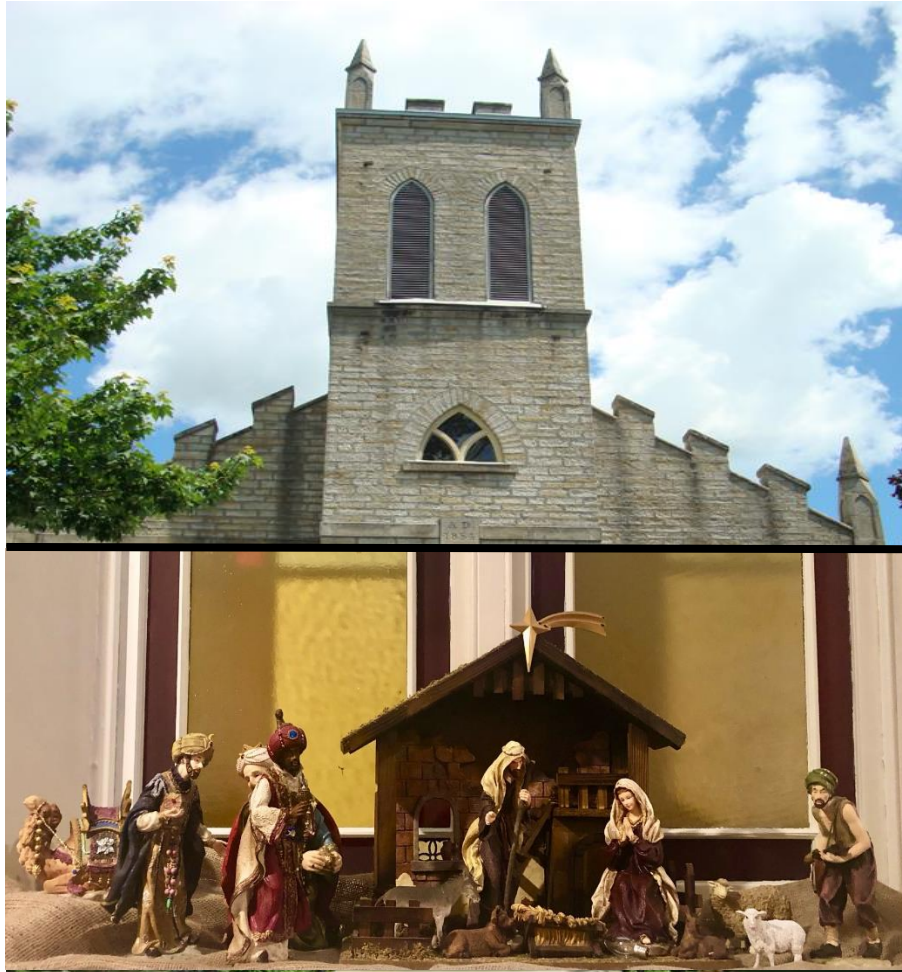


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH COMMUNITY OF FAITH

*A spiritual hub for
creativity, discovery and growth*



Tuesday, December 24, 2024 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve

Minister
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Brad Mills

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St. Paul's United Church, Perth
Sunday December 24, 2024 7PM
Christmas Eve Worship

✠ *invites us to rise in body or spirit*



Piano Prelude "What Child is This" (*Traditional, arr. by Mark Hayes*)

Greeting (Isaiah 60: 1-3 NRSVUE)

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
 and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth
 and thick darkness the peoples,
 but the Lord will arise upon you,
 and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light
 and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

✠ Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful" VU 60

- 1 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.**
- 2 God of God, light of light,
 lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
 very God, begotten, not created: R**
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
 sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
 glory to God in the highest: R**
- 4 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**
- 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
 Jesus, to thee be glory given;
 word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: R**

Gathering Prayer

One: Ever-loving God, tonight we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, we join our voices with the choirs of angels. With shepherds we behold your grace and mercy. Bless and accept our worship, we pray, as with those

who have passed this way before, and all who will come after, we rejoice in the ancient and beloved song of the Angels:

ANGELS' SONG: "Glory to God"

Jim Strathdee

**Glory to God, to God in the highest, Glory.
 Glory to God, to God in the highest, Glory.
 Peace on earth, Good will! Peace on earth, Good will!
 Peace on earth good will to all, all the children of God.
 Glory to God, to God in the highest, Glory.
 Glory to God, to God in the highest, Glory.**

The Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Part 1

On each Sunday in Advent, a candle has been lit in the Advent wreath. First was the "hope" candle – a sign of the hope in our hearts that God's reign will come. It will be for everyone, and it will be forever.

(Re-light the 1st Advent Candle)

Part 2

The second candle is a sign of peace. The light of the Peace candle is a sign that there is something greater than the suffering and sorrow caused by the wars being fought in the world. It shines as a sign of the promise of God to those who need it most.

(Re-Light the 2nd Advent Candle)

Part 3

The pink candle, lit on the third Sunday, is for joy. God created us for joy! We remember the message of "great joy which shall be for all people" - the message of the angels on the first Christmas eve.

(Re-Light the 3rd Advent Candle)

Part 4

The fourth candle shines for God's love. God so loved the world that he sent Jesus from the depths of his own being to redeem the world and to show us how to love.

(Re-Light the 4th Advent Candle)

Part 5

Tonight, we light the Christmas Candle, to remind us of the great Light that comes with the birth of Jesus, the Word of God made flesh.

Candlelighter -Light the Christmas Candle-

Part 6

As we welcome Jesus in the stable in Bethlehem let us bring his transforming love to birth in all dark places and serve him in all our sisters and brothers.

Junior Choir: "Sleep Little Baby, Sleep" - Besig & Price

Sleep, little baby, sleep;
 Close your eyes and rest your head.
 Angels their watch will keep
 O'er your lowly manger bed.
 High above in the wintry sky
 A star will show the way.
 Sleep, little baby, sleep
 'til the dawning of the day.

Sing little sparrow, sing
 With a gentle lullaby.
 Wake not the tiny King
 'til the morning light is nigh.
 Now His mother holds Him close
 To keep Him safe from harm.
 Sing, little sparrow, sing,
 As she rocks Him in her arms.

Come, little children, come
 Greet the Child who's born this night.
 God's little tiny Son,
 He will fill the world with light.
 Join your hearts in thankful praise
 To God who reigns above.
 Come, little children, come,
 Let us share His gift of love.

Come, Little children, come,
 Let us share God's gift of love.

A Reading: *St. Luke 2: 1—7 (RSV)*

The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. ² This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Solo: "Joseph's Song" by Michael Card *sung by Joel LeBlanc*

**How could it be
This baby in my arms
Sleeping now, so peacefully
The Son of God, the angel said
How could it be?**

**Lord, I know He's not my own
Not of my flesh, not of my bone
Still Father let this baby be
The son of my love**

**Father show me where I fit
Into this plan of yours
How can a man be father
To the Son of God
Lord, for all my life
I've been a simple carpenter
How can I raise a king?
How can I raise a king?**

**He looks so small
His face and hands so fair
And when He cries
The sun just seems to disappear
And when He laughs it shines again
How could it be?**

A Reading: *St. Luke 2: 8—4 (RSV, alt)*

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹ for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Thanks be to God.

Choir: "Nativity Carol" *John Rutter*

Born so long ago;
Born 'neath light of star
He who loved us so.

Far away, silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay
For Christ is born for aye
Born on Christmas Day.

Cradled by mother so fair,
Tender her lullaby;
Over her son so dear
Angel hosts fill the sky.

Far away, silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
Christ is born for aye
Born on Christmas Day.

Wise men from distant far land,
Shepherds from starry hills,
Worship this babe so rare,
Hearts with his warmth he fills.

Far away, silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay,
For Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.

Love in that stable was born
Into our hearts to flow;
Innocent dreaming babe,
Make me thy love to know.

Far away, silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
Christ is born for aye
Born on Christmas Day.

A Reading: *St. Luke 2: 15—20 (RSV)*

The Shepherds go to Bethlehem.

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Thanks be to God.

Women's Trio: "Not that far from Bethlehem" - *Borders & Alexander*

Sue Bamber, Elaine Brazeau, Patti Greer

Underneath the stars,
Just a simple man and wife,
Somewhere in the dark
His words cut the silent night:

"Take my hand, for the child
That you carry is God's own.
And though it seems the road is long,

We're not that far from Bethlehem
Where all our hope and joy began.
For in our arms, we'll cherish Him.
We're not that far, from Bethlehem".

Let us celebrate
As the Christmases go by,
Learn to live our days
With our hearts near to the Child;

Ever drawn, ever close
To the only love that lasts.
And though 2000 years have passed,

We're not that far from Bethlehem
Where all our hope and joy began.
For when our hearts still cherish Him,
We're not that far.

We're not that far from Bethlehem
Where all our hope and joy began.

For when our hearts still cherish Him,
 We're not that far,
 We're not that far, from Bethlehem

The Blessing of our Tithes and Offerings

☩ Offertory Hymn

Tune at VU # 81 (Dix)

**As were offered gifts most rare,
 at that manger crude and bare,
 so may we with holy joy,
 pure and free from sins alloy,
 all our costliest treasures bring,
 Christ to you, our heavenly King.**

☩ Offertory Prayer (*all*)

O God, may the gifts we give open us to the blessings you give at Christmas: the gift of childlike wonder; the gift of radiant hope; the gift of peace which passes understanding; the gift of joy which knows no bounds. With our gifts, we offer ourselves to you, O God, in loving response to the greatest gift of all—the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

☩ Hymn: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" VU 64

- 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 street 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.**
- 3 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.

- 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.

A Christmas Eve Reflection: "We Need Christmas" *Rev. McLean*

✠ Hymn "Silent Night" VU 67

- 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.

Prayers for Christmas Eve

✠ The Christmas Blessing

✠ A Christmas Eve Lullaby (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 bright 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 you, 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 your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

Organ Postlude: "Carillon Sortie" - Henri Mulet

Memorial Star Dedications

Jasper & Gerrie Sels and their grandchildren Robert & Kimberlee – Love Gerda & Ike

Glenn Tunnock – Love from two friends

John Aikman – Always in our hearts, Irma, Howie, Rik, & families

Harold & Helen Davies and David Thompson – Love Dorothy & Richard

Bill Faith – Love Betty

Robert (Bob) Black – Love Helen

Ellen & A.J. Foster – Love Helen

Glenn Tunnock – Love Linda, Bronwyn & Jaimie

Bill Cuthbertson – Love Linda, Bronwyn & Jaimie

Ted & Nora Thompson – In loving memory of my parents, from Mavis

Anita & Doris Thompson - In loving memory of my sisters, from Mavis

Clare Thompson – In loving memory of my brother, from Mavis

Burkhard von Oppeln – Love Ute

Margaret Hodgins – In loving memory of my sister, from Mary

Glenn Tunnock – Love Mary & Andre

In this Season of Christmas we pray for those who are grieving losses. Remind those who are grieving, Lord, that You are always with us, holding our hearts tenderly in Your hands. Surround them with friends and family who will cover them with love and let them know they are not forgotten. On this night of miracles, speak peace to those who need it most. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Honour Angel Dedications

Eila Van Wingerden – Love Opa & Oma



Walter Thompson – Mavis & Family

*Memorial Stars and Honour Angels are a decorating tradition at St. Paul's
Memorial stars remember family and friends who have passed away
Honour Angels are dedicated to special people in our lives*