



**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – 7:00 p.m.**

Sunday, December 24, 2024

Music Director: Victoria Warwick

**Readers: Don Penrose, Heather McDonald,
Rebecca Amadei, Shaun McIntosh,**

Zena Pendlebury, Louise Leck and youth of the congregation

**Tech Team: Glenn Erwin, Gabriela & Rick Dell,
Bruce Wilcox, Marina Commisso**

We're glad you're here. We're an inclusive Christian community that welcomes everyone. The St. Paul's community has served the Midland area for over 125 years. We're a forward-looking community committed to living Jesus' message through worship and a wide range of social justice and outreach programs.

**To learn more about participating in spiritual life with us, email stpaulsunited@rogers.com
We wish you a safe and peaceful Christmas!**

Welcome and Call to the Gathered – Louise Leck

Acknowledgement of the Land

Opening Prayer: read by Victoria Tovell

One: Holy One, this Christmas Eve, we gather to celebrate your power displayed in vulnerability. Tonight, we find the clearest expression of your hope embodied by an infant, your peace in the poverty of a rough stable, your joy in the midst of oppression, and your gracious love in a world overflowing with violence.

Many: We gather in gratitude, and we embrace your uncorruptible power, choosing to live as your disciples by leaning into the daring justice of your hope, your peace, your joy, and your love.

One: We gather to celebrate the birth of God-with-us, the One who shows us a new way, opens a new understanding, invites us into a new realm.

Many: We gather in gratitude, and we embrace your example with joy. We gladly open ourselves to new ways of being, and we will answer your gracious invitation by daily choosing to live with gospel intention, for your KINdom purposes, bringing your realm of wholeness and harmony to our neighbours and the nations!

One: We gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Teacher, who claimed that Love was the greatest commandment, and who taught us that God's Love was for everyone.

Many: We gather in gratitude, and we make space for the grace of loving God, loving ourselves, loving our neighbours, and also, loving our enemies.

One: We gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Healer, who gave dignity to hurting people and showed compassion to those who suffer; Jesus removed the stigma and shame surrounding mental and physical illnesses, restoring relationships and setting the lonely in families again.

Many: We gather in gratitude, committed to respecting all people, listening to stories of heartache and hurt, treating all people with dignity, and widening the welcome we extend as members of your body, the "Capital C" Church.

One: We gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prophet, who raged against the mistreatment of the last and the lost; Jesus lifts up those deemed the "least and the lowest" by the privileged, healthy-and-wealthy ones. Jesus sent the rich away, empty-handed, because they were already too full of themselves to make space for the grace of anything, or anyone else.

Many: Loving God, we gather in gratitude, embracing your vision of global justice, a world

where the needs of all peoples are met. Jesus, as we celebrate your birth, empower us to participate more deeply in the realization of God's peaceful realm. Holy Spirit, move in and through us, we pray, so that we may live more faithfully and steward more wisely our small corner of creation. On this most special of nights, we sense your presence among us as Emmanuel, God-with-us; encourage us and strengthen our faith as we, your people, join our hearts together and lift up our voices in praise. Amen.

Opening Carol: VU#60 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" vs 1, 3, 5

Lighting Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love and Lighting the Christ Candle:

One: we continue tonight lighting our advent candles

Many: As we light these candles tonight, we reflect on these good gifts from God, of God, for us.

One: And now, as we light the Christ candle in the center of our Advent wreath

Children: we're making space for the grace of Jesus!

One: We remember the Advent journey we have taken,

Many: preparing, anticipating, and now celebrating the birth of the Christ Child.

One: Tonight, our long Advent journey has been fulfilled.

Many: Jesus has been born, sent by God to show us illuminating grace.

Carol: "Light a Candle"

Light a candle for Christ born among us. Grace of God most fully revealed. Advent watching and waiting is over. God with us, humanity healed. Emmanuel, God is here; God is here!

Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story

Book by Sally Lloyd-Jones, Read by Lynne Angus

CAROL: VU #73 "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy"

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9: 6-7 read by Don Penrose



CAROL: VU #1 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" vs. 1, 3, 7

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2: 1-4 read by Don Penrose

REFLECTION: Christmas Poem - "What I Want for Christmas" by Anne Weems

read by a youth from the congregation

CAROL: VU #64 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1, 3, 4

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2: 5-7 read by a youth from the congregation

A MOMENT FOR PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND AND BEYOND: Rebecca Amadei

HYMN: MV#134 "There Was a Child in Galilee"

1. There was a child in Galilee who wandered wild along the sea.
A holy child, alone was she, and they called her Dreaming Mary.
And she dreamed, rejoicing in her saviour; she dreamed of justice for the poor.
She dreamed that kings oppressed no more when she dreamed, that Dreaming Mary.
2. One holy day an angel came with voice of wind and eyes of flame.
He promised blessed would be her name when he spoke to Dreaming Mary.
Then she spoke, rejoicing in her saviour. She spoke of justice for the poor.
She spoke that kings oppressed no more when she spoke, that Dreaming Mary.

3. And did she dream about a son? And did he speak, the angel one?
We only know God's will was done in the son of Dreaming Mary.
Then she prayed, rejoicing in her saviour. She taught him justice for the poor.
She taught that kings oppressed no more when she taught, that Dreaming Mary.
4. Then Jesus grew in Galilee, they wandered wild along the sea.
Now he calls to you and me to dream with Dreaming Mary.
And we dream, rejoicing in our saviour. We dream of justice for the poor.
We dream that kings oppress no more as we dream with Dreaming Mary.

SCRIPTURE: The Shepherds visit Jesus, the Family Story Bible (Luke 2) read by Sidney Angus

REFLECTION: poem Madeleine L'Engle, "The Risk of Birth." read by Heather McDonald

SIGN OF PEACE

CAROL: VU #75 "While Shepherds Watched" vs. 1-4

SCRIPTURE: The Shepherds visit Jesus, the Family Story Bible (Luke 2) continued
read by a youth from the congregation

CAROL: VU #59 "Joy to the World" vs. 1, 2, 4

REFLECTION: Shaun McIntosh

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING FOR THE BENEVOLENT FUND: Zena Pendlebury

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Christ is Born, Nowell!" sung by St Paul's Choir

SUNG RESPONSE: VU# 55 (V. 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.

OFFERING PRAYER: Zena Pendlebury

CANDLE LIGHTING

CAROL: VU #67 "Silent Night"

CLOSING PRAYER: Shaun McIntosh

SENDING CAROL: VU#43 "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

We wish you a safe and peaceful Christmas!

This service is an adapted version of one prepared by Rev. Dr. Lisa Waites using many resources from Advent Unwrapped 2024.
thank those who helped volunteer to participate in tonight's service.



MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS

The poinsettias decorating the chancel tonight are in memory of the following loved ones:

Aileen Wallace
Marian Wilcox
Doug & Lorraine Bumstead
Les & Alice Barber
Marjorie & Clarence Lusk
Eefje Vandendool
George Leck
Byron Metzgar
Harold Bertram
Ken & Bessie Cowan
Greg Rogers
Tom Rogers
Mario Arnone
Arthur Hollinger
Mel Brown

Gunter & Ruth Freund
Rocco Commisso
Bill & Jean Whitman
Chris Erb
Bob Broome
Gary Price
Shirley Dixon
Pat & Grace McTavish
Gord & Betty Grieve
Harold & Arlene French
John Steele
Cliff Pendlebury
Michael McConnell
John & Marion Deacon
Bernie & Mary Keating

Norm Ellis
Joyce Ellis
Doug Ellis
Phyllis MacFarlane
Bob Bell
Tom McCullough
Graham & Diane Patchell
Phyll McCullough
Jim McCullough
Joe & Loraine Gunson
Carl & Vi Reckzin
Judy Ford
Reuben Reckzin

