

# ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH



**December 27, 2020**

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**Minister: The People of St.Andrew's**

**Pastor: Rev. Cheryl Bolton**

**Ministry of Music: Lynn Sloan**

# WE GATHER

## Welcome and Announcements

Good morning and Merry Christmas! I hope you had a wonderful Christmas Day and enjoyed a slower paced celebration. The last few years my tradition for the Sunday following Christmas has been to celebrate with a very casual service. I would have suggested a potluck meal with Worship around the table. Oh and Christmas Sweaters and/or Christmas Ties are definitely encouraged! In fact, prizes are often rewarded. So I hope you have your coffee poured and your sweater on as we settle in for a relaxing time of worship.

## **Candle Lighting**

Arise! Shine! The light you have been waiting for is here!  
God's light of hope floods the earth  
Let us prepare our hearts to receive this Light. AMEN.

## **Opening Prayer**

Praise the Living God! Praise God from the heavens:  
Sun and moon and shining stars, praise the Living God!  
Praise God's Holy Name, whose word speaks all things into being,  
who is present in the expanse of the universe, and in the voices of children.  
Praise the Living God, our rescuer and deliverer, whose wonder is found in the heavens and in all creation, who comes in innocence, and with mercy.  
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 root our lives in you; through Christ, the Living Light.

## Carols and their Stories

### Carol

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem,” VU 64*

### **Story**

*In 1865, the famous preacher and abolitionist Phillip Brooks rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and participated in the Church of the Nativity's Christmas Eve celebration. In response to his experience there, he wrote the now-famous carol “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” which was first performed by the children’s choir of his church a few years later. Unlike many Christmas carols, the lyrics of this reflective and hopeful song are set in the present tense rather than the past. The author’s experience of wonder and awe are palpable and cover the seemingly great distance between the birth of Christ then and our experience of it now.*

*A number of tunes have been composed for these words. The most familiar is ST LOUIS, though FOREST GREEN is equally beautiful (and set slightly lower, making it easier to sing). Popularized by Welsh boy soprano Aled Jones, the anthem setting by Walford Davies would suit a solo performance of this carol very well.*

### Carol

*“Good King Wenceslas” (lyrics and music can be found online)*

### **Story**

*Though the tune is taken from a much older madrigal, John Mason Neale’s “Good King Wenceslas” (1853) is about a man who braves winter storms during Saint Stephen’s Day (December 26) to help his poorer neighbours. The story it tells is based on a real person—Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia—who was assassinated by his own brother and had been adored by his subjects. His charity and popularity eventually led to his being named the patron saint of the Czech Republic.*

*This carol is beloved by many, in large part because of the evocative story images and the possibility for performance. Traditionally, the part*

*of the Page (the king's assistant) is sung by a treble voice, while the King is sung by a bass voice. However, in a congregational setting, the same could be achieved by assigning a part to higher and lower voices, or children and adults, or one half of the church and the other, with everyone joining together for the non-dialogue parts. The whole thing is quite a bit of fun, especially since the opportunities to sing this simple Christmas story are so few.*

## **Carol**

*"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," VU 44*

## **Story**

*Written by Massachusetts Unitarian minister Edmund Sears, this pastoral-sounding carol carries a much deeper meaning than simply retelling the birth of Jesus. Sears hoped to offer an uplifting message amid the great poverty he was witness to and to remind people that God, in the form of a child, had entered a world sorely in need of love and peace. Richard Storrs Willis' tune, CAROL, paired with the words only a year later, gave the carol its lasting appeal and one of its two most common tunes, the other being NOËL.*

*A movie was made in 1992, called A Midnight Clear, it tells the story of American and German soldiers laying aside their weapons on Christmas Eve of 1944. The story ends tragically, as miscommunication causes hostilities to resume. Yet, the powerful third verse of the carol, with its invitation to hush the noise of battle in order to hear God's "love song" to the earth and all people, is a strong one. This carol speaks gently, yet powerfully, God's word of peace amid strife and weariness.*

## **Carol**

*"Silent Night, Holy Night" VU 67*

## **Story**

*In 1816, Father Joseph Mohr wrote the poem "Stille Nacht!"*

*Heilige Nacht!” while stationed at a pilgrim church in Mariapfarr, Austria. Two years later, now at St. Nicholas’ church in Oberndorf, he asked Franz Gruber to set the poem for guitar and choir, which the two performed on Christmas Eve of 1818. Since then, a legend has grown around the circumstances of this collaboration, beginning with a broken organ at St. Nicholas’ and ending with a dramatic, last-minute musical setting for the now-familiar carol. To what extent the legend of the carol’s origins is true is perhaps less important than its beauty and simplicity.*

## **We Respond to God**

**Prayers of the People** pray for your people and your world.

Today, we give you thanks for the gift of your child, Jesus Christ, who in birth, life, death, and resurrection revealed your unending love for all people and opened to us the purpose and promise of life together. We give thanks also for the gifts of this season: hope for the vision of justice you promise, even in the midst of despair; for peace within and among your people, even in the midst of conflict; joy found in reunion and celebration, even amid the challenges of this life; and love, with the power to transform and heal all things, even in the midst of brokenness.

We pray for those who still long for these, your gifts, God of Love: for those who will spend this season alone or anxious... for those who grieve an empty place at the table this year... for those who are ill, in body or in spirit... for those in hospital and in care... for those who endure the terror of conflict and oppression... for those who will go hungry this day, and who long for the simplest of creation’s gifts... for your people and your world, we pray, O God.

Let us listen to the angels’ song again, your song of love for this world. Move us to return that song in what we say and do, that we may be instruments of your hope and peace and joy and love.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who became the Christ, and who taught us when we pray to say, Our Father...

## **Closing Hymn: Go Tell it on the Mountain**

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

The child is born! Alleluia!

Our God has come among us!

Let the whole earth rejoice!

Let us leave the manger and return to our daily routines, knowing that we have seen the Lord, and glorifying and praising God for all that we have heard and seen. Thanks be to God. Amen.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to the lockdown, the church will be closed from Dec.26<sup>th</sup> until January 23, 2021. The office will be closed during this time as well. Rev. Cheryl Bolton will be in the church once a week to do a walk thru, attend to needed tasks, check phone messages etc. Please feel free to continue to drop off donation envelopes thru the mail slot, it will still be monitored. Cheryl and Susan will be monitoring email and phone messages from their home offices on a daily basis. Services will continue to be posted on the St. Andrew's Facebook page and on the St. Andrew's website. Mailbox ministry will continue. However, bulletins will be mailed out for the duration of this lockdown. Rev.Cheryl will be reaching out in the coming weeks by telephone. We encourage everyone to continue to be vigilant during these difficult days.



**Annual Reports should be in to Susan by January 20, 2021. You can email them into the church office or drop them off in person(use the mail slot). Please note that the Annual meeting is postponed until such a time that it is safe to proceed.**



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***The Broadview Magazine will be renewed in January. Anyone wishing to be a new subscriber please contact Margaret Hutchison 519-633-1105. I will be sending the form in by Dec 23rd. The monies will be due mid January \$25. Please place a cheque or money in your church envelope marking it Broadview.( drop in mail slot)***