

Quispamsis United Church

December 24, 2023 - Christmas Eve

Liturgical Colour: Blue

Presider: Rev Ian Manson

Music: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Bob Crowley

Centering Reflection: *Look for the light, witness it,
and find yourself awash in the waves.
For every candle we light, for all that we can see,
there is more. Much more.*

- Diana Butler Bass

GATHERING TOGETHER

Opening Music (Carol Medley) & Time of Prayer and Candle Lighting

Welcome

Lighting of Affirm Candle & Acknowledgment of Territories

Call to Worship (Responsive):

In the beginning, Light shines in the darkness - loving, beautiful, and good - giving birth to all creation & to the gift of life.

The light is the gift of Jesus.

The light is the gift of love.

The light is the gift of beauty, wonder and joy.

The light is the gift of life in the midst of death, and hope in the midst of despair.

May the gift of the Christ Light reveal the wisdom and wonder of God's boundless love to all, tonight and always.

Prayer of Approach (Unison)

God of mystery and wonder, on this holy night we hear of angels singing, shepherds following a star, and Mary and Joseph receiving a gift that changed the world. As we sing, pray and ponder, fill our hearts with joy and our minds with insight. Bring peace to those who are troubled, and foster a spirit of justice and compassion in all our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening 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;**

Refrain

*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**

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy (Responsive)

On each Sunday of Advent, we gather around wreaths to reaffirm that God's light comes into the world and that nothing can overcome it.

And on Christmas Eve, we light the Christ Candle and celebrate that Jesus is the light of the world.

Like Mary and Joseph, we need that light, because sometimes we receive gifts we didn't expect.

Like the shepherds, we need to hear that we are special and important.

Like the angels, we are invited to sing and shout that we've been given the hope, peace and joy we need.

In the darkness of this night, we celebrate the Light of the World.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Candle Lighting Hymn

A Candle is Burning

VU 6 (vs 5)

**We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame,
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.**

Time For All Ages**Scripture Reading** Luke 2:1-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

The Gift of Music Still, Still, Still**Intergenerational Conversation** "Unexpected Gifts"**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD****Hymn:**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
**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!'**

VU 48

Refrain

***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! R**

**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. R**

Sharing of Gifts and Talents

Offertory Dedication Hymn: 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.**

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

**We pray, loving God, that you will graciously accept our offerings. May we know joy in the giving.
May all who benefit from them know the joy of receiving. Amen.**

The Gift of Music Gesu Bambino

Communion Hymn O Little Town of Bethlehem 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.

How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessed gift of heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

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.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Liturgy

Glory to God in the highest!

And on earth, peace and love to all!

How blessed and wonderful are you, God of majesty and mystery...

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Post-Communion Prayer (Unison):

God of shepherds and magi, you gather us by the light of the star of promise. Guide us this night by the light of that same star. Grant us hope for the future, and help us trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place. Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn:

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.**

Blessing & Benediction

Closing Music Joy to the World - arr. Hugo Gehrke