



# Sunset United Church

December 24, 2021

## *Candlelight Christmas Eve Service*

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*Sunset United, located on Treaty 4 Territory,  
is an Affirming community of faith. All are welcome here.*

## WE GATHER

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

An unmarried teenage girl was invited

**To carry Christ into this world.**

An ordinary carpenter was invited

**To be a father to a child unlike any other.**

The shepherds were invited

**Outcast and isolated, included at the manger.**

The Magi were invited

**Foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.**

And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited -

**Then we can trust that we too are invited.**

This story is for us.

**This love is for us.**

Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

**Amen.**

Carol VU#47 Still, Still, Still<sup>1</sup>

Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.  
The Christ child in his crib lies sleeping,  
angels round him watch are keeping.  
Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.

Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep,  
while Mary sings and gently holds you,  
safely in her arms enfolds you.

Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus softly sleep.

Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!  
For through God's holy incarnation  
Christ is born for our salvation.  
Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!

### Lighting the Advent Candles

In God's house, there is hope -

For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.

In God's house, there is peace -

For all that separates us from God falls away.

In God's house, there is joy -

Because God created music, and coffee, and dance floors,  
and laughter that is contagious, and mindless rounds of  
peek-a-boo with babies; and if those things have God's  
fingerprints, then God's house surely exudes joy.

In God's house, there is love -

Because God is love, from start to finish,  
And that love exists for us all.

And in the center of our hope,

In the center of our peace,

In the center of our joy

In the center of our love – is God – who dwells among us  
So tonight we light the Christ Candle, for God’s love just  
could not stay away.

**Prayer**

**Scripture**     Isaiah 9:2-7

**Reading**    Those Who Saw the Star – Julia Esquivel

**Carol**    VU#55 In the Bleak Midwinter<sup>2</sup>

    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.

    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.

    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.

        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.

**Scripture**     Luke 1:26-35, 38

**Reading** Gabriel's Annunciation

**Special Music**

**Scripture** Matthew 1:18-21

**Reading** The Risk of Birth – Madeleine L'Engle

**Carol** MV#74 What Child Is This?<sup>3</sup> (vs. 1 & 2)

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?

*Refrain* 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.

*Refrain* This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

**Scripture** Luke 2:1-20

**Reading** The Nativity – C. S. Lewis

Carol VU#91 The First Nowell<sup>4</sup> (vs. 1 to 4)

The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds  
in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they  
lay a-keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest;  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
and there it did both stop and stay,  
right over the place where Jesus lay.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

Prayer

## Lighting the Candles

Carol VU#67 Silent Night<sup>5</sup>

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.

## Blessing



**Minister:** Rev. Tricia Gerhard (she/her)

**Children & Youth Minister:** Michelle McConkey (she/her)

**Choir Director:** Corinne Groff (she/her)

**Pianist:** Shirley Hill (she/her)



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<sup>3</sup> Words: William Chatterton Dix ca. 1865. Music: English melody, 16<sup>th</sup> century; harm. attrib. John Stainer 1871. Reprinted under One License 605683.

<sup>4</sup> Words: English traditional carol, ca. 17<sup>th</sup> century, alt. Music: English traditional melody, harm. John Stainer 1871; desc. and harm. Healey Willan 1926. Refrain harmony and descant copyright © 1926 Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted under One License 605683.

<sup>5</sup> Words: Joseph Mohr 1818; English trans. John Freeman Young 1863, et al. Music: Franz Xavier Grüber 1818. Reprinted under One License 605683.

