

**Online Joint Worship for the Mid Fraser Cluster Worship
Aldergrove, Gladwin Heights, St. Andrews
and Trinity Memorial**

**Christmas Eve, 7 PM Service
December 24th, 2020**

Thank you for Connecting for Worship

Today's Leadership includes

Preacher: The Rev. Tracy Fairfield

Presiding: The Rev. Tim Bowman

The Rev. Michael Collison

and The Rev. Bill Booth

Musician – Donna Poncelet & Jacob Greenan

Song Leader & Soloist: Deborah Handley

Technical Support: Jeremy Wright

People are invited to share their prayers in the chat during the worship service.

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

**Words of Welcome, Announcements from Each Congregation
Land Acknowledgments **All****

Lighting the Rainbow Candles **Bill**

Lighting the Advent Candle of Love: **Tim and Family**

Our Advent journey is complete as we witness asylum, isolation and want. Yet the birth of the baby Jesus in humble circumstance opens us to people living on the margins.

We come to remember the story and to live into the transformation it prompts.

We proclaim, like the heavenly chorus, the good news of vulnerability. We come, like the shepherds, filled with wonder at what could be.

We come to receive the gracious gift of becoming, of potential

We light the first candle reminding us of the way of hope.

(The first Advent candle is lit.)

We light the second candle reminding us of Christ's path of peace.

(The second Advent candle is lit.)

We light the third candle reminding us of Spirit-filled joy.

(The third Advent candle is lit.)

We light the fourth candle reminding us of God's self-giving love.

(The fourth Advent candle is lit.)

We light this Christ candle for the arrival of Emmanuel, God-with-Us.

Sung response:

Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright.

R) When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth. **R)**

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born. **R)**

Love is a flame that burns in our heart, Jesus has come and will never depart. **R)**

"Hope is a Star" (additional verse) VU 7

Christ is the gift that God still imparts, our thanks to God is the gift of our hearts. **R)**

Call to Worship: Michael

The hope of God is here tonight in the birth of a babe in Bethlehem.

Come to the light.

The peace of God is here tonight in the birth of a babe in Bethlehem.

Come to the light.

The joy of God is here tonight in the birth of a babe in Bethlehem.

Come to the light.

The love of God is here tonight in the birth of a babe in Bethlehem.

Come to the light.

O come, all ye faithful; come, all ye doubtful.

Come, all ye hopeful and weary, all ye tired and expectant. Come be open to the presence of the Holy One finding you at home and finding a home in you.

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;*

**R) 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)*

Opening Prayer: Michael

God of all Life, you teach us abundant life in the birth of a child. With the angels, we shout:

Glory to God! Hallelujah!

God of all Love, you teach us abundant love in the choices of Mary and Joseph, with the angels, we cry:

Glory to God! Hallelujah!

God of all Hope, you teach us abundant hope in the awe of the shepherds, in the warmth of the animals, in the gift of the Story. With the angels, we sing:

Glory to God! Hallelujah! Glory to God in the highest! Hallelujah! Amen!

Hymn: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (verses 1 & 2) VU 64

*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.*

*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*

Prayer of Confession: Tracy

Not all who heard of Jesus' birth responded as the shepherds did. The powerful and mighty sought to have him destroyed. Perhaps we do not always welcome Christ among us either. There are times his presence challenges us and our living. Let us turn now, in honesty, confessing to God. Let us turn now, seeking to be freed from the powers and pressures. Let us join together in our prayer of confession:

God, we confess that ours is still a world in which Herod seems to rule: the powerful are revered, the visions of the wise are ignored, the poor are afflicted, and the innocent are killed. You show us that salvation comes in the vulnerability of a child, yet we hunger for the "security" of weapons and walls. You teach us that freedom comes in loving service, yet we trample on others in our efforts to be "free." Forgive us, God, when we look to the palace instead of the stable, when we heed politicians more than prophets. Renew us with the Spirit of Bethlehem, that we may be better prepared for your coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, we pray. Amen

(Written by Francis Flook, Gathering A/C/E 2016/16. Pg. 35. Used with permission.)

Assurance: Tracy

The journey to Christmas may be over, but the promise of Christmas is ever present. God is here with us, reminding us to be present each new day. Let us, with confidence, travel into a new year with hope, grace, forgiveness and anticipation; ready to face new challenges and to receive new inspiration, for God goes with us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Written by Bill Steadman. Gathering A/C/E 2016/17. Pg. 35. Used with permission.)

Time with our Children: Bill

WE LISTEN AND REFLECT UPON GOD'S WORD

Scripture: Luke 2: 1 – 5

The Birth of Jesus Tim

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattleshed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who, with God, is over all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.

Carol: "Once in Royal David's City" (verses 1 & 2) VU 62

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattleshed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who, with God, is over all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.

Scripture: Luke 2: 6 – 20 **Michael**

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Carol: “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” VU 43

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

*While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
beyond, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. R)*

*The shepherds feared and trembled when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Saviour's birth! R)*

*Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation that blessed Christmas morn. R)*

Scripture: Matthew 2: 7 – 12 **Bill**

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

WE COME TO THE TABLE

Carol: "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?*

**R) 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 Christians, fear, for sinners here The silent Word is pleading. R)*

*So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh, Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. R)*

God is with you. **Tim**

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God!

Let us give thanks to God, our God!

It is right to give God thanks, and praise.

On this night of unexpected angels, on this night of guarding shepherds, on this night of awestruck fathers, on this night of tired, wondering, mothers, and on this night of Abundant Life, we give you thanks, God of all Creation!

**Heaven and earth are full of your Glory!
Hosanna in the highest!**

We give you thanks that You **Michael**
have been with your creation, from before it came to be.

We give you thanks that you
continue to be with your creation -
in new life aborning, in times of calm,
in times of chaos, in death, and beyond!

We give you thanks that -
no matter what we have done, or have failed to do,
you invite us back into relationship with you; again, and again.

We give you thanks that you
given us the gift of your love -
unearned, unasked for, unbelievable -
a gift filled with grace and wonder!

We give you thanks, God of all Creation!

**Heaven and earth are full of your Glory!
Hosanna in the highest!**

And so, with all Creation, with the earth, the sea, the sky,
and all the creatures that live within it,
we join with your angels, and sing our joy:

(Tune: What Child is This / Greensleeves)

O Holy, Holy, Holy God;
O God of earth and heaven.
Creation sings, all heaven rings,
acknowledging our salvation.
Hosanna in the highest -
Blessed is the One who comes
In the name of our God
Hosanna in the highest! (rb)

And you give us this great gift: **Tracy**

Child of Life, Prince of Peace,
Emmanuel – God-with-us!
In the birth of a tiny baby,
born on the edge,
born in a shack,
visited by the poor,
guarded by his parent's love,
you give us yourself!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

He laughed with those who laughed,
he grieved with those who grieve,
he listened and taught,
but most of all – he loved.
He loved us with a love that pointed us back to you.
He loved us with a love that shocked and challenged.
He loved us with a love
that raised up the lowly,
and sent the powerful away to reflect and learn.
He loved us into new relationship with You.
Your Christmas gift to the world.
Thank you, loving God!
Thank you, loving God!

On the night before his life would be ended, **Bill**
ended because overwhelming love can sometimes
cause fear to react in violent ways, Jesus sat with his friends, celebrating,
like we sit with our friends, celebrating.
Together, they remembered the story
of the people Israel, brought out of slavery by your love.
During the meal, Jesus took a loaf of bread and blessed it, giving thanks to you,
God, for your gift of life.
He broke that bread and passed it to his disciples, and said, “This is my body, given for
you. Each time you eat this, remember me.”
When the meal was almost over, Jesus took a cup of wine, and blessed it,
giving thanks to you, God, for your gift of love.
He lifted that cup, passing it to his disciples, and said,
“This is my life's blood. This is my promise. This is for you and for the world.
Each time you drink this, remember me.” So we eat, we drink and we remember.
A tiny baby born in a shack. A great teacher.
God-with-us – then and now. We remember.

(Tune: What Child is this/Greensleeves)

O Christ has died,
O Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.
Yes, Christ has died!
Yes, Christ is risen!
The Christ will come again! (rb)

Send your spirit upon these gifts,
God of all love,
that they, and we, might truly be Christ's body,
living his love in the world,
this Christmastide,
every day, all our lives.
Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most Holy,
now and forever. Amen.

Tim

The Bread is Broken / The Cup is Filled

Prayer after Communion:

**For this Christmas gift,
thank you, God. May its sweetness
be on our lips and in our hearts,
as a reminder of your love. Amen.**

Richard Bott, Dunbar Heights U.C., Vancouver, B.C. (richardbott.com)

WE RESPOND IN LOVE AND ACTION

Carol: "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" VU 48

*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!"*

Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

*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!*

Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Son 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.*

Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

Prayers of the People and all the World: Michael

The Lord's Prayer [Sung]:

(to tune of Away in a Manger)

Our Father in heaven all praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone:
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver your children most dear.

For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign.
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.
To you be the glory, resounding again,
From all of creation, forever! Amen!

Dedicating Our Gifts for the Work of God:

Our God is coming to us, once again.

What can we give Him?

Here are our hearts; here is our time; here are our passions; here are our lives.

They are a prayer for love. Amen.

VU 55 - "In the Bleak Midwinter" [Verse 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 can I give him - give my heart.

Blessing and Sending Forth: Bill

Carol: VU 67 - "Silent Night"

*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.*

Postlude

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