

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH COMMUNITY OF FAITH

*A spiritual hub for
creativity, discovery and growth*



**Sunday, January 5, 2025 ~ 10:00 a.m.
Epiphany & Holy Communion**

Minister
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St. Paul's United Church, Perth
Sunday January 5, 2025
Epiphany Sunday
The Sacrament of Holy Communion

✠ *invites us to rise in body or spirit*

God Calls Us Together



Piano Prelude: The First Nowell - English Melody arr. by Ann Buys

Lighting the Christ, Affirm and Prayer Candles

One: We light the Christ candle as a sign that Christ's Spirit alights us all:

All: **this day, this moment, and every moment.**

One: We light the Affirm candle to remind us to be a place of belonging and acceptance,

All: **to learn and grow together in love that protects and celebrates and uplifts.**

One: The Prayer candle reminds us to hold one another in prayer:

All: **to raise prayers of thanks and concern for one another, and any in need.**

Gathering Song: "There Is Room for All" MV 62

**There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing:
there is room for all sheltered in God's love.**

And I rejoice and sing,

"My Refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."

**There is room for all,
there is room for all.**

All Our Relations: "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren"

phonetically: AW GWAY NYAH DAY DAY WAY NAY REN

All God's Children (*Affirming Statement*)

Life of the Community

Choir: "A Star Rising in the East" *Pepper Choplin*

A star, rising in the east,
A messenger of holy peace.
A star, shining o'er the earth,
The herald of a royal birth.

Upon the darkness shines a light,
And from the Lord, there comes a sign.
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
And shall call His name, "Emmanuel".

A star of heavenly design
revealing hope to humankind.

A star, a witness of His care,
The answer to the ancient prayer,
For unto us a Child is born,
For unto us a Son is given.
The government shall be upon His shoulder.
He shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Almighty God, the Everlasting Father,
the Prince of Peace.

A star shining through the night.
Illumining the Way, the Truth,
The Life.

Gathering Words:

One: A star, rising in the East -

All: discovered by those open to its message.

One: A journey into mystery...

All: a journey of courage and curiosity.

One: On the way, an encounter with scheming.

All: Evil faced, yet resisted with care.

One: The Holy One recognized, in humble birth -

All: the tender and mighty love of God in the flesh...

One: This too is our journey. Our mystery. Our story.

†Hymn: "The First Nowell" VU 91

- 1 **The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
 born is the King of Israel.**
- 2 **They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. R**
- 3 **And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. R**
- 4 **This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. R**
- 5 **Then entered in those wise men three,**

full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. R

- 6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. R

Gathering Prayer (all)

O God, our light, our beauty, our rest: With the appearance of your Son you have brought us into your new Creation. Form us into your people, and order our lives in you; through Christ, the Living One. Amen.

Children & Youth Time

Jesus Invites Us to the Table

The Invitation to the Table

☩ Hymn: “**Bread of Life, Feed My Soul**” MV 194

- 1 Bread of life, feed my soul,
as the presence of the spirit makes me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
with the grace and mercy you impart.
- 2 I have heard your voice calling,
“Come, my friend, and share
in the feast that is laid out for you
to show how much I care.”
- 3 Bread of life, help me live
a life as pure and true as Jesus did.
Bread of life, help me see
the boundless love of Christ for you and me.
- 4 I have heard your voice calling,
“Come, my friend, and share
in the feast that is laid out for you
to show how much I care.”
- 5 Bread of life, feed my soul,
as the presence of the spirit makes me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
with the grace had mercy you impart

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: It is right and true, beautiful and holy
that we should, in ceaseless joy
Give our thanks and praise to you,
Holy and merciful God,
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
And thus, in grateful procession of endless praise
With the church that is, was, and shall be forever,
We glorify you, joining this unending song:

All: *singing*—**MV 203**

**O holy, holy, holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name always.**

One: Holy are you, Eternal One.
You sit above, through, within the circle of the earth
Setting light into being
Casting the stars in the sky
Founding the evolving earth
And all that dwell within it.

Limitless is your power,
And great is your wisdom.
You look upon the lowly
As your most cherished creatures.
You visit upon the downtrodden
With presence, grace, and the promise of eternal justice.

You sent to us your own child, Jesus,
Who reached into unexpected places,
Calling women beyond the limits of their times
Equipping men for nurturing love
Welcoming children into your holy embrace.

And so, we recall that on the night of betrayal and desertion,
The light of the world took bread, broke and gave it to the disciples, saying:
“This is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

And, in like manner, after supper, Jesus took the cup and after giving thanks give it to them saying,
“This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink of it, for the remembrance of me.”

Life’s greatest feast before us,
We joyfully proclaim:

All: *singing*—MV 204

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is ri-sen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is ri-sen,
Christ will come again!**

One: Dear God, you transform.
You transform all that is before you
So that at the touch of your grace
We are never the same.

Dear God, you illumine.
You bring light to all peoples
Light to the nations
Light into our hearts
Light on your Way.

Dear God, we pray for your Spirit.
Transform, illumine, bless.
Make these ordinary gifts of bread and cup
Into the extraordinary presence of Christ with us.

All: **In so doing,
You hold us as your own
Renew us as your people
For the sake of the world you love.**

One: For all honour and glory are yours, O God,
Through Jesus Christ,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in your glorious creation
Both now and forever.

All: *singing*—MV 205

**Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!
Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!**

The Prayer of Jesus (VU 959 – Sung)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil,
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.**

The Breaking of the Bread and Blessing of the Cup

The Sharing of Communion

(Now we open the elements – wheat wafer and grape juice. First, peel off the transparent film cover – the communion wafer is beneath. After receiving the wafer, peel off the foil cover to partake of the grape juice.)

The Prayer after Communion (all)

**We have been fed, Holy One, by your presence.
We have been led, Eternal One, by your light.
May we bask in this glow
Now and forevermore. Amen.**

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Sunday School proceeds to the Gathering Room

We Seek God’s Word

From the Gospels: St. Matthew 2:1-12 (MSG, alt)

Scholars from the East

2¹⁻² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

3-4 When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

5-6 They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,
no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

⁷⁻⁸ Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

⁹⁻¹⁰ Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

¹² In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country by another way.

One: For the wisdom that guides us, the word that inspires us
and the truth that enlightens us.

All: We praise you, O God.

Sermon: "Home another way..."

Rev. McLean

Choir: "Go, Tell It" - *Pepper Choplin*

Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born,
He is born, Christ is born.
Now, all God's people say,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell is on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born (repeat)

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens,
There shone a holy light, a light
See the light. Now all God's people say,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell is on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lowly manger,
the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.
He's born, Christ is born.
Now, all God's people say,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell is on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

Go tellin' it, go, singin' it.
O my, what a beautiful noise!
Go shoutin' it, go, preachin' it,
Go, tell it at the top of your voice.
Go singin' and shoutin',
Let all God's people say,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell is on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

That Jesus Christ is born.
Go tell it that Jesus Christ, the Lord is born,
He is born, He is born!

We Respond to God

Our Tithes and Offerings

☩ Offertory Hymn

VU 81 VERSE 3

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

Prayer of Dedication (all)

O God, receive our gifts, offered by envelope, through PAR or in other ways. Use them to reveal your tender and mighty love for the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your perfect gift, the light of the world, and our Saviour. Amen.

God Sends Us to Be the Church in the World

☩ Hymn: "Will You Come and See the Light" VU 96

- 1 Will you come and see the light from the stable door?
It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.
It will be your guiding star,
it will show you who you are;
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?
- 2 Will you step into the light that can free the slave?
It will stand for what is right, it will heal and save.
By the pyramids of greed
there's a longing to be freed;
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?
- 3 Will you tell about the light in the prison cell?
Though it's shackled out of sight, it is shining well.
When the truth is cut and bruised,
and the innocent abused,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?
- 4 Will you join the hope, alight in the young girl's eyes,
of the mighty put to flight by a baby's cries?
When the lowest and the least
are the foremost at the feast,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?
- 5 Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?
In the candle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,
and the darkness all about
is too dim to put it out:
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

☩ The Blessing for Epiphany

☩ Sung Blessing: "When You Go From this Place"

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**When you go from this place be true.
May the blessing of life find you.
May the winds of the Spirit guide you,
'cross the ocean of all your days.
May the seeds of your love - your life
a-dorn the Way.
A-dorn the Way.
A-dorn the Way.**

Postlude: Variations on KELVINGROVE (Allegro) - Bédard