
St. James'-Rosemount United Church

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God's Compassionate Community Sharing Christian Faith



**December 24th, 2020 – Christmas Eve
Family Service**

Welcome!

Welcome to worship! We're glad you're here!

WE GATHER IN GOD'S HOPE

VU: Voices United

MV: More Voices

* Please remain seated for all of service.*

We would like to acknowledge that we are on the Haldimand Tract, traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples.

Welcome & Announcements

Our two Christmas Eve services are a little different – the first being the one where we tap into that Christmas joy from our childhood and celebrate with carols like Joy to the World and Hark the Herald Angels Sing – a big boisterous celebration. And our second service is a little quieter – as I imagine the quiet descending on the night, with Mary and Joseph and Jesus. In both services, we celebrate Jesus' birth.

This year, even though we can't get together and celebrate Christmas how we'd like, there's still so much we **can** do. We can light candles (so you might want to get some before we begin), we can sing carols, we can laugh and play, we can welcome Jesus into our lives.

Maybe this year is even more special – because we're not celebrating Christmas Eve in our churches...and you're thinking...WHAT?! But hear me out. If we celebrate Christmas in our homes, it's like we're opening our own homes to Jesus. It's like he belongs there just as much as he belongs at

church, because there's a part of the story where there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the Inn – but we always have room – in our homes and in our hearts – for Jesus to be born. And so, I want you to think about during tonight's service – if a knock came at your door – would you make room for Jesus?

As you think about that – we're going to listen to our prelude – that's the music that starts our service – tonight brought to you by the Muppets.

Prelude Muppets – Ringing of the Bells

Call to Worship *from a prayer by Rt. Rev. Richard Bott*

One: On that first Christmas Eve,
 Mary, Joseph, and the newborn
 Jesus were in their family bubble;
 safe and together, for that night.
We gather tonight,
distant, but together;
as families in our own homes,
but also as family with Jesus.
We may be separated from the night of his
 birth by geography and time.
We may be separated from each other,
 because of this pandemic.
But we are together in God's love.
Nothing can separate us from that, or from
 each other in that.
So, friends - in Jesus name - let us be
 together in this time of Christmas
 worship!

Alleluia!

Alleluia, Amen! (and we sing...)

Opening Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem VU64

**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.**

Lighting our Advent Wreath

Light one candle for hope.

Because the world is still broken and the wait has
been long, but hope just won't let go.

Hope holds space for all our longings

lingers on the edge of harsh reality

like the dawn gently awakening the sky.

"Keep awake," she whispers,

“for the world is being made new.”

So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
Christ with us.

Light one candle for peace.

Because the world is still broken and the wait has
been long, but we refuse to be frozen by fear.
Peace comes in fits and starts: a deep breath
a courageous truth, a humble heart.

“Prepare the way,” she whispers,

“for the Lord comes to make the broken whole.”

So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
Christ with us.

Light one candle for joy.

Because the world is still broken and the wait has
been long, but our joy cannot be contained.

Like a toddler, toppling the thrones of power with a
gleeful swipe, Joy pierces our silence with song
interrupts our sighing with laughter
unshackles our fumbling feet to dance.

“My soul magnifies the Lord,” she whispers,

“and my Spirit rejoices in God my savior.”

So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
Christ with us.

Light one candle for love.

Because the world is still broken and the wait has
been long, but love never ends.

Love faithfully goes about the work of casting out
fear, speaking truth

healing the deepest wounds, crossing the divide
from this world to the next and back again.

“Here I am” she whispers, “the servant of the Lord.”

So we light one candle, because it only takes one:

Christ with us.

Light one candle for Christ.

Because the world is about to be remade even
though we have waited long,
Christ is with us through it all.

In humble manger in a back water town - a baby.
On a convict's cross - a king.

in every heart and every home where hope, peace,
joy, and love endure-Christ with us.

"Glory to God in the Highest heaven," she whispers,
"and peace to all on earth."

So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
for Christ with us. *And let us sing of our joy!*

Carol

Joy to the World

VU 59

***Joy to the world! the Lord has 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.***

Introduction of the Story

The story goes that long before Bethlehem, an angel came to Mary and Joseph and said the best sermon I've ever heard (in four words): Do not be afraid. Tonight, we realize how many angels we have in our lives – those working in hospitals caring for the sick, those working countless hours in stores to keep everyone safe, teachers and custodians ensuring that our schools are safe, those in our church who dropped gifts to people feeling alone, those who bring messages of hope in these difficult times – we have angels all around us.

And so we turn to the story of our faith, as we listen to all that happened to Mary and Joseph. After that, we'll hear the song **Hey Mary...** and lastly some friends will continue the Christmas Story for us.

Scripture Matthew 1:18-24, Luke

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to

her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² 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. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ 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. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ 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.

Song **Hey Mary!**

Story **Christmas According to Kids**

Carol **Away in a Manger** VU 69

1 *Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

2 *The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

3 *Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay*

***close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and take us to heaven, to live with thee there.***

Reading *adapted from a poem from Ann Weems*

Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.

The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem
or in Times Square, *or even into our own homes...*
For Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way
to Jerusalem -

Determinedly, inevitably...

Even now it comes

In the face of hatred and warring -

No atrocity too terrible to stop it,

No Herod strong enough,

No hurt deep enough,

No curse shocking enough,

No disaster shattering enough

No pandemic long enough -

For someone on earth will see the star,

Someone will hear the angel voices,

Someone will run to Bethlehem,

Someone will know peace and goodwill:

The Christ will be born!

Even in the Strangest times

Carol Hark! the Herald Angels Sing VU48

1 *Hark! the herald angels sing,*

***'Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,***

God and sinners reconciled!'

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,

join the triumph of the skies;

with the angelic host proclaim,

'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'
Refrain ***Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'***

2 ***Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!*** Refrain

3 ***Hail, the heavenborn Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.*** Refrain

Invitation to Offering

Offertory **Angels We Have Heard on High**

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE OTHERS

Lighting Our Candles

Hymn **Silent Night** **VU67**

***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.***

***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.***

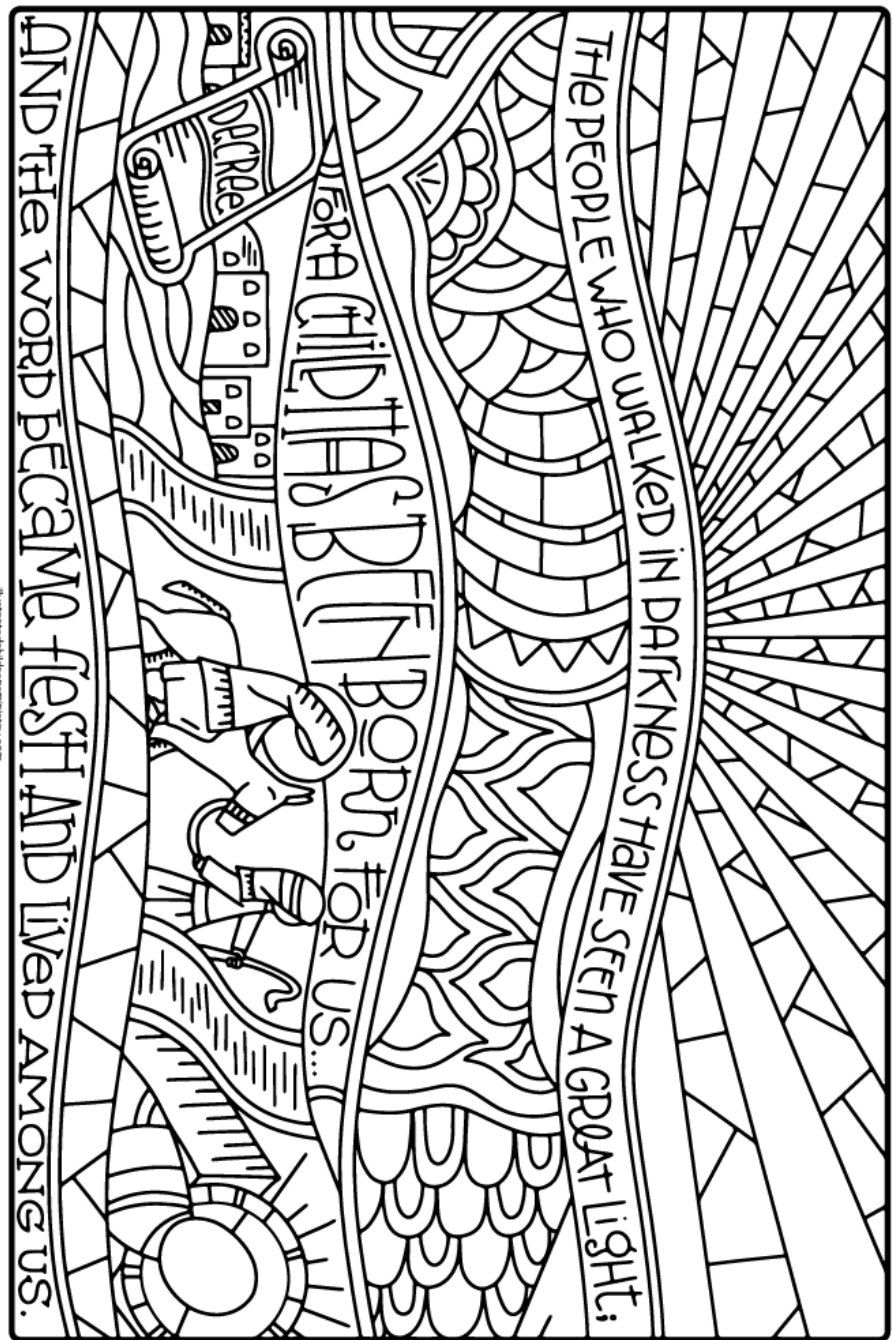
***3 Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.***

Announcements

December 27th – Zoom Carol Sing – Bring your requests and your singing voices as we continue the celebration of this season!

Special Gifts Allocations: The Special Gifts Committee invites applications for a share of any interest earned from the Special Gifts Fund. The deadline for applying is March 31, 2021. Please ensure that your application is in writing, is supported by the appropriate church committee, and that you indicate that you will spend any allocation by the end of 2021. Please send your application to Valerie Hoag at mail@sjruc.ca or mail it to her at the church, by the deadline.

December 31st – Please have your year end donations in before December 31st as we want to ensure that your donations are counted for 2020! Thank you for your continued generosity and support.



THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT;

FOR A CHILD HAS BEEN BORN FOR US...

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND LIVED AMONG US.