

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

Advent 4 ~ Love

10:30 AM

Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord! ~ Psalm 113

GATHERING AS GOD'S OWN

PRELUDE: In Dulci Jubilo ~ J.S. Bach

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY ¹

~ Vee Mariner

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)

Joy manifests as we share this life with God and each other.

It multiplies as we embrace ourselves and others in light of God's grace and seek Christ's way.

(Light JOY Candle)

At the core of this hope, peace, and joy is God's eternal love for us.

It is a love without conditions, without limits.

It began before creation, it sparked all that is, and it has no end.

It is a love that is meant for everyone, to be experienced and shared, reflecting from one person to another, until it fills the whole world.

Love is seeing the brokenness in the world and reaching out to embrace the pain in ways that allow healing,

In God's love, we find wholeness and better ways to live the lives God calls us to.

(Light LOVE Candle)

We light this candle, as a reminder of how God's infinite love is reflected into our world through concrete actions and in time-limited ways.

We remember how love came down in Jesus and that we are reflections of that love today. Empowered by the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, that comes from God we are prepared to welcome Christ into the world again.

*A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.*

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(Responsive)*²

We are waiting on you, God.

We are still waiting.

Going about our routine but look!

The star is beginning to shine.

The world is starting to shift.

Hope is in the air. Peace is promised. Joy is on the tips of our tongues.

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING HYMN: *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

VU 36

*Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:*

Refrain:

*come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

*Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant Light: R*

*Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star: R*

*Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear: R*

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

STORY TIME FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM: A Shoot Shall Come Forth ~ Horn

MESSAGE

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

HYMN OF RESPONSE: *O Ancient Love*

VU 17

*O ancient love, processing through the ages;
O hidden love, revealed in human form;
O promised love, the dream of seers and sages:*

Refrain:

*O living Love, within our hearts be born,
O living Love, within our hearts be borne.*

*O homeless love, that dwells among the stranger;
O lowly love, that knows the mighty's scorn;
O hungry love, that lay within a manger: R*

*O gentle love, caressing those in sorrow;
O tender love, that comforts those forlorn;
O hopeful love, that promises tomorrow: R*

*O suffering love, that bears our human weakness;
O boundless love, that rises with the morn;
O mighty love, concealed in infant meekness: R*

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: *See amid the Winter's Snow*

VU 76

*See amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
see, the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years.*

Refrain:

*Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;
hail, redemption's happy dawn;
sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

*Lo, within a manger lies
God who built the starry skies,
who enthroned in height sublime
sits amid the cherubim. R*

*Say, ye holy shepherds, say
what your joyful news today;
wherefore have ye left your sheep
on the lonely mountain steep? R*

*'As we watched at dead of night,
lo, we saw a wondrous light;
angels singing 'Peace on earth'
told us of the Saviour's birth.' R*

*Sacred infant, all divine,
what a mighty love was thine,
thus to come from highest bliss
down to such a world as this! R*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION³

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

POSTLUDE: Swiss Noel ~ D'Aquin

¹ Fredericton Narrative Lectionary Clergy Collective 2023

² Rev. Jenny McDevitt Liturgy Link December 13, 2011

³ Ministry Matters

Scripture Readers: Narrator – Deborah West, Gabriel – Ann Krause, Elizabeth – Chris Grant, People – Cathy Davis, Zechariah – Jane Banks

Greeter: Jane Banks **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 ~ Family Christmas Service at 3pm

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

December 31st ~ Christmas 2 Service at 10:30



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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