



*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2017 December 24

Christmas Eve

8:00 PM



## 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

Gary Pecknold, Robertson-Wesley Church Board

Hymn: *O Come All Ye Faithful*

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

Call to Worship:

Come into the mystery of a holy night, long ago.

Come into the mystery still present and potent.

Come, leave behind your skepticism,  
drop any disappointments.

Come bravely as generations have before you.

O come let us adore, Christ our Lord!

**We come tonight, ready and open to receive the Love of Christ.<sup>1</sup>**

Opening Prayer:

**God of our imagination, we gather to hear anew the story of your dream come true in Jesus, yes, the babe born in Bethlehem. But the dream did not end there; it is being fulfilled among us today, wherever peace and hope hold sway and love's light dwells in each adult, child, and teen. Give to us the courage of Joseph and Mary, the wonder of waiting shepherds who tarry, and the voice of glorious angels as we sing. May our dreams be not of certain gifts, but of the One who with us lifts, the good news that this blessed babe will bring! Amen.<sup>2</sup>**

Handbell Solo: *Carol Medley*, arr. Ken Holland

Stuart Sladden

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

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Here, tonight, is the meeting place of heaven and earth.

**Here, God keeps God's appointment to meet God's people.**

Into our world as into Mary's womb,

**come, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Into the forgotten places as into the stable,

**come, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Into our darkness as into the Bethlehem night,

**come, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Elaine Bidgood Sveet, **Gathering** Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2017-2018, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Written by Michele Rowe, **Gathering** Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2017-2018, p. 33. Used with permission.

And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
**come, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Light of the Universe, the church shines with the glory of your  
Incarnation.

**As in the beginning you said, “Let there be light!” So tonight,  
your light comes to dwell in our midst that we may behold the  
glory of our God. With untiring voices may we proclaim your  
glory as we, with the angels, sing your praises throughout the  
entire universe.<sup>3</sup>**

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

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

Hymn: *What Child Is This?*

*Voices United 74*

Reflection: A Thrill of Hope

(Rev. Karen Bridges, Brooke Leifso, with artist Laura David Foster)

Reflective time with Music: *What Child Is This?*, Traditional, arr. Jim Findlay  
Jim Findlay, guitar

*As the music is played feel free to reflect on what has been created tonight and how you  
will rejoice at this thrill of hope which is found in the birth of Jesus Christ*

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.**

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<sup>3</sup> Written by Ivan Gregan, *Gathering* Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2011/2012, p. 34.

Prayer of Gratitude

Candle Lighting

Hymn: *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

*Insert*

Benediction

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

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### Music Notes

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Special thanks to Belinda Chiang for playing for this service this evening and to Stuart Sladden, handbell solo and Jim Findlay, guitar for adding their musical leadership and talent to this service. 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. Let There Be Peace on Earth come from the United States, and In the Bleak Mid-Winter (offering verse) comes from England. Christmas around the world!

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### Front Cover

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This picture was taken by Rev. Karen Bridges of the service last year.

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Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges  
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### *O Holy Night* – John Sullivan Dwight’s Version

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of our dear Saviour’s birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till he appear’d and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born; O night Divine, O night, O night Divine.

Let by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand. So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here come the wise men from the Orient land. The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger; in all our trials born to be our friend. He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger, behold your King! Before him lowly bend! Behold Him lowly bend!

Truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his gospel is peace. Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother; and in his name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise his holy name. Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever, his power and glory evermore proclaim. His power and glory evermore proclaim.