

**Central Queens Pastoral Charge  
United Church of Canada**

**December 24, 2022**

**6:00 pm**

**Christmas Eve Service**

**With Communion**

**Central Queens Mission Statement**

**Central Queens United Church is a loving and living community called to support the life stages of all people; celebrating joy and sharing in pain. Through faith and fellowship we are united by God's love to live and serve as Disciples of Christ.**

**Gathering for Worship**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**\*Introit**        "O Come, All Ye Faithful"        VU #60 v. 1 and chorus

**\*Call to Worship**

Mary and Joseph have  
arrived in Bethlehem.

**But there is no room for them in the inn!**

You are right, did you know that the innkeeper  
said they could stay in the stable.

**Is this where Baby Jesus will be born?**

It is! He was born in an animal barn!

**I heard there were angels gathered in the night sky.**

That's what the story says.

**Is it true that shepherds were sitting on the hillsides that night?**

I believe so, and they were the first to hear and see the angels.

**What did they say to the shepherds?**

A special baby was going to be born and they should go to Bethlehem and see for themselves. Some say, if you listen very closely you can still hear the angels singing!

**Carol**      Angels, We Have Heard on High

VU #38

### **Advent Candle Lighting**

One candle to remind us of the prophets,

**Candle Lit**

the second for John the Baptist,

**Candle Lit**

the third for Mary,

**Candle Lit**

and the fourth for us.

**Candle Lit**

Now, the central candle for Jesus, born today.

Jesus is the light of the world.

**Candle Lit**

Mary gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth, and laid him in a manger – there was no room for them to stay in the inn. (*Luke 2:7*)

**Hymn**    "A Candle is Burning"

VU #6 v. 5

## Prayer of Approach

God, each Christmas Eve we journey with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Each Christmas Eve, we sing with the angels and offer our praise with the shepherds. Each Christmas Eve, Christ is born anew. This is the sacred, exciting moment we have waited for. Our hearts are prepared. Be born anew in us this night. Come, fill us with peace and love. Come, fill us with hope and joy. Then may we spread these gifts wherever we go. We ask in the Holy Child's name. Amen.

**Sacred text**      The Christmas Story read by Saint Nicholas.

**\*Hymn**                      "Jesus, Our Brother"                      VU # 56

**Story**              *For All the World*              *written by Helen Earle Simcox*

**Hymn**                      "Away in a Manger"                      VU #69

## Offertory Invitation

**Offertory**              "In the Bleak Midwinter"              VU #55 v. 4

### **\*Offertory Prayer**

Loving and gracious God, you have given the world the most precious gift – yourself in Jesus Christ. May our gifts and our lives be a reflection of that gift. May we, too, bring light to the world, by what we give here tonight, and always. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **Prayer of Transformation and new Life**

**O God, put a new song in our hearts, a song of justice and of mercy. Put a new vision in our site, a vision of glory and of peace. Put a new sound in our ears, the sound of creation's majesty. Put a new ground under our feet, the ground of a sustainable world. Put a new heaven within our reach, a heaven both here and coming. Amen.**

## **Assurance of God's Transformative Love**

Rejoice as the psalmist does, "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice" for God is coming to restore righteousness and truth to this world.

**Carol**      "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

VU #44

## **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

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 God our thanks and praise.**

God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace to recall your vision of hope for all people and for your world.

Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child. Through your prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice. In Jesus, you revealed your way of forgiveness and love. Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—your promise for the restoration of all creation.

As we gather to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus, the child born into obscurity, amid fear and uncertainty. We remember the fragility of that revelation, as well as the hope he stirred and imagination he inspired, and we sing...

*(VU 55, v.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.*

We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern: temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker; the author and finisher of our faith.

We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death, and we sing...

*(VU 55, v.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.*

On that night, in the midst of great confusion and fear, Jesus broke bread with friends, saying, "This is my body, which I give for you and for all. When you do this, remember me."

**Bread is broken**

With a blessing, he took the cup and offered it to them saying:  
“This cup is God’s covenant which is given for all. When you drink  
this, remember me.”

**Wine is poured**

*(VU 55, v.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.*

Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God. Bless us, these gifts, and what  
we do here, so that we might sing your song of love for your  
people and for your world.

**Prayers**

God of all, we pray for your people.  
For those who are afraid and oppressed, may you give courage.  
For those suffering conflict and fear, may you bring peace.  
For those who long for food and water, may they be filled.  
For those who long for justice, may it be fulfilled.

We pray also for ourselves and our community.  
That those in hospital and in care feel your strength.  
That those who are alone and anxious feel you near.  
That those who are ill in body and in spirit be comforted.  
That our friends and family be blessed by healing and love.

Hear our prayers, O God,

**and in your mercy, answer.**

We pray these things, trusting in God’s faithfulness revealed:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*(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 one I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him—give my heart.*

Come, for all is ready. This table is open to all. As Jesus did not deny anyone a place at his table, we do not deny anyone a place at this table either.

The bread that we break  
**is our sharing in the life of Christ.**  
The cup for which we give thanks  
**is our sharing in the life of Christ.**

### **Distribution**

Come, for all is ready.

### **Prayer after Communion**

**God of shepherds and sovereigns, you gather us by the light of the star of promise. You lead us not only to hope for the future, but to trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place.**

**Guide us this night, by the light of that same star.  
Lead us to the manglers of this world,  
where uncertainty is met with the renewal of life  
and the transformation of this world is most deeply felt in love,  
one with another.**

**Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Lights are dimmed, Elder lights the candle from the Christ Candle and shares the light with the congregation.

**Solo**            “Silent Night, Holy Night”            by Rachelle Belaire  
*The congregation is invited to join in the singing of the last verse.*

**\*Benediction**

May you be filled with  
    the wonder of Mary,  
        the obedience of Joseph,  
            the joy of the angels,  
                the eagerness of the shepherds,  
                    the determination of the magi,  
                        and the peace of the Christ child.  
May the blessing of God's love cuddle and hold you tightly tonight  
and evermore. Amen.

**Postlude**

\*Please stand as you are able.

The Revs. David Butterworth and Greg Davis will be sharing together in  
worship this evening.

*\* Communion Liturgy created by Rev. Andrew O'Neil, St. Paul's United  
Church, Riverview, NB*