
St. James'-Rosemount United Church

171 Sherwood Ave. Kitchener ON N2B 1K2

519-742-1002 www.sjruc.ca

God's Compassionate Community Sharing Christian Faith



**December 24th, 2020 – Christmas Eve
Communion and Candlelight Service**

Welcome!

Welcome to worship! We're glad you're here!

WE GATHER IN GOD'S HOPE

VU: Voices United

MV: More Voices

* Please remain seated for all of service.*

We would like to acknowledge that we are on the Haldimand Tract, traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples.

Welcome & Announcements

For tonight, you'll want to read elements for communion, as well as a candle that you can light at the end of service.

Our next service is a Zoom Carol sing on December 27th at 1030 am – bring your singing voices – your favourite Christmas sweaters – and your requests as we sing Christmas carols!

As we give thanks for all that perseveres in this very different Christmas – may this service of carols, poetry, and communion bring close to you the blessing of Christmas. So let every heart prepare him room...

Prelude

Away in a Manger

Call to Worship

One: *may these words of Mary Oliver
make room in your heart...*

I have refused to live
locked in the orderly house of
reasons and proofs.

The world I live in and believe in
Is wider than that. And anyway,
what's wrong with Maybe?

You wouldn't believe what once or
twice I have seen. I'll just
tell you this:
only if there are angels in your head will you
ever, possibly, see one.

And we sing...

Carol Of the Father's Love Begotten v1-4 VU 61

- 1** **Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
Christ is Alpha and Omega,
Christ the source, the ending he,
of the things that are and have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.*

- 2** *At his word the worlds were framed.
He commanded, it was done:
heaven and earth and depths of ocean
in their threefold order one;
all that grows beneath the shining
of the moon and burning sun,
evermore and evermore.*

- 3** *O that birth for ever blessed!
When the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Saviour of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.*

**4 *This is he whom seers in old time
 chanted of with one accord,
 whom the voices of the prophets
 promised in their faithful word;
 now he shines, the long-expected;
 let creation praise its Lord,
 evermore and evermore.***

Reflecting on the Gift of Hope *Hush* Lucinda Hynett

Sssh.

Can you hear it?

An expectant silence,
a hushed anticipation,
as if the very galaxy
is holding its breath.

There are some truths
even the stars know,

like darkness,
like loneliness

and how the night
can be a living thing.

And how once, long ago,
the night waited in wonder

along with the darkness
and the loneliness,

for the sound of a baby's cry,
for the miraculous

to come down
to the earth mundane.

...

This is the time again,
when the world in silence waits.

Scripture Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Response:

One: This is new hope for our world.

All: Let us live into this hope.

Light the blue Candle of Hope

Anthem – In the Bleak Midwinter

Solo: Colin Watts (SINGING ALL PARTS!)

Reflecting on the Gift of Peace

The Moment of Magic Victoria E. Safford

Now is the moment of magic,
when the whole, round earth turns again
toward the sun, and here's a blessing:
the days will be longer and brighter now,
even before the winter settles in to chill us.
Now is the moment of magic,
when people beaten down and broken,
with nothing left but misery and candles and their
own clear voices,
kindle tiny lights and whisper secret music,
and here's a blessing:
the dark universe is suddenly illuminated by the
lights of the menorah,
suddenly ablaze with the lights of the kinara,
and the whole world is glad and loud with winter
singing.

Now is the moment of magic,
when an eastern star beckons the ignorant toward
an unknown goal,
and here's a blessing:
they find nothing in the end but an ordinary baby,
born at midnight, born in poverty, and the baby's
cry, like bells ringing,
makes people wonder as they wander through their
lives,
what human love might really look like,
sound like, feel like.

Now is the moment of magic,
and here's a blessing:
we already possess all the gifts we need;
we've already received our presents:
ears to hear music, eyes to behold lights,
hands to build true peace on earth
and to hold each other tight in love.

Scripture Psalm 27 – James Taylor

In the darkness of the night I lie awake
And tremble
But with the dawn fears fade away
When I can see with my own eyes
That there is nothing to be afraid of
Why should I fear?
If I could see with God's eyes
I would know I have nothing to fear...

I have only one goal in life
I want to be a part of your family, God,
I want to look along the festive table
And touch the bonds of kinship
With my cousins, my ancestors, my descendants
Within that family I can feel safe...

When I was small, you took me into your home,
You took me for your very own...

Response:

One: This is new peace for our world.

All: Let us live into this peace.

Light the blue Candle of Peace

And we sing...

Carol

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

VU 58

**1 Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ
the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is born for all.
Christ the babe is born for all!**

**2 *Flocks were sleeping;
shepherds keeping vigil till
the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you.
Christ the babe was born for you!***

Reflecting on the Gift of Joy - Ann Weems

Into this silent night
as we make our weary way
we know not where,
just when the night becomes its darkest
and we cannot see our path,
just then
is when the angels rush in,
their hands full of stars

Scripture Luke 2:8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,

praising God and saying,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he
favours!' When the angels returned to
heaven, the shepherds said to each other,
"Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see
what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord
has revealed to us." They went quickly and
found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in
the manger. When they saw this, they
reported what they had been told about this
child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at
what the shepherds told them. Mary
committed these things to memory and
considered them carefully. The shepherds
returned home, glorifying and praising God for
all they had heard and seen. Everything
happened just as they had been told.

Response:

One: This is new joy for our world.

All: Let us live into this joy.

Light the pink Candle of Joy

And we sing...

Carol **O Come, All Ye Faithful** VU 60

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;

Refrain **O come, let us adore him,**

O come, let us adore him,

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

**2 God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten, not created: Refrain**

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

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

**5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: Ref.**

Reflecting on the Gift of Love The Iona Community

When the world was dark and the city was quiet,
you came. You crept in beside us.

And no one knew.

Only the few who dared to believe
that God might do something different.

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;
not the friendly darkness as when sleep rescues us
from tiredness, but the fearful darkness,

in which people have stopped believing
that war will end

or that food will come

(or that vaccines will come...and that the people will
take them)

or that a government will change
or that the Church cares?

Will you come into that darkness and do something
different to save your people from death and despair?

Will you come into the quietness of this town,
not the friendly quietness
as when lovers hold hands,
but the fearful silence when
the phone has not rung
the letter has not come,
the friendly voice no longer speaks,
the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness,
and do something different,
not to distract, but to embrace your people?

And will you come into the dark corners
and the quiet places of our lives?

We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden
or want to be,

but because the fullness our lives long for
depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to

you as you were to us, when you came,
wearing no more than diapers,

and trusting human hands to hold their maker.

Will you come into our lives, if we open them to you
and do something different?

When the world was dark and the city was quiet
you came. You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.
Do the same this Christmas. Amen

Response:

One: This is new love for our world.

All: Let us live into this love.

Light the purple Candle of Love

Carol **See Amid the Winter's Snow**

***See amid the winter's snow
Born for us on earth below
Why within this tiny form
Hast thou chosen to be born?***

Refrain ***Hail thou ever blessed morn
Hail redemption's happy dawn
Teach us to resemble thee
In thy true humility***

***Simple infant, love divine
What a tender heart was thine
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this*** Refrain

***Teach, O teach us, holy one
By thy grace how to become
Peaceful, hopeful, calm and bright,
Like the babe you were that night*** Refrain

Reflecting on the Gift of Jesus Circles of grace

Keri Wehlander.

Holy One:

We live at mystery's edge,
Watching for a startling luminescence
Or a word to guide us.
In fragile occurrences
You present yourself
And we must pause to meet you.

Daily, there are glimmers,
Reflections of a seamless mercy
Revealed in common intricacies.

These circles of grace
Spill out around us
And announce that we are a part of you.

Response:

One: This is new life for our world.

**All: For we are a part of the light of Jesus –
now and forever.**

Light the Christ Candle

Anthem – O Holy Night

Invitation to Offering

Offertory Angels We Have Heard on High

Sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion

One: God spoke in the beginning;
out of darkness came night and day,
out of emptiness came creation,
out of loneliness came humankind.
And God said, "This is very good."

God spoke when the world was troubled;
giving voice to prophets from the earliest days,
moving through Mary as she gave birth to her child,
crying as a vulnerable baby lying in a manger.
Still God said, "This is very good."

God speaks today;
breathing energy into our weary lives,
challenging our celebrations and sharing our pain,
dancing with songs of justice and peace.

Now we know that, "This is very good."

God speaks in this moment;
when the world is still, moving and breathing upon
ordinary things of this world,
and making them extraordinary.

Move upon us and what we do, so that in our ears,
we hear God's holy annunciation, "This is very
good."

Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup

Lighting Our Candles

Hymn

Silent Night

VU67

***1 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.***

***2 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.***

***3 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.***

Announcements

December 27th – Zoom Carol Sing – Bring your requests and your singing voices as we continue the celebration of this season!

Special Gifts Allocations: The Special Gifts Committee invites applications for a share of any interest earned from the Special Gifts Fund. The deadline for applying is March 31, 2021. Please ensure that your application is in writing, is supported by the appropriate church committee, and that you indicate that you will spend any allocation by the end of 2021. Please send your application to Valerie Hoag at mail@sjruc.ca or mail it to her at the church, by the deadline.

December 31st – Please have your year end donations in before December 31st as we want to ensure that your donations are counted for 2020! Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

