

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
DECEMBER 24, 2022 CHRISTMAS EVE

*Indicates stand as able

* *The live service will be broadcasted and recorded on YouTube, check your email for the link.*

***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.
Gloria 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.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2. Shepherds why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria 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.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Welcome & Centering for Worship:

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Good evening! The Holy Night is here and I am so happy to be spending it in this sanctuary with you. One of the best parts of Christmas for me is the chance to worship together and to hear once again the sacred stories of a night so long ago, when a special baby was born, a baby who would grow up to share the gift of God's love with the world – a gift that he urges each one of us to share extravagantly still today. It's a crazy busy time of year, and I love all the excitement of this season but I'm glad we could gather here tonight to leave the hustle and bustle behind for just a little while to gather with friends and family to remember together the baby who came to bring hope, peace, love and joy to a hurting world. Let us now gather in worship.

Lighting of the Candles: Acolytes: The Peck/Jones family

(Éric Hébert-Daly, Gathering ACE 2021-2022, p69. Used with permission.)

Enter, with your vulnerabilities and with your whole self just as you are.

We come seeking hope. *(The first Advent candle is lit)*

Come, with your brokenness.

We come seeking peace and healing. *(The second Advent candle is lit)*

Come, with your desire for new life.

We come seeking joy. *(The third Advent candle (pink) is lit.)*

Come, with your desire to love and to be beloved.

We come seeking love. We come to prepare the way of love.

(The fourth Advent candle is lit)

Come at God's invitation this night.

We come to welcome the Christ child.

Tonight, hope, peace, love, and joy are found in a manger and throughout the world. *(The Christ candle is lit.)*

Sung Response: A Candle is Burning (Verse 2) Voices United #6

(Words: Sandra Dean, 1986; Music: James R. Murray, 1887)

We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame;
Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
As God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) Rev. Lorrie Lowes

(Richard Bott, Gathering A/C/E 2018/19, p37. Used with permission.)

Why do we gather here on a night so beautifully dark and quiet?

To celebrate the birth of a child.

Who is the child that is born this night?

The One, the Christ, the God-With-Us.

Who are we, that we commemorate this birth?

His sisters and brothers and siblings, his disciples and friends.

Then, as family and friends, let us come together,

To tell stories and sing songs,

To celebrate and worship our God!

Opening Prayer: (Unison)

(George Allan, Gathering A/C/E 2017/2018, p 33. Used with permission.)

We strain to hear the angels sing, O God,

And we search for signs of shepherds coming to town.

Help us to notice, to be aware,

To accept, and to celebrate the joyous events of this night,

And enkindle within us the warmth that can only come

From your true Spirit and through Jesus Christ. Amen.

“God’s Great Idea – A Cosmic Christmas”

Written by Laura Alary

Performed by the children of Bells Corners United Church and friends.

(There are 4 congregational hymns and that will be sung as part of the pageant)

There Was a Child in Galilee (Dreaming Mary) - More Voices #134 v1-2

1. There was a child in Galilee who wandered wild along the sea.

A holy child, alone was she, and they called her Dreaming Mary.

And she dreamed, rejoicing in her saviour; She dreamed of justice for the poor.

She dreamed that kings oppressed no more when she dreamed, that Dreaming Mary.

2. One holy day an angel came with voice of wind and eyes of flame.

He promised blessed would be her name when he spoke to Dreaming Mary.

Then she spoke, rejoicing in her saviour. She spoke of justice for the poor.

She spoke that kings oppressed no more when she spoke, that Dreaming Mary.

O Little Town of Bethlehem - Voices United #64

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King and peace to all on earth.

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, hill 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.

Special Music: Silent is the Night – Althouse

BCUC Choir

I Am the Light of the World – Voices United #87

Refrain: “I am the light of the world! You people come and follow me!”
If you follow and love you’ll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

1. When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,
The work of Christmas is begun:
2. To find the lost and lonely one, To heal the broken soul with love,
To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
To feel the earth below, the sky above!
4. To bring hope to every task you do, To dance at a baby’s new birth,
To make music in an old person’s heart,
And sing to the colours of the earth!

Ministry of Music: Bethlehem Alleluia – Mengel

BCUC Choir

A Christmas Prayer

Rev. Lorrie

Tonight, for our Prayers of the People,
I am offering the words of Robert Louis Stevenson. Let us pray:

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the angels,
The gladness of the shepherds,
And worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
And open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
And good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing, which Christ brings
And teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us
Happy to be thy children
And Christmas evening bring us
To our beds with grateful thoughts
Forgiving and forgiven
For Jesus sake
Amen.

Special Music: Then the Baby Cried – Schram/Williams **CGS/Bell Canto**

Invitation to Offer:

Rev. Lorrie

In this season of gifts, we rejoice in the receiving, of course, but we also find great joy in the giving – shopping for just the perfect thing for each person we love, thinking of what they need and also what they dream of. Tonight, let us find that same joy as we offer our gifts to help the work of the church fill the needs and the dreams of this hurting world. We are not passing the offering plates tonight as we continue to follow health protocols, but you will find those plates on the table in the narthex. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or using the mail slot by the kitchen door, or by e-transfer. Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

****Offertory Hymn: Verse 4 - In the Bleak Midwinter*** **Voices United #55**

(Words: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1872; Music: Gustav Theodor Holst, 1906)

**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 him my heart.**

***Offertory Prayer: (Unison)**

(George Allan, *Gathering A/C/E 2019/20*, p41. Used with permission)

We thank you, O God,
For this wonderful night of awesome gifts!
Together, as your family, we welcome your gifts
Of hope and peace, joy and love,
Brought to us in the birth of the Christ child.
May we share these gifts generously with all,
Not only today, but forever. Amen.

***Passing of the Light: Silent Night - Voices United #67**

guitar: Will Wightman

1. 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.

3. 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.

2. 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.

***Sending Forth & Blessing: Rev. Lorrie**

May the gifts of Christmas extend all through the year.
May we share the gifts of Christmas in how we live and be with others.
May God bless you and keep.
Go in the peace of Christ, always travelling in the light. Amen.

***Christmas Wishes: Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas – arr. Hayes BCUC Choir**