



*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2016 December 24

Christmas Eve

8:00PM



## Welcome and Inclusion

In response to God's call, we, the congregation of Robertson-Wesley United Church declare our commitment to opening our hearts and our church family to all people in our community, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstance. We recognize that many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore, as a compassionate and caring spiritual community we will stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

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*Friends in Christ*

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Prelude: *Advent Pastorale*, Rex Koury

Belinda Chiang, organist

Greeting

Welcome

Garth van Herwaarden, Robertson-Wesley Church Board

Hymn: *O Come All Ye Faithful*

***Voices United 60 vs 1, 3, & 5***

Call to Worship:

Voice 1: We've been called tonight to listen and see...

Voice 2: We've been called to leave the darkness which surrounds us and follow the light.

Congregation: **We've been called to rejoice! Our burdens have been lifted, that which holds us down is no longer.**

Voice 3: As we embrace that which has been given to us, as followers of Christ

Voice 1&2: no longer are we in darkness,

Congregation: **on us light has shined.**

Voice 3: For tonight a child has been born for us,

Voice 1: ...a son given to us,

Voice 3: authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named

Voice 2: Wonderful Counsellor

Voice 3: Mighty God

Voice 1: Prince of Peace

Congregation: **The world shall be transformed by the birth of this child.**

Voice 2: His Light

Voice 1&3: His love

Voice 1,2,&3: shall touch each heart

Congregation: **and bring us peace and understanding.**

Opening Prayer:

**Holy God, grateful for the gift of your son, Jesus, we come to praise and worship him. We heed the angel's call not to be afraid and celebrate, instead, the hope that comes with Jesus' birth in our lives once again. May he grow in our hearts bringing love, instruction, and calls to service; and we will respond with faithfulness and hope for a world transformed by his Gospel. Amen.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Karen Boivin, **Gathering** Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2012-2013, p. 32. Used with permission.

Solo: *In the Bleak Midwinter*, Gustav Holst Matthew McGuigan, bass

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7 People have seen a great light Ken Petrachuk

Lighting the Christ Candle:

As we light the Christ candle to signal peace and goodwill to all on earth, let us remember all who yearn for a word from God, and all who gaze into the night sky in longing and in hope, listening for an angel song.

**May the flame of God's eternal light find a welcome in every spirit this night.**

Hymn: *Silent Night*

*Voices United 67*

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God's Holy Word

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Scripture: Luke 2:1-14 • The Decree & the Shepherds Jessica Blake

Hymn: *Angels We Have Heard on High* *Voices United 38*  
(in English or French)

Scripture: Luke 2: 15-20 • Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus Jessica Blake

Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* *Voices United 64*

*The Precious Presence*

(Rev. Karen Bridges, Brooke Leifso, with Matthew McGuigan, flute and Belinda Chiang, piano playing *Ave Maria* by Charles Gounod)

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

*Voices United, p. 921*

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Grateful Response

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Offering: *Variations on a Polish Carol*, Franklin Ritter

*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 Art Studio. 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 55 v 4*)

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

Prayer of Gratitude

Candle Lighting

Hymn: *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

*Insert*

## Benediction

Postlude: *Toccata on “Adeste Fidelis” (O Come, All Ye Faithful)*

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### Music Notes

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Special thanks to Belinda Chiang for playing for this service this evening and to Matthew McGuigan for singing and playing. There are carols from many different centuries and from around the world. O Come All Ye Faithful was originally a Latin carol, Silent Night comes from Germany, and Angels We Have Heard on High is a French carol. O Little Town and Let There Be Peace on Earth come from the United States, and In the Bleak Mid-Winter (offering verse) comes from England.

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### Worship Thanks

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Readers: Ken Petrachuk and Jessica Blake and Brooke Leifso

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