

Applewood United Church
an Affirming Congregation
Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve with Communion
(*please stand in body or in spirit)
Bold words are for all to share

Music for Gathering

Territorial Acknowledgement and Announcements

We understand that the land on which we live, work and worship is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The territory is mutually covered by the "Dish with One Spoon" Wampum Belt agreement. In the spirit of reconciliation, we commit to building relationships with all created beings, those who were here before, those who have settled, and those who continue to settle on this land. We commit to partnering with our Indigenous neighbours in being stewards and caretakers of God's Creation. Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we seek to live as reconciled people through our respect for, and our learning and understanding of, our Indigenous siblings.

Centering Music: "See amid the Winter's Snow" VU 76 verse 1

* Call to Worship and Opening Prayer: (*responsive*)

One: The night has come, full of mystery.

**All: The angels sing their song of joy,
the stars dance in celebration.**

One: The shepherds are the first to hear the news.

**All: The promised babe has been born
and God's love lives in the world.**

One: The night has come, and so have we -

**All: to worship, to pray, to sing like the angels,
dance like the stars and be awed like the shepherds.**

One: On this Holy Night, let us pray together:

**All: God of wonder and joy,
tonight we rejoice that the soles of your feet
have touched the earthly realm.**

**In this time of worship, we remember that the forgotten places and the ones on
the margins**

have been given a special place in the story.

Tonight, the people of earth

**welcome the Child of heaven.
You have come among us, God,
you are one of us.
We sing our praise and marvel at mystery,
as we give thanks for the Bethlehem baby,
God-with-us, Jesus Christ. Amen**

* Opening Hymn: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" VU 60 vs. 1, 3 & 4

Lighting the Christ Candle

One: Tonight, we remember our advent journey

Two: to kneel at the manger.

All: Illuminating God, your love In Jesus is born into the world and into our lives once again tonight.

Help us to shine with the love of Christ, to bring God's hope, peace, joy, love and justice to our world.

Amen

Sung response: "Joy to the World" VU 59 verses 1, 2, 4

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Musical Reflection "Christmas Peace Canon"

Christian Scripture: Luke 2:1-7 *The Inclusive Bible*

Reflection *The Women*

Carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" VU 64 verses 1 and 2

Christian Scripture: Luke 2:8-14 *The Inclusive Bible*

Reflection *A Report from the Heavenly Host*

Carol: "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" VU 48

Christian Scripture: Luke 2:15-20 *The Inclusive Bible*

Reflection *Cleaning the Stable*

Carol: "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy" VU 73

Completing the Nativity

Offering of Music: "The King of Us All"

*** Hymn of Dedication:** *tune 'Good King Wenceslas'*

**God of light and God of love, God born in a stable,
here we bring our gifts to share in loving celebration.
Now we witness Love's rebirth, hearts and minds rejoicing!
Bless the givers and the gifts, signs of light and promise.**

*** Offering Prayer** *(together)*

**All: Giving and Gracious God,
may our gifts reflect your
gift of childlike wonder;
your gift of radiant hope;
your gift of peace
which passes all understanding;
and your gift of joy which cannot be contained.
With these gifts, we bring ourselves, O God,
in response to the greatest gift of all—
the Babe of Bethlehem. Amen**

Sacrament of Communion

Christmas Eve

One: God be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them up to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to God.

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

One: God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace to recall your vision of hope for all people and for your world.

Two: Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child. Through your prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice. In Jesus, you revealed your way of forgiveness and love. Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—your promise for the restoration of all creation.

One: As we gather to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus, the child born into obscurity, amid fear and uncertainty. We remember the fragility of that revelation, as well as the hope he stirred and imagination he inspired, and we sing...

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 1*

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow; snow on snow.
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

Two: We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern: temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker; the author and finisher of our faith.

We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death, and we sing...

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 2*

**Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign; in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.**

One: On that last night with his friends and followers, in the midst of great confusion and fear, Jesus broke bread with them, saying, "This is my body, which I give for you and for all. When you eat this, remember me."

Two: With a blessing, he took the cup and offered it to them saying: "This cup is God's covenant which is given for all. When you drink this, remember me."

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 3*

**Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day, a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.**

One: Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God. Bless us, these gifts, and what we do here, so that we might sing your song of love for your people and for your world.

Prayers of the People

Two: God of All, we pray for your people. For those who are afraid and oppressed, may you give courage. For those suffering conflict and fear, may you bring peace. For those who long for food and water, may they be filled. For those who long for justice, may it be fulfilled.

We pray also for ourselves and our community.

That those in hospital and in care feel your strength.

That those who are alone and anxious feel you near. That those who are ill in body and in spirit be comforted. That our friends and family be blessed by healing and love.

Two: Hear our prayers, O God,

All: and in your mercy, answer.

One: We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

All: *sung, VU 55 verse 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.

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

*(If you are worshipping in the sanctuary, you may come forward to receive the elements. If you prefer to stay seated, they will be brought to you – you may wish to respond to the words "Jesus Christ the True Vine" and "Jesus Christ the Bread of Life" with the words "**amen**" or "**thanks be to God**" If you are participating on ZOOM, this would be the time to take bread and juice, and if with another you could serve one another.)*

Prayer after Communion:

All: God of shepherds and kings, you gather us by the light of the star of promise. You lead us not only to hope for the future, but to trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place.

Guide us this night, by the light of that same star. Lead us to the mangers of this world, where uncertainty is met with the renewal life and the transformation of this world is most deeply felt in love, one with another.

Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Communion Liturgy written by Rev. Andrew O'Neil, St. Paul's United Church, Riverview, NB and posted at adventunwrapped.ca Adapted and used with permission

* Closing Carol: "Silent Night" VU 67 (*with candles*)

* Commissioning/Benediction

Music for Scattering