-1183 | E-mail: stpaulsoffice224@gmail.com
Website: www.stpaulsunitied.ca

Minster: Rev. Michelle Armstrong | **Organists:** Dr. Sharon Pond
Church Administrator: Meghan Roebuck | Custodian: Rusty Blakely