



**UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE**

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Ministers: All of us

Lead Minister: Emmanuel Menyereye

Music: Tracey Smetaniuk

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Denise Todosichuk

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter: Lorne Anderson

Scripture Readers: Wendy & Kim Eskowich

ORDER OF WORSHIP

**December 24, 2019
Christmas Eve Service Year A
7:00 pm**

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

DECLARATION OF GOOD NEWS:

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this"
(Isaiah 9:6-7 - NRSV).

PROCESSIONAL CAROL (VU 62)

"Once in Royal David's city"

GREETING & WELCOME:

COMMUNITY SHARING (ANNOUNCEMENTS):

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Welcome, everyone, on this holiest of nights.
As Mary readied herself to give birth to Jesus,
let us prepare ourselves to welcome new birth
into our own lives.

As a child prepares to open a special gift,
let us prepare our hearts to receive the wonder
of God's love.

As heaven and Earth sing of great joy,
let us sing our joyful praises to God.

Come, let us worship God together.

CAROL (VU 60): *"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

OPENING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

**O God, we come filled with excitement to
hear the Christmas story again, on this holiest of nights.**

**Open wide the crowded inns of our hearts,
that we may see with new eyes, what happened that night
so long ago.**

**Open our ears that we may hear your voice
in the voices of those around us.**

**Fill us with wonder and mystery
that we may experience your presence with us now,
we pray. Amen.**

LIGHTING THE CHRIST'S CANDLE:

In this season of expectant waiting, we have held hope in our
hearts,

**hope that in the vulnerable infant Jesus is our promise for
transformation.**

(The candle of Hope is lit).

Hope leads us to pray for peace, acting peacefully to cultivate
harmony in all our relations.

In that peace, we find the Prince of Peace.

(The candle of Peace is lit).

Peace transforms into joyful celebration: walls torn down, chasms
filled, barriers leveled, valleys bridged.

Joy inspires us to dance with abandon.

(The candle of Joy is lit).

Joy embraced fosters love that makes all things new

and, in that newness, we discover the deep meaning of love shared.

(The candle of Love is lit).

Love self-given through self-emptying, through humility,

shows us the Christ, still completely vulnerable, yet filled with promise.

(The Christ candle is lit).

Sung Response (VU 6) “A Candle Is Burning”- verse5

CAROL (VU 48) “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7: by Lorne Anderson

CAROL (VU 64) “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
– verses 1 & 4

The Second Lesson: Luke 2:1-6: by Don Neher

CAROL (VU 69) “Away in A Manger”

The Third Lesson: Luke 2:8–14: by Megan McAvoy

CAROL (VU 75) “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” – verses 1, 2 ,4 & 6

The Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:15–16: by Grace Wilton

CAROL (VU 38) “Angels We Have Heard on High”

The Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:17–20: by Madison McAvoy

CAROL (VU 59) “Joy to The World”– verses 1, 2 & 4

SPECIAL MUSIC “*The Prayer*”– David Foster
Soloist – Tracey Smetaniuk

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORDS TO US

OFFERING INVITATION:

This is the season of gifts,
and so we give thanks for all we have received.
As we have been blessed, so we offer blessings
here, that together we might do God’s work of
justice and peace for all. Let us present the
blessing of our offering.

*[by Sheryl Spencer, A/C/E 2019-2020
Year A Gathering, p.40].*

OFFERING:

OFFERING HYMN (VU 55)

“In the bleak Midwinter”- verse 4

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

We offer to you, Loving God, our Christmas gifts.

**We offer you our worship, our carols,
our prayers, and our reflection on the nativity story.**

God, bless these gifts.

**We offer you our practical concern for those
close to us who are going through difficult times.**

God, bless these gifts.

**We offer you our readiness to work with others to
enrich the life of this church.**

God, bless these gifts.

**We offer you our wish to help all who need
to know your presence.**

God, bless these gifts. **Amen.**

[by David Sparks, A/C/E Year A 2019-2020 Gathering, p.41].

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

We remember you, Jesus, born in a stable because there was no room for you anywhere in Bethlehem. We remember Mary desperate in her labour and forced to take the shelter she could find. And we remember anxious Joseph concerned that his child should be born on a dirt floor among the animals. And we acknowledge that the world is not much different for many people today.

We pray for those in this community, and throughout the world who are poor and homeless, for refugees whose children are still being born in stables, tents, and whatever shelter can be found. We think of those who are not able to be with loved ones this Christmas, for those who work in hospitals and aged care facilities, and for other essential services so that we may be safe and secure.

And we remember those who are sick, or lonely this Christmas. Pour out the warmth of your love upon them and grant them peace this night.

Be with all of us we pray. Bless our homes and celebrations, keep us safe in your love, and empower us to share this love with others. We pray these things in the name of Jesus who became the Christ, who taught us when we pray to say...

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

SHARING THE CHRIST LIGHT:

The Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-14: by *Bea White*

(Main lights are switched off. Candle lighters then take their light from the Christ candle and move down the aisles, lighting the candles at the end of each row; each person passes the light to his or her neighbour).

CAROL (VU 67) *"Silent Night"*

PETITION PRAYER: *(in unison)*

**Christ among us, Light of the World,
heal our brokenness, and bring us to wholeness,
ease our pain, and bring us hope, strength,**

and life. Give us new heart, new hope, and a new song, that our prayers and deeds may be one. We ask in your name. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

CAROL (VU 43) *“Go, Tell It on The Mountain”*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:

From this house to your, may you share in the gifts of this season.

May love, the promise of generations, attend you. Peace, the desire of neighbour and nations, find you. And may a very Merry Christmas be yours. **Amen.**

CHORAL BLESSING *“My Peace”* – K. Routledge

Prayer Resources:

**Seasons of the Spirit -Seasons FUSION Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019-2020; Lessons and Carols: Christmas Eve Service AdventUnwrap.ca; Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Liturgies and Prayers for Public Worship; The United Church of Canada Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019-2020 Year A Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission.*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019) READINGS:

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 READINGS:

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 3:1-12.

THANKS

- *All who have taken part in the leadership of this service. [Tracey Smetaniuk, Lorne Anderson, Don Neher, Megan & Madison McAvoy, Grace Wilton, Bea White, our greeters and ushers].*
- *All of you for worshipping with us tonight.*

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***HAVE YOURSELVES A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!***