

# Quispamsis United Church

December 24th, 2022 - Christmas Eve Late

*Feasting in Wonder*

**Liturgical Colour:** Blue/Purple

**Presider:** Rev. Richard Bowley

**Director of Music:** Stephen Alexander

**Reader:** Leslie Reid

**Centering Passage:** *Say among the nations, 'The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity.' Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.*

*-Psalm 96:10-13*

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## GATHERING TOGETHER

**Opening Music** Carol Medley

**Welcome & Lighting of Affirm Candle**

**Acknowledgement of Territories**

**Celebrations & Announcements**

**Introit:**

A Candle is Burning

VU 6 (vs 5)

**We honor Messiah with Christ's candle 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.**

**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Gathering (Responsive):**

The Lord of the Star be with you

**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to the God who works miracles, and embraces the lowly.**

Let us give thanks to the One who is born anew this day.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

**Opening Prayer:**

O wondrous God of the stars, we come tonight with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives. We hear the names “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Prince of Peace,” and we are in awe. You have touched the earth this night with your unconditional love. Touch us— touch our hearts and minds and souls. May we never tire of this story. May we never take it for granted. Make this night magical again. Amen.

**Hymn:**

O Come All Ye Faithful

VU 60

**O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,**

**O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him, born the King of angels:**

**[Refrain:]**

**O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**God of God,  
light of light,**

**lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb,  
very God, begotten, not created: [Refrain]**

**Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God in the highest: [Refrain]**

**See, how the shepherds  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; [Refrain]**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;  
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: [Refrain]**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving (Responsive):**

It's Christmas Eve again, God. It is almost over and we feel like we're barely ready for it. The day has been full of places to be and things to do, whether it is work, parties, last minute wrapping, or worse, buying of gifts. We're in a whirlwind of activity. In the midst of the busyness we sometimes miss what it is all about— you coming to earth—Emmanuel—God-with-us.

Help us to slow down in these last moments before the dawning of your glory. Help us hear anew your promises of hope and salvation and love as we sing songs of praise. Forgive us for forgetting the magic of this night, for focusing on ourselves and what we need to do instead of on the miracle of Jesus' birth. Rock us out of our complacency. Let us hear angel voices, see shepherds hurrying to a stable, feel the baby's soft breath on our cheeks, and ponder in our hearts what all this means for the world, for us.

And so as a people blessed, forgiven and called we rejoice with all your people of every time and place, and with angels and archangels, to proclaim the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
God of vulnerable love;  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Hymn:**

Once in Royal David's City  
**Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle-shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed.  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.**

VU 62

**He came down to earth from heaven,  
who, with God is over all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall.  
There among the poor and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**

**For he is our lifelong pattern;  
daily, when on earth he grew;  
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,  
tears and smiles like us he knew.  
Thus he feels for all our sadness,  
and he shares in all our gladness.**

**And our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love;  
for that child who seemed so helpless  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.**

## **LISTENING FOR TRUTH**

**Reading:** Luke 2:1-15

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!' 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.'

**Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy (Responsive):**

A mother and father seek rest for the night after a long journey

**their Hope is not in vain, but a barn is the best they can find.**

The night is quiet now, like the whole world is waiting

**because God -Christ - is so close, we can feel that Holy Presence just on the edge of our next breath.**

But in the distance we can hear the faint songs of angels growing in intensity as the moment approaches,

**and in their songs we hear of such Joy as the world has never known.**

The world - not ready, yet long waiting - stands at the cradle. Kings wait with shepherds, the rich alongside the poor.

**all stand equal in a Love that is poured out on the world, other all and given freely to each**

*[light HOPE, PEACE, JOY, & LOVE candles]*

And now that moment has come. Born in us and in the world is a light that cannot go out.

**Born in us and in the world is a light to push back the darkness.**

*[light CHRIST candle]*

*silent reflection*

**Anthem**      Midst the Deep Silence (Senior Choir)

**Message**      An Old Story Made New

**Hymn:**                      Angels We Have Heard on High                      VU 38  
                                    **Angels we have heard on high**  
                                    **sweetly singing o'er the plains,**  
                                    **and the mountains in reply,**  
                                    **echoing their joyous strains.**

**[Refrain:]**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?**  
**Why your joyous strains prolong?**  
**What the gladsome tidings be**  
**which inspire your heavenly song? [Refrain]**

**Come to Bethlehem and see**  
**Christ whose birth the angels sing;**  
**come, adore on bended knee**  
**Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]**

**See him in a manger laid,**  
**whom the choirs of angels praise;**  
**Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,**  
**while our hearts in love we raise. [Refrain]**

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### Invitation to The Table:

We come to the table late, but just in time for the feast that awaits, and we come to celebrate the greatest gift we could receive, Emmanuel, God with us. Christ calls us to the table to share in the Holy Sacrament of Communion. We gather at the table just as Christ and his disciples did. And so, all you who are hungry, before you is the feast of the most high. All those who thirst, here is the cup of blessing, waiting to quench the thirst of the world.

For communion this night, you will be invited to come forward, to seek the table even as we seek the stable. Please take the bread and the juice back to your seat, and at the appropriate time we can take in the grace of the elements together.

Know that you are welcome here, regardless of the road that brought you to this place. Because though this table sits within these four walls, it is not the table of Quispamsis United Church, nor even is this the table of the United Church of Canada. This is the table of our brother and saviour Jesus Christ, who welcomes all of a variety of age, race, gender, or sexuality. You who hunger for the Good News, may eat. You who thirst for justice, may drink.

### Remembering the Meal (Responsive)

And on a night, much like this one, a star tells of a birth, but also of a life that will be:

Of a night in which Jesus was betrayed,

**where he took bread, and gave thanks;**

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

**"Take eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."**

And after supper he took the cup, gave thanks,

**and gave it for all to drink, saying:**

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As we reflect on the life that was and the hope of life yet to be, we shout with praise the mystery that is our faith:

**Christ has died;**

**Christ is risen;**

**Christ will come again.**

### How Can I Give?

1/ If you have internet banking, you can E-transfer funds to QUC by sending the funds to [QUC@nb.aibn.com](mailto:QUC@nb.aibn.com). Do not forget to send a separate email with the answer to your security question.

2/ Go to [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org) and search for Quispamsis United Church. You can give to the church by using your credit card. The address says Gondola Point, do not worry, that is us.

3/ Mail or deliver your giving's to our treasurer, Brion Crossman, 22 Country Crescent, Quispamsis, E2E 1T2

4/ You can sign up for a pre-authorized remittance (PAR) donation which comes out of your bank account or credit card once a month. You can cancel this at any time. Contact Brion Crossman at 849-6003 for details.

5/ if you come for in-person worship, there is a plate as you enter the church where you can place your offering.

6/ As we consider the greater work of the United Church consider giving to Mission and Service Fund through your regular offering or at <https://united-church.ca>

<b>Offertory Dedication Hymn:</b>	In the bleak midwinter	VU 55 (vs 4)
	<b>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.</b>	

#### **Blessing the Gifts (Responsive):**

God of Life that cannot end and Love that has no limit, send your Spirit upon what we give and upon these elements. May the gifts of our time, talent, and treasure be used for the healing of your world, and may the bread and the cup that we share this day give us the strength to carry the newborn Christ with us into the world. In this hope and as your people we praise you saying:

**Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours,  
God most holy, now and forever.**

#### **Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer**

**Anthem:** Torches (Senior Choir)

#### **Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup**

The body of Christ, bread for a journey newly begun.

The cup of the covenant, renewed at the birth of each new day.

## **Sharing of the Bread and the Cup (Responsive)**

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Come now for all has been made ready.

*sharing the meal*

## **SENDING FORTH**

**Lighting the Lights:**

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
**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.**

VU 64

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.

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessed gift of heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him,  
still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in;  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels



**the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

**Commissioning & Benediction (Responsive):**

Go now in wonder. Go to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find no joy, and comfort to a world that is greatly in need.

**We go with the songs of angels in our ears, and the love of God in our hearts. We go to spread the word—the babe of Bethlehem is born for all.**

**Closing Hymn:**

Silent Night

VU 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.**

**Closing Music** Joy to the World – arr. Hugo Gehrke