

St. Paul's United Church

11:00 p.m. December 24th, 2014

Christmas Eve Communion Service

The people of St. Paul's United Church welcome you.

May there be a blessing for you in this house today.

* Please stand as you are able, sit as you prefer *

Prelude A Bethlehem Pastorale Paxton

*Greeting

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,

and also with you.

Introit "O Come All Ye Faithful" VU 60(vs 1)

**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!**

Call to Worship (Responsive)

A light shining in the darkness...

What could it be?

The sound of angels' wings...

What could it mean?

A baby born in a stable...

Who could it be?

Come to Bethlehem and see.

***Hymn** "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" VU 44

The Promise: Isaiah 9:2-7 Bob Miller

Prayer of Hope

God of wonderful possibilities, we come to you in this time with Hope. We look to the future and see what can be, a world where all people are fed, sheltered, and cared for. A world that is not only worth hoping for, but worth striving for. Walk with us through this season, help us to turn our hope to action. We ask

For all the gifts we give and receive, for all the blessings which are abundant in our lives, we give thanks. Bless what we offer this night, whether it is money, care, time or even ourselves as we work for the body of Christ in this place. Bless us as well as we bring the light of Christ's birth to the dark places of this world. In his name we pray. AMEN

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Communion (see insert)

***Lighting of the Candles** "Go Tell It On The Mountain" VU 43

*Commissioning & Benediction

Go now in wonder. Go to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find no joy, and comfort to a world that is greatly in need.

We go with the songs of angels in our ears, and the love of God in our hearts. We go to spread the word—the babe of Bethlehem is born for all.

Choral Closing "Silent Night" VU 67

Postlude In Dulci Jubilo arr. Martin

Merry Christmas

Greeters: Larry Buick & Roger Miller

The bulletins for this service have been donated in loving memory of Dr. E.H. and Shirley Sutherland by their granddaughters Claire and Kate Green.

Donations have been made in loving memory of the following people:

Memorial Chimes Fund in memory of Marion Blackmer by her son John and family.

Operating Fund in memory of our parents, Frank and Mary Hallett by daughters, June & Roberta.

Foundation and the Pantry in loving memory of Ralph Dingee by his daughter, Mary Dingee Jacobs.

this in the name of Christ who moves through us. AMEN.

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Litany of Life and Love

The Buicks

Throughout the Advent season we have been lighting candles for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that their light might shine through us, to light a way to the world that can be.

[The first, second, third, and fourth Advent Candles are lighted]

Tonight, we light a fifth candle, one that represents the embodiment of the other four. Tonight, we light the candle of Christ. It is a flame that burns in and through us, calling us to bring healing to a broken world.

We open our hearts to that light, that it might guide our steps warm our souls, and empower us to share the Good News.

[Christ Candle is lit]

Now with our five candles burning brightly, we offer the light of those who we love, who have loved us, who we will never forget.

***Litany Hymn**

“A Candle is Burning”

VU 6

Profession of Faith

We come together this night for light, though not the twinkling kind. We come together to receive a gift, but not one we find under a tree or in Santa's sled. We come together with family, but it is one that goes beyond these walls, beyond our country, and across the whole world. Here, tonight a light is born anew in each of us, the gift of salvation is offered without requirement, and we join hands with our neighbours to welcome the Christ child, our hope, our peace, our joy, and our eternal love. Welcome Jesus our brother into our lives.

***Hymn**

“In The Bleak Midwinter”

VU 55(vs 1-3)

The Celebration: Psalm 96 (VU p. 816)

Prayer of Peace

We pray, O Prince of Peace, for a world that truly lives out your kingdom. In the birth of a single child, you offer us a glimpse of the trust you have in your people. The trust to live out the dream you have for this world where all people join hands in love, not hate, peace and not war. Guide our hands and feet to make that dream a reality. AMEN.

Assurance of God's Love

Anthem

Still Is The Night

Williams/Martin

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The Call:

Titus 2:11–14

Prayer of Joy

In Joy, we come before you again O God of the dance that is creation. Born to us each year is a reminder of not only our hope for the future, of a world living in peace, but also a call to not live in fear, to celebrate both the life we are given in creation and the new life afforded by the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice this day as we await the coming of your son in our lives. AMEN.

The Birth:

Luke 2:1–14

(silence)

Prayer of Love

God of Eternal Love, the love we learn about at Advent is a true, strong, selfless, heartfelt love which shows itself by giving to others with no expectation of anything in return. We need guidance to be able to express this kind of love to others all through the year. Open the flood gates of our hearts that we might offer to all the fullness of our love, as Christ did for us. Let this be so through this season and beyond. AMEN

Message

***Hymn**

“The First Noel”

VU 91

Offertory

O Jesulein Suss

arr. Paxton

***Dedication Verse**

VU 55(vs 4)

***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 Prayer (Unison)**

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Communion Hymn

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

VU 75(vs 1-3)

(elements uncovered)

Gathering

Glory to God in the highest!

And on earth, peace to all!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, God of majesty and mystery. From the dawn of creation to the fullness of time you seek us out. We thank you that you find us in your Word made flesh, Emmanuel. We praise you for your revelation in stable warmth and birthing cry, in humility and in power. We bless you for this Good News of great joy, and join with angels singing and shepherds rejoicing to proclaim your praise:

Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest,

Blessed is the One who comes in God's name.

Hosanna in the highest.

Remembering the Meal

In the midst of celebrating Christ's birth, we remember why he came to this world.(...)To do this we go to the world proclaiming the mystery of our faith to all we meet saying together:

Christ has died. ***Christ has died.***

Christ is risen. ***Christ is risen.***

Christ will come again. ***Christ will come again.***

Blessing of the Bread and the Cup

Christ enters our lives once again this night and calls us to continue his healing mission. Send your Spirit upon these gifts, O God, and hear us as we boldly proclaim the truth of our faith:

**Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours,
God most holy, now and forever.**

And now, as daughters and sons whom you have reconciled to yourself, we pray together the words Christ taught us saying: **Our Father...**

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup

The body of Christ, bread for a journey newly begun.

The cup of the covenant, renewed at the birth of each new day.

Words of Instruction

Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Come now for all has been made ready.

sharing the meal

Communion Hymn

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

VU 75(vs 4-6)

(remaining elements covered)

Prayer after Communion (Unison)

Prince of Peace, Child of Promise, Emmanuel, Jesus. Over the years we have come to know you by many names. Over the years we have come to know the many ways in which you enter our lives. As you filled the night sky with the light of your coming, so fill our lives as you are born anew in us. May we carry the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that has grown among us