

YELLOWKNIFE UNITED CHURCH
An Affirming Ministry and Congregation of
The United Church of Canada
Christmas Eve Communion 2017 - 10:00 pm

* - rise in body or spirit

GATHERING IN ANTICIPATION

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Territory

The Christmas Eve Christ Candle

One: The Advent time of waiting and preparing is over! We have lit four candles that remind us about waiting in hope and peace and joy and love. (*Light the four Advent candles.*)

Two: These candles remind us that God promises to be with us, to comfort us, to help us rejoice, and to teach us to love.

One: Today we celebrate that God has come to be with us in the baby called Jesus.

Two: Today we light one more candle, and we call it the Christ candle. (*Light the central white candle.*) This candle reminds us of all God has done for us. God fills us with good things, like hope and peace and joy and love. God is faithful to us. God is with us, now and always.

All: **O God, come, lead us through our lives. Give us courage to spread your light in the world. Amen.**

***Candle Lighting Song - 59 VU (Verse 1) Joy to the World**

***Call to Worship**

One: The people who walked in darkness.

All: **Sometimes we walk in darkness.**

One: have seen a great light.

All: **We live in darkness and in light.**

One: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them has light shined.

All: **Whenever we find ourselves in the night, God's morning dawns anew.**

One: You have increased the nation's joy.

All: **The people rejoice as at the time of harvest.**

One: For the yoke of their burden you have broken.

All: **The pressure, the tension, the anxiety of the past fade as we gather in this place.**

One: For a child has been born for us.

All: **God's child has come to be with us -**

One: one who will rule with peace and justice forever and ever,

All: **and through whose love we are all children of God.**

***Carol 47 VU Still, Still, Still**

Prayer of Approach (*together*)

Tonight, O God, the soles of your feet
have touched the earth.

Tonight, the back street and the forgotten place
have been lit up with significance
far beyond our wildest dreams.

Tonight, the households of earth
welcome the Child of heaven.

For you have come among us, you are one of us.

So may our songs rise
to surround your awesome mystery
as our knees bend to approach your cradle. Amen.

***Carol 75 VU While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks**

Prayer of Confession

And so we confess:

the emptiness of our hearts this Christmas Eve,
and the sadnesses that have emptied them;
the loneliness we feel though surrounded by others;
the hurt we have caused to others and ourselves—
knowingly and unknowingly;
the destruction to our environment
because of our greed;
the struggle for power which causes war;

the hope we have in the babe in the manger
for a new way of being, a new way of living,
a new life of hoping.

In your kindness, God, hear our prayers.
(a time of silent prayer)

Words of Assurance

May God who hears our confession
and who knows the secrets of our hearts
touch us with healing and with grace
on the miracle of this Christmas night.

May we find in the old, old story
ever-new hope, peace, joy, and love.

May we meet Christ in everyone
with whom we share our living.

And may we bring new life to God's waiting world.

Written by Bob Root, Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2011-2012, page 34. Used with permission

Choral Response Gloria, Gloria In Excelsis Deo Refrain #38

LISTENING TO THE STORY

Hebrew Scripture: Psalm 96 *page 816 VU*

Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 1-20

Meditation An Answer In the Form of a Question...

RESPONDING IN FAITH

***Carol 74 VU** What Child is This?

***Passing of the Peace**

One: The Holy Child of Peace has come to dwell among us!
Let us now share the peace with one another.

All: **Christ has come among us!**

One: The peace of Christ be always with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Offering and *Doxology

Praise God, whose dawn transfigures night,
Whose Daystar shines for us on high,
Whose spirit brings into our sight
The hope which to our world draws nigh

*The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to our God.

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

One: It was as a baby that you came to us, gracious God.

A child in a manger – crying and smiling, staring out in wonder and sleeping in contentment.

All: **As we celebrate this birth once again,**

fill us with wonder and contentment.

In a world of craziness and busy-ness,

still our hearts and minds to the beauty of this sacred moment.

One: We thank you for Mary, a frightened teenage mother who dared to say “yes” to you.

We thank you for Joseph, confused father who learned to trust in your mysterious and wonderful ways.

All: **We thank you for Jesus – child, youth, adult –**

who brought your presence into our world for us, offering hope at times when we feel all is lost.

One: As we celebrate his birth, so we commemorate his time among us, we remember, how, on the night that Jesus was betrayed, he sat at supper with his disciples.

While they were eating, Jesus broke bread and as he shared it said, “remember me.”

Later he took a cup of wine and

shared it with the words, “remember me.”

And so, as Christ did, we bless these gifts and share them amongst ourselves,

and in doing so we remember

Christ's presence with us – always.
And so we pray the prayer he gave us...

The Lord's Prayer

Communion

Prayer after Communion (*together*)

Generous Creator:

 this night we celebrate Emmanuel—God with us.

In this Holy meal we have received

 bread for the journey,

 hope for the year to come.

Thank you, O God, for these wonderful gifts.

May we go forth from this service

 with carols delighting our spirits,

 with eyes and hearts alert

 for opportunities to share your love,

 and with souls at peace, trusting in your grace. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Joanna MacQuarrie, Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany
2011-2012, page 35. Used with permission

***Carol 71 VU** 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

***Commissioning and Benediction** (*together*)

Let us go gently into this sacred night

 as those who have seen the Christ.

We can go without fear

 for a divine light illumined by the very heart of God,
shines on our paths and leads us to the place where

 hope, peace, joy, and love are fulfilled.

Surely, now is the time for rejoicing!

Christmas Eve Candlelighting

44 VU It Came Upon the Midnight Clear