



Newcastle United Church

Christmas Eve

December 24th, 2023, 7 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons and Carols service is steeped in the rich tradition that started start around 1870's. Its origins began in Cornwall England when the Truro Cathedral Choir would visit residents in the community, singing and reading scripture lessons regarding the birth of Jesus.

In 1918, King's College, in Cambridge, formalized the readings and hymns into a worship service. The service that you are about to experience this evening is based on this century old worship liturgy.

We hope that this Christmas Eve service fosters a spirit of awe and grace that proclaims God's constant and loving presence in our lives. It is also hoped that this service meets the spiritual needs that are connected to the birth of the Christ Child.

Listen and sing as the story of the birth of Christ is shared with you this evening. Let this evening's experience bring the Light of Christ into the dark places of your life and into creation, bringing hope, peace, joy and love.

Hear The Good News

Prophet Isaiah 9:6–7, - Old Testament

Hymn “O Come, All Ye Faithful” vv. 1, 2 VU 60

Lighting the Advent Candles

L: We light the first candle of the Advent Wreath called Hope. We hope that the Christmas message shines brightly, announcing hope of new beginnings and transformations in our world and in our lives.

A: Let your Light shine in our lives revealing your Holy Hope for all of humanity and creation.

L: We light the candle of Peace. As this candle casts its light, let it find all the places where peace is absent. Let the Holy Light of Peace drive out the hatred and conflict in the world and in our lives that separate us from one another.

A: Let your Light shine in our lives, revealing your Holy Light of Peace for all of humanity and creation.

L: We light the Candle of Joy. Let its light dance in our celebrations in life. We pray that joy will return to those who are experiencing loss and loneliness, like the songs of birds that return in spring.

A: Let your Light shine in our lives revealing your Heavenly Joy for all humanity and creation

L: We light the Candle of Love. This candle reminds us of the greatest gift that anyone can give, is to love one another as God loves us. God's love for all humanity and creation was revealed through Jesus Christ who was born in love. Tonight, we are reminded of God's love made known through the birth of an infant named Jesus.

A: Let your Light shine in our lives, revealing your Holy Love for all of humanity and creation.

Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

vv. 3, 4
VU 60

Call to Worship

L: Like the shepherds, we come to the stable, uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

A: longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

L: Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make, gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

A: that this world can change for the better.

L: Here, in the stillness of this December night, we gather to share the light of Christ, a light that shines in the darkness of the night.

A: We gather in the wonder of this night to share our joy and to give thanks for new beginnings.

In the darkness of the night, we give thanks for light that reveals the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love that you, Holy One, had in mind for all creation.

Hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” vv.1&6
VU 1

The First Lesson Genesis 1:26–2:4
Hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vv. 1&7
VU 1

The Second Lesson Isaiah 9:2, 6–7
Solo: Karen Nichol “Mary Did you Know?”
Words & Music by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

The Third Lesson Luke 1:26–35
Carol “Angels From The Realms Of Glory”
VU 36

The Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1–20
Hymn “Away In A Manger” VU 69

The Fifth Lesson John 1:1–14
Carol: “Joy to the World” VU 59

Reflection

Ministry of Music: “Born Tonight in Bethlehem”
Words & Music by Don Besig and Nancy Price

Responding in Love

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

VU 55

*What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise [one], I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him—give my heart.*

Offertory Prayer

Prayers of the People

The Lighting of the Christ and the Sharing the Light of Christ

L: And now the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.

A: O Holy God, we light the Christ candle. It shines on smiles and tears. It shines on both the young and old. It shines and we hear angels. It shines and we see a manger. It shines and we remember the story. It shines on our world, like Bethlehem long ago. It can never be extinguished, because you, Jesus, are the candle tonight. We promise to be the candle of hope, peace, joy and love with every breath we take. Amen.

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2019/12/02/christmas-eve-wreath-and-christ-candle-liturgy-2019/> modified by Rev. B. Ransom)

The Sharing of Christ Light with the Community

Carol: “Silent Night, Holy Night”

VU 67

L: Take the Light of the World, the light of possibilities, and share it with all of creation.

Blessing and Benediction

A: Amen, Amen, Amen

Welcome! We are happy you are able to join us this evening. We enjoy open seating so please, sit where you feel comfortable, and meet a new friend.

May the Joys and Blessings of this Holiday season, bring Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, to you and your family and friends.



Resources used in the development of the Christmas Eve service.

The United Church of Canada, Christmas Eve Liturgy 2016



<https://cpcissaquah.org/2018/12/24/christmas-eve-lessons-and-carols-service-silent-night/>

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2019/12/02/christmas-eve-wreath-and-christ-candle-liturgy-2019/>



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please contact our interim treasurer, Susan at 289-927-6297 or

treasurer@newcastleunitedchurch.org