



Robertson - Wesley

UNITED CHURCH *Spirited*

An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada

2016 Dec 24

Choral Service/Christmas Night

11:00 PM

Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstance. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.



*And they shall name him
Emmanuel*

Seeking Community

Prelude: *Christmas Favourites*, Various Composers Tammy-Jo Mortensen, organ

Processional Carol: *Joy to the World* (Voices United 59)

- 1 **Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**
- 2 **Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 4 **He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Christmas Greeting Garth van Herwaarden, Robertson-Wesley Church Board

Christmas Prayer

We come together tonight, gracious and loving God, to hear the story one more time. Some of us with excitement, some of us with sadness, some of us with regret. It matters not, because on this night we gather together to share.

We share the words of a people searching for meaning and hope in life, under a ruler that held them down, that cast a young couple about to be parents into an uncertain future not of their choosing, that filled both shepherds and kings, the common and the proud, with fear, wonder, and awe.

We share the story of a baby born – an event as wondrous and frightening then as it is now.

We, too, are a people looking for meaning, searching for hope and reassurance and comfort. And doing our best to do it with joy and excitement, and wonder in this holiday season and on this most holy night of nights.

Gracious and loving God, be with us in this place, on this night, that we might sense your presence and be absolutely assured of your love

for us, as was that young family so long ago. Amen.¹

Lighting the Christ Candle

Seeking Meaning

Anthem: *Thou Shalt Know Him*, Mark Sirett Choir of Robertson-Wesley
Isaiah 9:2-7 • The Righteous Reign of the Coming King Donna Krucik
Story of Promise and Hope Rev. Karen Bridges
Carol: *Angels We Have Heard on High* (*Voices United 38*)

- 1 Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!**
- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!**
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!**
- 4 See him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!**

Seeking for our Emmanuel

Anthem: *What is This Lovely Fragrance?* French Carol, arr. Healey Willan
Choir of Robertson-Wesley

¹ Written by Cheryl McMurray, **Gathering** Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2015-2016, page 30. Used with permission.

Carol: *Still, Still, Still*

(*Voices United 47*)

- 1 **Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.
The Christ child in his crib lies sleeping,
Angels round him watch are keeping.
Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.**
- 2 **Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep,
While Mary sings and gently holds you,
Safely in her arms enfolds you.
Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus softly sleep.**
- 3 **Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!
For through God’s holy incarnation
Christ is born for our salvation.
Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!**

Offering: *Settings of “O Come, All Ye Faithful”*, arr. Jacobus Kloppers

The work of the church relies on the generosity of your donations to maintain the beauty of this building and the ministry that it provides along with outreach programs such as the community dinner and the Spirited Arts Collective. Donations of over \$10, placed in the envelopes found in the pews, will receive a tax receipt. Thank you for your support.

Offertory Hymn

(*Voices United 68*, words adapted by Warren Mack)

**Then haste we in bringing our gratitude singing
in love in these Christmas days.
All poor ones and humble and all those who stumble
your God comes, give thanks always.**

Seeking Direction

Anthem: *Wonder*, Erin Craig

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Luke 2:15-20 · The birth of Jesus

Dawn Allan

Sermon: *Called to seek, create, and greet*

Anthem: *Huron Carol*, arr. Robin King

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Lighting our Candles

Carol (*seated*): *Silent Night*

(*Voices United 67*)

**Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,
Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

Benediction

(Please remain seated until the lights go up.)

Postlude: *Variations on In Dulci Jubilo*, arr. Denis Bédard

*As hearts are joined together on this holy night,
may each one be touched by the peace and joy
of the wondrous birth.*

Music Notes

Musically, it's Christmas around the world, but we've also chosen many Canadian pieces in anticipation of Canada's 150th!

The opening carol is English and was written by Isaac Watts and set to music by Lowell Mason, who based some of the tune on a Handel melody from "Messiah". This is the most published carol in North America.

"Thou Shalt Know Him" is by Canadian composer Mark Sirett. Mark was a section lead here at Robertson-Wesley for a few years in the 1980's. He is based in Kingston, ON, and runs a family of choirs called "Cantabile" and is a prolific composer.

"Angels We Have Heard on High" and "What is this Lovely Fragrance" are both French carols, the second which is arranged as an anthem by the "Dean" of church music in Canada, Healey Willan. He was at St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto from 1921-1968. There he was involved in music nationally, composed organ and choral music, as well as a composer and arranger of hymns.

"Still, Still, Still" is a well-known carol in Austria. It has the same wonderful, quiet, mysterious feel as the famous German carol, "Silent Night".

The offering music is an arrangement of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" by Edmonton composer, Jacobus Kloppers. Dr. Kloppers was one of my professors, and he taught at The King's University College for many years. He is Music Director at St. John's Anglican Church, here in Edmonton.

The last two anthems are by composers with connections to Robertson-Wesley. Erin Craig was an alto section lead here at R-W, and wrote this piece for us for the Lessons and Carols service in 2005. The arrangement of the Huron Carol is done by Robin King, who was the Music Director here from 1988-1993. "Twas in the Moon

of Wintertime", is Canada's oldest Christmas song, written probably in 1642 by Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit missionary at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons in Canada. Brébeuf wrote the lyrics in the native language of the Huron/Wendat people; the song's original Huron title is "Jesous Ahatonhia" ("*Jesus, he is born*"). The song's melody is based on a traditional French folk song, "Une Jeune Pucelle" ("A Young Maid"). The English version of the hymn uses imagery familiar in the early 20th century, in place of the traditional Nativity story. In the English version, Jesus is born in a "lodge of broken bark" and wrapped in a "robe of rabbit skin". He is surrounded by hunters instead of shepherds, and the Magi are portrayed as "chiefs from afar" who bring him "fox and beaver pelts" instead of the more familiar gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The English translation uses a traditional Algonquian name, Gitchi Manitou.

The postlude is by Canadian composer Denis Bedard, originally from Quebec, but now Music Director at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver. It's a wonderful set of variations on the tune "In Dulci Jubilo" or "Good Christian Friends Rejoice". You may find the tune at VU 35.

The musicians here at Robertson-Wesley convey our sincere blessings this Christmas-tide and for the New Year!

Worship Thanks

Scripture Readers: Donna Krucik, Timber Davies and Dawn Allan

Minister of Spiritual and Pastoral Care Development: Vacant
Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges
Director of Music: Tammy-Jo Mortensen
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