



Westminster United Church
Worship Service for December 29th , 2019
Today's Worship Leader is Anna-Marie Hancock

"We are a faith community building relationships with God, all people, and our world."

Prelude

PROCESSION OF THE CHRIST CANDLE: **"O Come All Ye Faithful"** (VU 60 vs 1,3,5)

CALL TO WORSHIP: (David Sparks, Summerland, B.C. Gathering 2019-2020, page 15)

We come to Bethlehem and feel the frustration of Mary and Joseph.

There was no room for them to stay in the inn.

We come to Bethlehem and know the wonder of the shepherds.

An angel comes with good news for them.

We come to Bethlehem with carols and praise in our hearts for what God has done.

We join our praise with the angels' praise for this wonderful happening.

We come to Bethlehem and are amazed with the shepherds at what God has done.

**We will go back into our small corner of the world with joy in our hearts;
we have Good News to proclaim!**

HYMN: **Congregation's Choice**

OPENING PRAYER:

Dear God, when your precious Son became a tiny baby in a stable in Bethlehem, in poverty and simplicity, you changed our world. As we imagine those surroundings, we join with the shepherds and the wise men in wonder and praise. We thank you for our material lives, praise you for our spiritual lives, and trust in you for our eternal life. Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE:

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ today, as we open ourselves to give and receive the spirit and peace which connects us all.

May the peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us share a sign of peace with each other.

HYMN: Congregation's Choice

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (Gathering, ACE 2019-2020 page 18)

Gracious God, in this season of gift giving, it is easy to feel overwhelmed.

Are the gifts we give "good enough"? Are they—and we—accepted?

We may feel that it is more blessed to give than to receive,

and so we busy ourselves with shopping, forgetting to stop and listen for your voice.

We may feel that we are not worthy to receive the gifts you long to give us.

Are we "good enough" to receive such gifts? Are we accepted?

(a time of silent reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE: (Tricia Challoner, Norquay U.C., Norquay, Sask., Gathering 2019-2020 pg. 19)

Christmas has come!

God is born in Jesus.

God is born in you and me.

God's will be done in you and me.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

INVITATION TO PRAYER: **"Come Touch Our Hearts"** (MV 12, vs 1)

1. Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
from falling embers build a blazing fire;
love strong enough to overturn injustice,
to seek a world more gracious, come touch and bless our hearts.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE: (*Worshippers are invited to light a candle and share a prayer concern with the congregation.*)

Response after each prayer: One: God of Love, ALL: Hear Our Prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them

that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN: Congregation's Choice

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION: (Phyllis Flemming, Grace U.C., Thornbury, Ont. Gathering 2019-2020 pg.19)

O Love Incarnate, Word of Truth, be with us all as we meditate on your word for us today. Help us to receive it, and live it out in our lives.

In the name of the radiant Christ child, we pray. Amen

SCRIPTURE READING: **Isaiah 63: 7-9**

HYMN: **"Silent Night"** (VU 67, vs 1,2,3)

SCRIPTURE READING: **Luke 2: 1-20**

HYMN: **Congregation's Choice**

READING: **" O Wholly Overwhelming Night" by Katie O'Connell**

HYMN: **Congregation's Choice**

READING: **"Washing Our Hands in Money" by Eva Carte**

LIFE AND WORK:

OFFERTORY:

DOXOLOGY: **"In The Bleak Midwinter"** (VU 55, vs 4)

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.

DEDICATION:

As bells ring out, as joy breaks out, as light shines out, we recognize the gifts will bring and we rejoice! Amen.

blessing these

HYMN: **Congregation's Choice**

READING: **"The Sounds of Christmas" by Melissa Wootan**

READING: *"Santa Claus" by Kimberly Henrie*

HYMN: **Congregation's Choice**

COMMISSIONING:

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving.

CHORAL AMEN: (VU 967)

Amen, Amen, Amen.

BENEDICTION: **An Irish Blessing**

*May the blessing of light be upon you, light on the outside, light on the inside.
With God's sunlight shining on you, may your heart glow with warmth like a
turf fire that welcomes friends and strangers alike.*

*May the light of the Lord shine from your eyes like a candle in the window,
welcoming the weary traveller.*

*May the blessing of God's soft rain be on you, falling gently on your head,
refreshing your soul with the sweetness of little flowers newly blooming.*

*May the strength of the winds of Heaven bless you, carrying the rain to wash
your spirit clean, sparkling after, in the sunlight.*

*May the blessing of God's earth be on you and, as you walk the roads, may you
always have a kind word for those you meet.*

*May you understand the strength and power of God in a thunderstorm in winter,
the quiet beauty of creation, and the calm of a summer sunset.*

*And may you come to realize that insignificant as you may seem in this great
universe, you are an important part of God's plan.*

May He watch over you and keep you safe from harm.

-Phil Coulter

SENDING FORTH: *"Auld Lang Syne"*

*Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and days of auld lang syne?*

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my dear,

For auld lang syne.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet,

For auld lang syne.

Postlude

Assisting with the Service This Morning

Elder-in-Charge:

Pat Evans

Greeters:

Clara & Everett White

Scripture Reader:

Donna Scharf

Coffee Hosts:

Wayne & Arlea Harper

Sound :

Hayley McKim

PowerPoint Operator:

Kathy Nielsen

Wheelchair Lift Operator:

Pat Evans