



Diocese of
New Westminster
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church

Doing God's Love Since 1899

December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Family Service

Celebrant: The Reverend Georgina Harris

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church

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Christmas Letters 2025

Christmas Greeting 2025!

We read in the Prophet Isaiah, a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-3)

In the Liturgical Church we make our way from the celebration of Christ the King, into the Advent Season, and finally the magnificent celebration of Christmas. Sadly, in this 21 st century world fewer of those who identify as 'Christians' take the journey through Advent as it was meant to be – a time of reflection, penitence, and preparation.

We are caught in a never-ending commercial barrage that "encourages" us to start preparing for Christmas in August!

It is a challenge to intentionally take time to do Spiritual Prep. work. That is what Advent is for – preparing us Spiritually for what is to come!

One of the ways we can prepare ourselves spiritually is to use the **O Antiphons** as a foundation for reflection. As we make our way through each of them take the time to reflect and answer the question "How does this apply to my life?"

O Antiphons:

**O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High,
you reign over all things to the ends of the earth:
come and teach us how to live. Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O Lord, and head of the house of Israel,
you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning
bush and you gave the law on Sinai:
come with outstretched arm and ransom us. Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations,
all kings will keep silence before you
and all peoples will summon you to their aid:
come, set us free and delay no more. Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel,
you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open:
come and free the captives from prison. Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal
and bright Sun of righteousness:
come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death. Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires:
Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one:
come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.
Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour:
come and save us, Lord our God.
Lord Jesus, come soon!**

As the days shorten and the nights grow longer where do we find ourselves in the busyness that is the Advent / Christmas Season? Taking time to reflect on what we are moving toward prepares us to fully engage with who and what we are as Christians in this troubling time in our world.

The days shorten, the nights lengthen, and yet in all this there is the promise of new light, new promise, new hope, and renewed faith.

Holy One, as we enter this Christmas Season, help us hold onto the Hope you bring. In a world that feels heavy with need, remind us of Your promise to come again and make all things new. Let our hearts be filled with the light of Your presence, leading us closer to You each day. Amen.

May this time be a time of richness and renewal.

Reverend Georgina



Dear Friends,

I would like to begin my Christmas Letter to you by thanking you all for the very warm welcome that I have received. I have already been incredibly touched to learn about all the ways in which God is at work in, and through, this parish, and I look forward to learning more as I walk with you. We have only had a few services and "coffee hours" together at the time of this writing, but I have enjoyed speaking with those I

have been able to speak with and getting to know a bit about the parish. If we have not had a chance to speak yet, please do feel free to reach out either during a coffee hour or via my contact information.

At this time of year, many of us often feel a variety of emotions depending both on our own histories and where we find ourselves at a particular moment of time. One of the great gifts of the Christian liturgical calendar, in my view, is that it repeatedly prompts us to remind ourselves of God's promise to us, particularly at this time of year. One of the collects sometimes used for Advent 3 (Gaudete Sunday) reads as follows:

**God of power and mercy,
you call us once again
to celebrate the coming of your Son.
Remove those things which hinder love of you,
that when he comes,
he may find us waiting in awe and wonder
for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.**

I find that this collect helps me to remember many things during this time of year. I remember that Advent invites us into a posture of waiting and anticipation. God is a saving God, and at Christmas we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

This collect, though, also encourages us to wait in awe and wonder for Jesus Christ. It reminds us that Jesus' coming is moment by moment, and that God keeps coming in different ways in our lives, and at different times. I think that is part of both the complexity and the joy of Christmas. We are, in part, asked to reflect on what our response might be to the Good News of the incarnation. We might ask ourselves: How might we work together to nourish the Kingdom of God?

My friends, I want to wish you and your loved ones the best at this time of year. I hope you find time for some rest, and I hope that you experience some of the awe and wonder of Christmas. God is with you, now and forever.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Shawn

The Reverend Dr. Shawn Bullock

Welcome

We are glad you have joined us for worship this evening. Please turn all cell phones and other electronic devices off or to "silent". Thank you.

Ministering this evening at our 5:00 p.m. service:

Celebrant:	The Reverend Georgina Harris
Deacon-in-Charge and Curate:	The Reverend Dr. Shawn Bullock
Crucifer and Server:	Hazel Breakey
Musician:	Galina Martynioug, piano and organ
Choir Director:	Christie Smith

Flowers in the Sanctuary today have been donated by members of the Parish of St. John. Please see back pages for dedications.

Communion: Please note that the Eucharist is not part of this service. If you are interested, we welcome you to stay after the final hymn and we will offer communion then.

Our Service Today

This liturgy (the words we say) was written especially for St. John's, and we encourage individuals and families to participate when invited. Your help is needed to build the Nativity scene, and to start the Wise Men on their way. As we proceed through the service, this bulletin will help you recognize when to stand and when to sit, when to speak and when to sing. We invite you to read aloud with us anytime the bulletin says **All**.

The Offertory Plate sits at the back of the church:

We do not "pass the plate" at St. John's. We invite you to place your donation on the Offertory Plate at the back of the church anytime. During the Offertory Hymn the plate is brought forward to the altar. Your thoughtful and generous gifts to St. John's enable our worship and ministries to our community. One-time or recurring donations can be made by visiting our website www.stjohnnv.ca, or by scanning this QR code with your smartphone.



Musical Prelude

Before the service begins, the ministry team will hand out pieces from the Nativity set to be brought forward during the service.

Territorial Acknowledgement - *Please stand as you are able.*

Celebrant We acknowledge with respect that we worship on the traditional territories of the Squamish - Mother of the Wind, the Tsleil-Waututh - People of the Inlet, and the Musqueam - People of the River Grass. Let us pray that we may live more deeply into the calls to action from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

All May the living Christ lead us all on pathways of reconciliation and peace. Amen

The Gathering of the Community

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

All And also with you.

Celebrant Almighty God,

**All to you all hearts are open,
all desires are known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you, and worthily,
magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect

Celebrant Eternal God,

**All this holy night is radiant
with the brilliance of your one true light.
As we have known
the revelation of that light on earth,
bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly
glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

Advent Song - Hope is a Star

We sing all verses of the Advent Song as the candles are lit.

Liturgy for the Christ Candle at Christmas - Fulfillment

First Voice The Advent time of waiting and preparing is over!
We have lit four candles that remind us about
longing and peace and joy and love.

(The four Advent candles are lit)

Second Voice These candles remind us that God promises to be
with us, to comfort us, to help us rejoice, and to
teach us to love.

Today we celebrate that God has come to be with
us in the baby called Jesus.

Today we light one more candle, and we call it
the Christ candle.

(The white Christ candle is lit)

First Voice This candle reminds us of all God has done for us.
God fills us with good things, like hope and
peace and joy and love. God is faithful to us. God
is with us, now and always.

**All O God, come, travel with us through our lives.
Give us courage to spread your light in the
world. Amen.**

A Christmas Story: A Night Like No Other

Part One. This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem. The children will show us how to go. The little town we seek sits in the hill country some ten miles south of Jerusalem. For thousands of years the houses have gathered there on the hilltop like a family breaking bread. "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread."

In the centre of the village is a small inn. On this night it is overflowing with people seeking sleep and a place to eat. Behind the inn is a dark stable. A gray donkey chews his barley and broken straw while a weary cow leans and rests after the day's plowing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep. All is still and quiet in the little town.

Hymn - On To Bethlehem Town

During the singing of the hymn, we bring forward the donkey, the cow, and the sheep.

Part Two. As night gathers, the last two travellers come slowly up the road. Look, there is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband. They are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago.

They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as a tax.

But it is late, and Mary is so weary. Where will they sleep? There is no room in the inn. They decide to sleep with the animals.



Hymn - Once In Royal David's City

During the singing of the hymn, we bring forward Mary and Joseph.

Special Note: This melody was written by Henry John Gauntlett, who was a relative of Reverend Dr. Shawn Bullock's maternal Grandmother, who joins us from her home in Ontario by viewing services online.

Part Three. Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation holds its breath. Suddenly, from the stable, comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket and lays him in the feed box that his father has filled with straw.

Hymn - Away in a Manger

During the singing of the hymn, we place the baby Jesus in the manger.

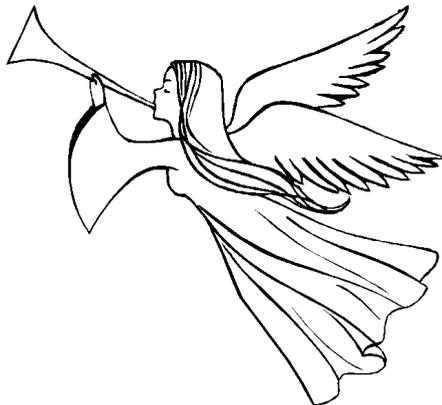
Part Four. In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their shadowy sheep. All at once, the dark is lost in light, and in the midst of the light is something even brighter: the faces of angels. The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly,

"Do not be afraid.
Listen, I bring you news of great joy,
a joy to be shared by all people.
Today in the City of David a Savior is born!
He is Christ, the Lord."

Then more angels appear, a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing:

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
goodwill to all people, everywhere."

The shepherds run with joy across the fields to Bethlehem to the barn behind the inn. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward, overwhelmed with mystery, to find Nativity itself in the centre of all that love.



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Hymn - While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

During the singing of the hymn, we bring forward the shepherds and angel.

Part Five. The story is not finished! Even as the infant Jesus lays in the Manger there are more visitors to come. A Caravan of Camels is making their way to Bethlehem. Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They have come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert, perhaps from as far as the Caspian Sea. The camels carry three kings, the wise ones, the Magi. They are following the wild star, the destiny they had never seen before, and they are following it, wherever it goes, to find the King its shining shows them.

Hymn - We Three Kings

During the singing of the hymn, we place the three Magi and their camels in the back window, to begin their journey to Bethlehem.

Part Six. The kings journey will conclude at the Epiphany as they finally gaze upon the infant King. Their restlessness rests at last. They fall to their knees and give him bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrrh, brought so far with so much love.

We have all come, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to this Child, God's gift to us.

Come forward now. Bring your gifts of stars and of yourselves to place around the manger. Show us the way into the Mystery of Christmas, as we sing, for this night is holy and filled with overflowing silence.

Hymn - Silent Night

During the singing of the hymn, we bring forward stars to place around the stable



Communion

You are invited to come forward to the altar to receive Communion.

All who love God and desire Christ are welcome to receive communion. Gluten-free wafers are available. Please let the Eucharistic Administrator know if you wish to receive one. Please note intinction, (dipping the bread into the wine), is not permitted.

The Blessing

Dismissal

Celebrant
All

Words of dismissal.
Thanks be to God.



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We wish you all a wonderful Christmas

*A Christmas Day service will be held on
December 25th, 10:15 am, at St. Agnes Anglican Church,
located at 530 East 12th St.
(near Grand Boulevard)*

Christmas Flower Donations

Donated by

Madeline Cooper

Sandra Miller

The Brookfield & Friday families

Michele and Ron Payne

Galina Martynioug

Dedication

In memory of Harry Cooper

In memory of Barbara Dunlop,
George and Freda Batt, Tom
and Rosemary Ryley

In memory of our parents and
grandparents

In memory of Pat Keuchler