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# St. James'-Rosemount United Church

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God's Compassionate Community Sharing Christian Faith



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**December 24, 2021 – Christmas Eve – Late Service**  
**Worship Leaders Rev. Chris Fickling and Alison Vicary**

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# Welcome and thank you for sharing in our Christmas celebrations!

Please remain seated until Silent Night

## Welcome & Announcements

### Prelude

Opening *adap. from a poem by Pamela Cranston, based on D. Bonhoeffer*

One: Look how long the weary world waited,  
locked in its lonely cell, suffering as ones  
experiencing the injustice of loneliness.

As you can imagine,  
it sang and whistled in the dark.  
It hoped. It paced and pattered about,  
tidying its little piles of inconsequence.

It wept from the weight of ennui,  
draped like shackles on its wrists.  
It raged and wailed against the walls  
of its own plight.

But there was nothing the world could do  
to find its own freedom.  
The door was shut tight.

It could only be opened from the outside.  
Who could believe the latch  
would be turned by a pink flower —  
the tiny hand of a newborn baby?

Carol

**Once in Royal David's City**  
***1 Once in royal David's city***  
***stood a lowly cattleshed,***  
***where a mother laid her baby***  
***in a manger for his bed.***  
***Mary was that mother mild,***  
***Jesus Christ her little child.***

**2 He came down to earth from heaven  
who, with God, is over all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall.**

**There among the poor and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**

**3 For he is our lifelong pattern;  
daily, when on earth he grew,  
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,  
tears and smiles like us he knew.  
Thus he feels for all our sadness,  
and he shares in all our gladness.**

**4 And our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love;  
for that child who seemed so helpless  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.**

The Story – Jeremiah 23:5-6

<sup>5</sup>The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up a righteous descendant from David's line, and he will rule as a wise king. He will do what is just and right in the land. <sup>6</sup>During his lifetime, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And his name will be The Lord Is Our Righteousness.

Response: **Jesus, the Hope of the World**

Reading and Reflection

Carol            **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming**

**1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender  
stem hath sprung, of Jesse's lineage coming,  
as seers of old have sung.**

**It came a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter,  
when half spent was the night.**

**2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
the Rose I have in mind,  
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright she bore for us a  
Saviour, when half spent was the night.**

The Story – Matthew 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. <sup>20</sup>As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: <sup>23</sup>*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will call him, Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us."* <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Response: **Jesus, the Peace of the World.**

Reading and Reflection

Carol                      **In the Bleak Midwinter**

**1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**2 Our God, heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee  
away, when he comes to reign;**

***in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.***

***3 Enough for him, whom cherubim  
worship night and day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel which adore.***

***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.***

The Story – Luke 2:8-20

<sup>8</sup> Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. <sup>9</sup> The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. <sup>11</sup> Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. <sup>18</sup> Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

Response: **Jesus, the Joy of the World**

Reading and Reflection

Carol      **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (alt v3)**

- 1** *It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold,  
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven's all-gracious King!'  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.*
  
- 2** *Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.*
  
- 3** *O ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
whose forms are bending low  
Who toil along the climbing way  
with painful steps and slow  
Look now for glad and golden hours  
come swiftly on the wing  
O rest beside the weary road  
and hear the angels sing.*
  
- 4** *For, lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.*

## The Story – Revelation 21: 1-5

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Response: **Jesus, the Love of the World.**

Reading and Reflection

Sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup

*Following Communion, we invite you to stand as you’re able and light your candle as we hum together Silent Night. We will then process from the Sanctuary (after verse 1) - **keeping distance in while in your bubble** - carrying our light into the dark night.*

A Blessing *from Jan Richardson*

One: Blessed are you who bear the light in  
unbearable times, who testify to its endurance  
amid the unendurable,  
who bear witness to its persistence  
when everything seems in shadow and grief.  
Blessed are you in whom the light lives,  
in whom the brightness blazes—  
your heart a chapel, an altar where in the  
deepest night can be seen the fire that shines  
forth in you in unaccountable faith,  
in stubborn hope,  
in love that illumines every broken thing it finds.

Carol

**Silent Night**

***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 Alleluia!  
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 dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth***