

Welcome
to Aurora United Church
...uniting hearts and hands on the journey.



Christmas Eve
A Service of Lessons & Carols (Communion)
December 24, 2021

*Child of Bethlehem, when your fingers wrap themselves round one of ours,
and your eyes focus on our face, you look for love in us: love for friends,
for God and strangers, love for the earth, love for enemies,
love that says Yes to life.(R.Burgess)*

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE CONCERT

River (*Joni Mitchell*) David Pilkey

O Come All Ye Faithful (*J.F.Wade*) John Malarczyk, guitar

Silent Night (*J.Mohr/J.F.Young*) Brian, Jules & Justine Pastoor

Still, Still, Still (*arr. N.Fanning*) the Laurier Trombone Choir: Cole Blais, Nick Djurdjevic, Gareth Frolander, Elizabeth Kyriakides, Gabriel Maahs, Simon Malone, Rebecca Myette, Katie Procter, Brooklyn St. John

WELCOME

Acknowledgment of Territory/Candle of Remembrance-Every Child Matters

As we come into worship tonight, we acknowledge that we reside and worship on the traditional lands of the people of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation... and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages...and we light the orange candle of remembrance on this special night to remember the Indigenous children lost to residential schools...We remember: every child matters.

CALL TO WORSHIP Mila Buset & Stephen Crawley

Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,
longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,
that this world can change for the better.

Here, in the stillness of a winter's night,
we gather to share the light of Christ,
a light that shines in the darkness.

**We gather in the wonder of this night
to share the news, that Jesus Christ is born.**

Let us worship in wonder.

Hallelujah!

CAROL O Come, All Ye Faithful (*F.Oakeley*) VU 60

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.

God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Bob, Lisa, Elizabeth & Victoria Kyriakides

Advent, the season of preparing, is nearly over.
Our waiting is nearly finished.
Now is the time of fulfillment and celebration.
In the darkness of night, we give thanks for light.

We light a candle of Hope:
hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.
(first blue candle is lit.)

We light a candle of Peace:
peace in our hearts, and on earth.
(second blue candle is lit.)

We light a candle of Joy:
joy to the world, and within our hearts.

We light a candle of Love:
the promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

And now the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.
**We light the Christ candle,
the light of the world! Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE Hope Is a Star *(B.Wren/J.C.Fogg) VU 7*
**Christ is the gift that God still imparts;
our thanks to God is the gift of our hearts.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid. (J.Holden)**

ANTHEM Joy to the World *(arr. by Valerie Stephenson) AUC Handbells*

STORY A Christmas Story *(The Well Community Church) YouTube*

SHARING THE STORY

The First Lesson Isaiah 9:2,6-7 *(A Son is given to us.) Pat Innes*

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. 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.

CAROL Away in a Manger (*W.J.Kirkpatrick/arr.D.Hassell*) VU 69

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

The Second Lesson Luke 1:26-35 (*He will be called Son of God.*) Joyce Hagarty

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

CAROL Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (*C.Wesley/F.Mendelssohn*) VU 48

Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!'
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;

with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'
Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'

The Third Lesson Luke 2:1-20 (*The birth of Jesus.*) Rev. Lorraine

²In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord

shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

CAROL What Child Is This (*W.C.Dix/J.Stainer*) VU 74

What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels
greet with anthems sweet while shepherds
watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the
King, whom shepherds guard and angels
sing; haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox
and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear;
for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds
guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring
him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh;
come one and all, to own him. The King
of Kings salvation brings; let loving hearts
enthron him. This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe,
the Son of Mary!

The Fourth Lesson John 1:1-14 (*The Word become flesh.*) Rev. Andy

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

ANTHEM How Far Is It To Bethlehem (*Trad. English carol, arr. by Stan Pethel*)
AUC Chancel Choir

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

A Statement about the gifts we bring in worship for the life of the church....

OFFERTORY PRAYER

GIFT OF MUSIC Silver Bells (*M. Bubble*) Wesley Bells, violin

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

God be with you.
And also with you,

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to give God 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 the imagination he inspired, and we sing...

***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. (VU 55, v.1)***

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 fulfillment
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...

***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. (VU 55, v.2)***

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

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.'

*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.* (VU 55, v.3)

Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God. Bless to 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 of the People & Lord's Prayer

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.

*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.* (VU 55, v.4)

SHARING THE FEAST

*Communion in this time of pandemic has proven to be yet
another way we remain connected to one another and to the
broader Christian community. Tonight we bring to our living
spaces the things which speak to our lives...bread/wine, bread/juice;
pita, rice cracker or otherwise. In response to the invitations:
'Jesus Christ, bread of heaven' and 'Jesus Christ, cup of salvation'...
take your elements, each in their turn, and remember, we are tied to
one another in the Spirit of God made known to us in Jesus Christ.
In such a night as this, know that you are not alone.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**God of shepherds and kings, 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 mangers of this
world, God of Love, where uncertainty is met with the renewal of life
and the transformation of this world. Be with us on this most wondrous
of nights—we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

We Light Our Candles...

CAROL Silent Night (*J.Mohr/J.F.Young*) VU 67 AUC Chancel Choir

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 host sing Hallelujah,
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 the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus Lord, at thy birth.

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

From this house to your house,
may you share in the gifts of this season.
May love, the promise of generations, attend you.
Joy, the gift of life together, fill you.
Peace, the desire of neighbour and nations, find you.
Hope, the horizon of faith, sustain you.
And may a very Merry Christmas be yours! **Amen.**

POSTLUDE Gloria: 1st Movement (*J.Rutter*)

AUC Chancel Choir, EmBellished Handbell Ensemble, the Aldbury Gardens Brass Quintet,
and Jamie Drake, timpani—Carols by Candlelight, 2019

AUC Christmas Photo Montage-2021

A Child's Christmas in Wales (Dylan Thomas) a reading by Charles Truax



The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast are on traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples.



The congregation of Aurora United Church
wishes you and your family, God's deepest blessings
in this holy time of the year! May your Christmas days
be merry, bright and safe, as you celebrate!

++Portions of tonight's service, taken from Advent Unwrapped/the United Church of Canada.

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Participating in Worship today...

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar; David Pilkey; John Malarczyk; Brian, Jules & Justine Pastoor; the Laurier Trombone Choir: Cole Blais, Nick Djurdjevic, Gareth Frolander, Elizabeth Kyriakides, Gabriel Maahs, Simon Malone, Rebecca Myette, Katie Procter, & Brooklyn St. John; AUC Handbells; AUC Chancel Choir; Wesley Bells; EmBellished Handbell Ensemble, the Aldbury Gardens Brass Quintet, & Jamie Drake; Mila Buset & Stephen Crawley; Lisa & Victoria Kyriakides; Pat Innes; Joyce Hagarty.

With thanks to... Noah Comar, videographer, and to Bob Kyriakides, video editor...and to all who are filming at home in order to participate in worship in some way! ☺

Images used in worship video...

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Hark! The Herald Angels Sing – siw_grisa_angel_8158.jpg

What Child Is This – Joy Filled Days

In The Bleak Midwinter – Jonathan Knepper - Unsplash

Silent Night – Dreamstime

Hope Is A Star - landscape.jpg

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