

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay**  
**Christmas Eve Service – Light of Light**  
**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Prelude** *While Shepherds Watched* A. Hawryluk

**Introit** *Hark a thrilling voice is sounding* 116

**Light of Light** *Words by Joel Raney*  
*Coventry Carol Setting and Additional Music by Joel Raney*

**Christmas Eve – Light of Light**

Light of Light, shine in our hearts and renew our hope.

**Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Light of Light, shine in our hearts and grant us peace.

**Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Light of Light, shine in our hearts and bring us true joy.

**Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Light of Light, shine in our hearts and fill us with love.

**Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

*Candle Lighting*

Tonight we light all five candles – the candles of hope, peace, joy, love, and finally, the Christ Candle, celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior. The candle of hope reminds us that in sending Christ, God sent hope to the earth. The candle of peace reminds us that peace will one day reign. The candle of joy is a reminder that we have been given eternal life and have no reason to be fearful. And the candle of love represents God's redeeming love for us, brought to earth in the form of a tiny child.

© 2019 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

**\*Hymn** *Light of Light*

Voices cry out from a world in grief:

prayers of those who seek relief.

End their dark ness, hear their call for

peace on earth, good will for all.

© 2019 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188

www.hopepublishing.com 800-323-1049 All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

**Call to Worship** *O Come, All Ye Faithful (vv1-4)* **159**

**Greeting and Welcome**

**Prayers of Adoration**

God of mystery and wonder,

Creator, Christ and Spirit,

On this holy night, the angels sing your praises with great joy.  
The shepherds welcome your saving love, born in a manger.  
Mary and Joseph ponder your promise, cradled in their arms.  
Glory to you, O God, for such gifts entrusted to us in Christ Jesus!  
And so we come to praise you, singing with the angels,  
amazed like the shepherds, cradling the Christ Child in our hearts once again.  
Glory to you, O God, Source of Light and Love for all people.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## Prayer of Confession

**God of grace and mercy,  
you have given us the greatest gift of all, your Son Jesus,  
but we confess the pressure to give the perfect gift distracts us.  
Jesus was born in human flesh,  
but we fail to see the dignity in the human lives around us.  
Forgive us, O God,  
and help us cherish the true meaning of all you offer us  
each and every day in the child in the manger.**

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## Assurance of Pardon

The angel of the Lord assured Joseph he should take Mary as his wife, because her son, to be called Jesus, would save God's people from their sins. This night, receive the gift of God's forgiveness, offered in Christ Jesus. Know this gift is for you and share it with others in Jesus' name.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## Carol

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vv6,7)*

**122**

## Prayer for Understanding

God of light and life, open our hearts to hear your promise of new life in the familiar stories of Christmas. Surprise us with new insights and refresh us with deep wisdom. Enfold us in the light of your Holy Spirit as we attend to the baby in the manger. Amen.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## The Christmas Story Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and

wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**Carol** *What Child Is This, Who Laid to Rest?* **161**

**Carol** *The First Nowell* **136**

### **The Christmas Story** Luke 2:8-20

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>5</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**Carol** *Angles we have heard on high* **147**

### **The Glory of God is its Light** Revelation 21:22-27

<sup>22</sup>I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup>Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup>But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

### **Reflection** Light of Light

A tiny baby. What can a baby do?

Think of the joy and hope that bringing a baby into the world means for most of us. Even when things seem hopeless around bringing a baby into the world, the baby itself is not the problem. The baby is new life, the challenges are about life itself.

Jesus came as a baby, but his life represented not only his own new life but new life for all and for all time. His birth came with light. We heard,

“and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—  
I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.”

The glory of the Lord shone around them. The news of Jesus birth came with illumination. This illumination continues into our own time and lives.

As this service began, we lit the four advent candles of hope, peace, joy, and love and then the Christ candle. Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ life, were the advent of hope, peace, joy, and love for a world that was and continues to be sorely lacking in the four attributes. It is not that we don’t experience those things but rather that we don’t give a second thought to them if our lives seem to be going rather well. Yet this is not the case for people in our community and around the globe who suffer. Name the suffering...lack of adequate food, clothing, shelter, physical or emotional security. It is everywhere and likely you know someone who struggles. It may be you.

We light a Christ candle every Sunday, and if I forget to do it, someone else will come down to the front during the service and light it. I am so grateful as that light represents Christ’s light. Jesus’ birth brought light to the world in human form so that we might have the light of hope, the light of peace, the light of joy, and the light of love that is God to illumine our lives. Even as we sang our opening hymn *Oh Come all ye faithful* you may have caught the line in the second verse that reads, God of God, Light of light.

Jesus is that Light of light. We know that Jesus came from God, and is part of what we call the Godhead, Creator, Son and Holy Spirit. His light is the light of God that shines into a world that is suffering, that has darkness. The light of the Christ candle points us to the hope that we have in Christ for the world. This light, this hope is for every person, not just for those we like or love. It is for all who have sinned, for those who have committed murder and for those who have hurt the feelings of others.

In John 8:12 Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

The following comes from a sermon discussion from respected theologian and Presbyterian minister Frederick Buechner who just passed away this August. He wrote, “We can’t see light itself. We can see only what light lights up, like the little circle of night where the candle flickers--a sheen of mahogany, a wineglass, a face leaning toward us out of the shadows. When Jesus says that he is the Light of the World (John 8:12), maybe something like that is part of what he is saying.”

Jesus is the Light of the world that is available to each of us. His light, which is the light of life, makes us shine in a world of darkness, his light shines in and through us when we give generously of time, energy, money, and of ourselves, whatever we have to offer. We take this light, that is represented by the Christ candle, and carry it out from this place to our homes, our workplaces, and the very world. You carry it when you treat people with dignity regardless of their social, political, or economic standing. You carry it with you always.

The world, what we experience, will do it's darndest to snuff out the light of Christ in you. It may be a toxic workplace, an abuse relationship, illness, death, or events that are beyond your control. It may be lack of resources, physical and emotional. But the light of Christ always shines. The Christ candle represents that ongoing light...light which brings, hope, peace, joy, and love into places that it doesn't seem to belong.

My mom always seemed to be one who saw the light, the dawn of hope, even in the most challenging of situations. She once told me that as long as she could see that light of hope she knew that things would be okay. My greatest sadness was when she said that she couldn't see that light anymore. The pain in her body was taking its toll. It is in those situations that we must bear the candle of light for another.

We do this living thing together. We are not isolated one from another. We come together in families, circles of friends, in the community of the church and the communities where we live. We are a community regionally, nationally, and globally.

In the scripture from Revelation, we heard the following,

<sup>22</sup>I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, *for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.* <sup>24</sup>*The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.* <sup>25</sup>Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

...The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. This is the hope for the world and God's intention. It was God's intention since the beginning that we would know God's light, but we have not born that our in our human lives. This time of light will come. Our call is to live into it now, bringing the light of God, the light of Christ, the Light of light into the world as it is now.

Later, as this service comes to a close, we will be taking the light from the Christ candle and one by one the candles we hold will be lit. The sanctuary lights will be dimmed. We do this not because of the beauty it brings to our Christmas Eve service or the warm fuzzies it gives us, though that is wonderful and beautiful, but rather we do this ritual because it represents the light in the darkness, we see more clearly in the dark how the light illumines our space. The more candles that are lit the more the glow grows.

This is us in the world. As the faithful people of God in community we bring the light of Christ to the world. We do this as individuals, remembering that it is from the community of Christ that we are strengthened, healed, and taught.

May the light of God, the light of Christ, the Light of light shine brightly, not only this night, but everyday through us as God's people in a world that needs the light of hope, peace, joy, and love.

May the light of Christ illumine your way, the Light of life fill you and give you life abundant, a life of love that even in the darkness brings light to the world. Amen.

**Carol**

*In the bleak midwinter*

**145**

### **Prayer**

O God in whom we live and move and have our being,  
In this season of Christmas,  
we give you thanks that your love took flesh in the Christ child  
and that his story still fills us with wonder.

With all the to-ing and fro-ing between family and friends this season,  
we remember Mary and Joseph and their journey  
in the midst of another busy time.

Watch over all who travel at this time of year,  
for happy reasons or in the face of difficulties.  
May they find your peace in the midst of their journeys.

As we remember the innkeeper who found space for Mary and Joseph,  
we are grateful for the spaces we call home,  
whether simple or sophisticated.

We pray for all those who are homeless,  
and those who seek a welcome in strange places.  
May they find an open door and kindness within.

As we remember the shepherds watching over their flocks,  
we give you thanks for those who watch over us this night.

We pray for all those who must work on holidays,  
tending the well-being of others.  
May they know a blessing in the services they provide  
and our gratitude for their efforts.

As we remember the angels and their message of peace and goodwill,  
we are grateful for peace and order in our communities.

We pray for all those who work to establish and maintain peace  
in troubled places and troubled lives,  
knowing trouble rarely takes a vacation.

As we remember the Magi and the gifts they brought to honour the Christ Child,

we thank you for the generosity that overflows at this time of year.  
May it touch the lives that need it most.  
May each of us find ways to offer you what we value most in the year ahead.

Hear these prayers and all the silent prayers of our hearts, O God,  
and cradle them and us in your holy wisdom,  
as we offer the prayer Jesus taught his friends and followers:

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## Lord's Prayer

**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 forever. Amen**

## Choir's Gift of Music *The hands that first held Mary's child*

### Acknowledgment of the Offering

God's gift in the Christ Child arrived in a small town, a humble stable, to a couple no one invited in – and still that gift changes lives. Our gifts to God this Christmas share in that miracle.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

Our offering was received as you entered for worship. Any loose offering will go to the church's benevolence fund. As we present these gifts to God we sing the doxology followed by the prayer of dedication.

## Doxology *Glory be to God our Maker* **298**

Glory be to God our Maker, God Redeemer, holy Son;  
glory be to God the Spirit, God almighty, Three-in-One!  
Glory, glory, glory, while eternal ages run.

Words: public domain

## Prayer of Dedication

**Generous and loving God, your gift to us in Christ Jesus still draws us to manger and opens our hearts with wonder. Bless our gifts in his name, so that they may draw others to your love and the blessing we have found in the Holy One, born for us this night. Amen.**

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Christmas Eve. Saturday, December 24, 2022. Year A.

## Carol *Away in a manger* **149**

### Candle Lighting

*Light a candle either from another candle or on its own and sing...*

## Carol *Silent Night* **154**

## **Closing Prayer**

**God of light, tonight we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We thank you for this, the most precious of Christmas gifts, and we ask that you keep the hope, peace, joy and love of this season in our hearts, now and throughout the coming year. Emmanuel – God is with us, now and forevermore. Amen.**

© 2019 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188  
www.hopepublishing.com 800-323-1049 All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

## **Carol**

*Joy to the World*

**153**

## **Benediction**

To you is born this night a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

May the love of the Christ Child embrace you;  
and the joy of the Christ Child fill your heart.

May the peace of the Christ Child give you rest,  
and the hope of the Christ Child guide you into the year ahead.

## **Postlude**