



**ORCHARD VALLEY UNITED CHURCH**  
130 Cornwallis Ave., New Minas, NS B4N 3M7



## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Sunday, December 24, 2023, 4:00 pm

### **Christmas Eve**

#### **Music as We Gather**

#### **Gathering**

**\* Introit:** "O Little Town of Bethlehem" VU #64 vs. 1,4

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.

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.

#### **Advent Candle Lighting**

Where hope once sputtered dimly,

**It blazes within and around us, for tonight, hope is born anew!**

*(Hope candle lit)*

We searched the whole world for peace and were left wanting,

**Because true peace comes to us in a child, a prince, a teacher, our Emmanuel!**

*(Peace candle lit)*

Brought low by the world's problems, we were overwhelmed with despair and frozen by fear,

**then we heard the angels' song, and we started to dance for the joy of the world.**

*(Joy candle lit)*

Bound by chains of isolation, we were lost and lonely,

**But a love that will not let us retreat into ourselves breaks into our world to set us free.**

*(Love candle lit)*

And now we wait as God does something new and amazing among us.

**We have waited and are waiting expectantly.**

*(Silent Pause)*

## **Christ Candle Lighting**

This is the light we have been waiting for.

**This is the light we have been searching for.**

*(Christ candle lit)*

Born in us and the world this night, the divine comes.

**To live with us, to laugh with us, to support us, to save us from ourselves, and to love us.**

## **Recognition of the Land**

## **Welcome and Announcements**

May the peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you!**

## **Call to Worship**

Can you feel it?

**Oh yes, we can feel it!**

Yes, there's excitement in our gathering tonight!

**Yes! It's Christmas Eve! And we're filled with the  
sense that something is happening!**

Tonight, we celebrate the birth of Christ, the One who  
came to reveal God's deep and lasting love for all, and to  
show us how to live!

**Come, the Child of God is born in us this night!**

**\* Hymn:**        "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"        VU #44

It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold,  
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven's all-gracious King!'  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats

o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing,

and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and warring humankind hears not  
the love song which they bring.  
O hush the noise, and cease your strife,  
to hear the angels sing.

For, lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.

## **Opening Prayer**

### **Celebrating With Our Children**

**\* Hymn:** "What Child Is This"

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. **R**

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him. **R**

## Listening

### Scripture:

Isaiah 9:2-7 ..... *A child has been born for us.*  
 Luke 2:1-14 ..... *Jesus' birth.*

# The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Choir Anthem:** “Emmanuel” *A. Pote*  
*Offered by Orchard Valley United Church Choir*

**Message:**                    **Angels Among Us**                    *Rev Don Sellsted*

\* **Hymn:** “O Come All Ye Faithful” 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: **R**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God in the highest: **R**

See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; **R**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: **R**

## **Celebrating Giving**

### **Offering our Gifts**

**\* Offertory:**            "In the Bleak Midwinter"            VU #55 vs.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 man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him - give my heart

**\* Offertory Prayer:**

**There are so many things to be thankful for tonight,  
God. Receive these gifts of our gratitude for your  
love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they**

**become God-with-us for all the world. May they breathe mystery back into a world that needs a sense of wonder, awe, and joy. Amen.**

## **Going Out**

**\* Hymn:**

“Joy to the World”

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 Saviour 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.

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.

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.

## Commissioning & Benediction

**Postlude:** "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 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.

**This week's Worship Bulletin is sponsored  
in loving memory of ~ *John and Mary Mercer* ~  
parents of Sally and Nancy**