

Christ Church Gabriola

**A Collaborative Anglican – United Church
Open to All**



**Home Church
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2020 7pm**

Rev. Karen Hollis

*We acknowledge these lands upon which we worship are the traditional,
ancestral, and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.*

Medley of Carols

Piano by Dirk Damonte on album:
When the Silent Night Starts to Sing by Tom Hunter
Recording used with permission

Welcome

Centering Stillness

One: I bring greetings in the name of the One born this night:
May the hope, peace, joy and love of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Advent Candle Lighting

Ivany Family

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you

One: As we light these candles, watching the light as it grows and fills the darkness, we celebrate the arrival of Christ's own light, born this night. We light the candle of Hope, remembering God's faithfulness since the beginning of creation. Our Hope is a witness to God's promise to bring us out of darkness.

All: We light the candle of Peace for healing, wholeness, truth and reconciliation. We light this candle in the name of the Prince of Peace, who brings Peace that surpasses all understanding.

One: We light the candle of Joy as a sign of the Joy God offers to every heart, the Joy that cannot be contained and must be shared. We celebrate tonight the Joy that grows in each of us.

All: As we light the candle of Love, we give reverence to God's Love born to us again in Jesus the Christ. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger than even death. We Love because God Loves us.

One: As we light the Christ candle, let us marvel at the wreath fully aglow, and praise the Christ who is born tonight in the baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

All: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shined.

One: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;

All: And he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Let us pray,

Emmanuel, God with us, we are in awe of the gift of your birth. Here at the darkest time of the year, when our world is weighed down by suffering, you are born to us. We come to you in need your Love, in need of your healing; we come to learn your ways of

justice and Peace, and we are so grateful that you lead us in your ways. May the candlelight we see growing in the darkness be more than a symbol of the Hope we place in you; may it be an image of what is yet to come. We pray in gratitude for your birth this night, Amen.

Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful v. 1,3,5

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.

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

⁵ Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: [Refrain]

Lessons & Carols

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-8

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.'

¹ 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.

² Joy to the world! 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.

³ No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

⁴ 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.

Second Reading: *Isaiah 9:2-7*

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You 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.
For 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.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His 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 onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Song: *God in Flesh Our Hope Divine*

The Brilliance

God of heaven, Lord of earth, ***we beseech Thee***
Born of Mary, virgin birth, ***Lord we greet Thee***
God in flesh our hope divine, ***Hallelujah***
Babe of heaven, God's own son, ***Hallelujah***

Star of David, Son of man, ***God be with us***
Suffering servant, wounded man, ***bring peace to us***
Broken flesh, our hope divine, ***Hallelujah***
Lifted up for all mankind, ***Hallelujah***

Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo

Brood of Jesse, which I'll stand, ***Lord we need Thee***
Banner o'er the nations, ***we receive Thee***
Glorious resting place for all, ***Hallelujah***
Jew and Gentile, welcome all, ***Hallelujah***

Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo

Come Lord Jesus, people sing, ***we are yearning***
Give us back the garden, ***we are longing***
On that day we'll see Thy face, ***Hallelujah***
This whole realm in Your embrace, ***Hallelujah***

Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis deo

Third Reading: *Luke 1:26-38*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The 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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Video: *The Magnificat*

The Work of the People
Video used with permission

Fourth Reading: *Luke 2:1-7*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

Song: *When the Silent Night Starts to Sing*

Tom Hunter
Recording used with permission

It's as quiet as whispering out her tonight,
It's dark and it's cold and the stars are bright.
Then little by little you start to hear sounds.
They come from the water, the sky, and the ground.
So you listen to hear what it brings
when the silent night starts to sing.

The singing is bringing good news of great joy.
It's not like commercials or screaming or noise.
It makes you feel peaceful and lively and brave
'cause tonight the sound tells you, don't be afraid.
So you listen to hear what it brings
When the silent night starts to sing.

The sounds might be angels, or voices, or bells.
They might be the stories that carols can tell.
They might be a cow, or a camel, or sheep.
But mostly they sound like a baby asleep.
So you listen to hear what it brings
When the silent night starts to sing.

So may Christmas bring you the sounds of God's love
In children and presents, in angels and doves.
And tonight when you think you hear sounds in the dark,
Maybe it's God being born in your heart
So listen and hear what it brings
When the silent night starts to sing.

Fifth Reading: *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 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.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Carol: *Angels We Have Heard On High*

VU #38

¹ Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

[Refrain:]

Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

² Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song? [Refrain]

³ Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

Meditation

Carol: *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*

VU #64

¹ 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 streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

² For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth.

⁴ O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in;
be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Prayers of the People:

Betty Schultze

One: Loving God

All: Hear Our Prayer

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom and the power,
and glory are yours now and forever. Amen**

Invitation for Offering

As this tonight's story tells us, Mary and Joseph were required by decree to travel to Bethlehem to be registered under Caesar Augustus so they could worship him and pay his taxes. But we have not come tonight out of hollow obligation, rather of our own free will to worship in community, desiring only to celebrate God's gift of self to the world. May we give this season in this same spirit of investing in our community and in the health and healing of the world. While we are not able to pass the plate this evening, you can give in the following ways:

Christ Church Gabriola
2600 South Rd
Gabriola, BC V0R 1X3
250.247.8633

Mission & Service – United Church
1-800-268-3781 ext. 2738
<https://united-church.ca/donate>

Primate's World Relief Fund
1-866-308-7973
<https://pwrdf.org/give-today/>

Offering Prayer

With these gifts, loving God, accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts, which rejoice in your goodness and love. Let our gifts point to your presence in the world, and further your dream for the world through Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

Candle Lighting

You're invited to light and hold a candle (perhaps the Christ candle from your wreath) while we sing together Silent Night.

Carol: *Silent Night*

VU # 67

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.

Instrumental

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.

Blessing

May the light that enlivens all the world, the light that darkness cannot overcome, love's pure light in Jesus the Christ, shine on you and in our world this night. Amen

Postlude: O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

Verse 1

O holy night the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn

Chorus 1

Fall on your knees; O hear the angel voices
O night divine; O night when Christ was born
O night divine; O night when Christ was born

Verse 2

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here came the wise men from Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our Friend

Chorus 1

Verse 3

Truly He taught us to love one another
His law is love and His gospel is peace
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother
And in His name all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us praise His holy name

Chorus 2

Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever
His power and glory; evermore proclaim
His power and glory; evermore proclaim