

**ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH
DECEMBER 24, 2019 4:30 pm
The Sounds and Light of Bethlehem**



*Growing and Deepening our Spiritual Lives in an
Affirming and Inclusive Community*

Welcome to St. David's United Church

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We gather as a Christ-infused Community of Faith

Dec. 24, 2019 Family Christmas Eve Service 4:30 pm

Rev Peggy McDonagh presiding with the people of St. David's
and visitors

Actors: Heather Ferlyko, Ian Ramraj, Sharon Ramraj

Narrator: Janice Rider

Regardless of your age, stage, gender, sexual identity, or how great or small
you feel your faith is, we each bring something of ourselves to this place.
Come as you are -- and be.

*Prior to the service The Treaty 7/Metis Region 3 candle was lit to show
respect for the land and to affirm our continued commitment to live into
right relations with our indigenous brothers and sisters.*

PREPARING FOR THE STORY

*All are welcome to be part of the drama The Sounds and Light of
Bethlehem. We invite you to choose and wear one of the costumes in the
foyer. During the service children who are dressed in costume and wish to
participate will be called to the front to be part of the manger scene.*

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem vs. 1 & 2 VU #64

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wandering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

Leader: What do you hear?

All: **The music of the organ, the hustle and bustle of people gathering, the delight of laughter, the rustle of preparation, and the excited chat of children and adults.**

Leader: What do you see?

All: **The Advent Wreath, beautiful Christmas trees, a manger scene, blue banners, happy faces, twinkling eyes, and family and friends.**

Leader: On this Christmas Eve amid these joyful sounds and colorful sights, let us come together with joy, love and peace.

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem vs. 3 VU #64

How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is given!
So, God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

PRAYING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY

Let us pray together:

God of laughter, delight, and goodwill we watch and wait with excitement and impatience. The stable abounds with animal sounds; the sky an empty stage. We watch and wait for the newborn's cry and a heavenly host that will proclaim glad tidings of great joy. We want to remember the immense love you have for each of us in this place. This Christmas Eve restore joy and goodwill, in our lives and help us relax and make room in our hearts for your love. Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND CHRIST CANDLES

V1: Why do we light these candles on this night?

V2: We come together tonight after many weeks of waiting and preparation for this special night.

V3: On Christmas Eve we light each of the candles to remind us of the gifts of Christmas and God's love.

V4: We light the first candle as a sign of joyful hope and the second candle as a sign of loving joy.

V5: We light the third candle as a sign of the abundant joy that filled Mary's and Joseph's hearts. We light the fourth candle hoping that peace will fill the world.

V1: Why do we light the white candle on this night?

V2: The white candle represents the beautiful Light of God that shone in Bethlehem so long ago, yet which shines again for us this night.

ALL: **May we see the Light of God in ourselves and in one another and hear the stirrings of love everywhere.**

HYMN

A Candle is Burning (Tune VU #6)

The candles are burning with flames warm and bright,
Candles that shine through this dark evening's night,
Our hearts fill with wonder our eyes glow with light
Come all of you people rejoice on this night.

We honour the Christ child with soft candle flame,
Our Christmas Eve carols glad tidings proclaim,
O come, all you people, rejoice on this night,
as God comes among us our joy and delight.
(- alternative words by Rev. Peggy McDonagh)

THE BIBLE STORY OF CHRISTMAS: Luke 2:1-7

Carol Away in the Manger vs. 1 & 2 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.

The Sounds and Light of Bethlehem Part I

CAROL Once in Royal David's City vs. 1 VU #62

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed.
Mary was the mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER OF THANKS

Leader: As Nathan and Hannah run to the shepherd's cave, let us take time to play their listening game. Maybe we will hear sounds. Maybe we will hear silence. What can we hear? (Silence)

And now let us pray.

All: **O God, we give thanks for sounds, sights, and stillness. We give thanks for all we hear: piano music and happy songs, whispering and firm strong words, quiet smiles and silly laughs, singing voices and praying voices – all the sounds alive at this time.**

Leader: We also give thanks for silence and moments of quiet and peace especially during this very busy Christmas time.

All: **We give thanks, Holy One of Love, for all we see in life: blazing sunshine and soft starlight, blowing snowflakes and snow angels, kids in pageants and happy adults watching, bright coloured Christmas lights and white glowing trees, a baby's tiny cry and a big warm hug. We give thanks for all that we see and hear that helps us appreciate the awesome wonders of life. Amen.**

The Sounds and Light of Bethlehem Part II

A Christmas Prayer of Concern for Others

Leader: Loving God, Jesus' birth was announced with angel choirs and bright stars, with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds.

All: **Help us to hear that amazing news again tonight. The news of great love being born again in our hearts.**

Leader: Move silently but brilliantly among us this Holy Eve.

All: Help each of us bring to others the hope, love, joy and peace of the Christmas message.

Leader: Through the sounds and signs of our life, may we be sound and sights of care and love for the homeless and hungry children. May we be sound and sights of healing and joy for those who are sick or sad. May we be sound and sights of hope that fills the hearts of those who are depressed and anxious.

All: Through us, may the sounds and light of Bethlehem spread to all creation. God is with us, we are not alone. Amen.

The Sounds and Light of Bethlehem Part III

Carol: Gentle Mary Laid Her Child vs. 1 & 2 VU #46

Gentle Mary laid her Child lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, lo the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the saviour?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favour.

Angels sang about his birth, wise men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth glory all around him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

Conclusion of Play

Narrator: While we are singing, all the shepherds and the animals are invited to come to see Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus in the cave.

Carol O Come, All Ye Faithful vs. 1, 3, 4 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.

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.

See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps,
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Narrator: Now, let's be still and listen to the rest of the story in the gospel of Luke.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 8-20

Offertory

Offering Dedication Prayer

RECEIVING THE LIGHT OF BETHLEHEM

CAROL

Silent Night

VU #67

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 Hallelujah,
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior 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.

**WE ARE BLESSED AND SENT FORTH TO SHARE GOD'S GIFT
OF LOVE**

A Christmas Benediction

CAROL Joy to the World

vs. 1,2,4 VU #59

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!

Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

POSTLUDE

**Please place candles in the baskets as you
leave the church.**

***The church office will be closed from
December 25 through to January 2, 2020.***

**The staff of St. David's United Church wish you all the
blessings, wonder and beauty of this
Season of Birth, Hope, and Love.**

MERRY CHRISTMAS