

# Cochrane Street United Church

81 Cochrane Street ♦ St. John's, NL ♦ A1C 3L7



**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent (LOVE)**

Guest Presider: Rev. Karen Bursey

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Eric Hillier

Minister of Music: Patricia Young

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*Poinsettias in the sanctuary are from June & Barry Hatfield and Family*

## **GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

\*please stand as you are able

\*\*bold is in unison

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.

### **\*PRELUDE:**

### **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Please see your congregational email for detailed announcements.

**\*INTROIT: O Come All Ye Faithful**

**# 60 VU**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: (loud) LISTEN!

**All: (loud) LISTEN!**

One: (whisper) Listen!

**All: (whisper) Listen! (*silent pause*)**

God comes to us in the voice of others'

**God speaks in the ordinary and in the mundane:**

In an insignificant town, in minor acts and in words of love,  
in silly, spontaneous songs, in a chat between kin.

**God, open our ears and spirits to each other,  
where we can listen and hear your voice.**

### **LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH**

Readers: The Reynolds Family

1: What do you do when an angel interrupts your day?

2: You stop.

1: What do you do when an angel speaks?

2: You listen.

1: An angel interrupted Joseph's dream.

2: He stopped. He listened.

- 1: The angel had a message for Joseph, who was engaged to the pregnant Mary: "The baby is God's Son."  
2: But Joseph said, "I can't handle such a challenge."  
1: The angel said, "Have courage. God will be with you."  
2: Remembering Zechariah and Elizabeth, we light this candle of Possibility.

**All: In the circle of God's light, all things are possible.**

*(Light one blue candle.)*

- 1: Remembering Mary, we light this candle of Risk.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we dare to risk.**

*(Light a second blue candle.)*

- 2: Remembering the shepherds, we light this candle of Joy.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we live with joy.**

*(Light the pink candle.)*

- 1: Remembering Joseph, we light this candle of Courage.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we live with courage.**

*(Light a fourth blue candle.)*

## **SUNG RESPONSE**

Angel, from the realms of glory, speak to Joseph in his dreams.  
You who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
come and worship, come and worship,  
worship in this Advent time.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE – DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>**

Readers: The Reynolds Family

- 1: What do you do when an angel interrupts your day?  
2: You stop.  
1: What do you do when an angel speaks?  
2: You listen.  
1: A multitude of angels interrupted the quiet Bethlehem night.  
2: People stopped. People listened.  
1: The angels had a message for the world.  
2: "A baby is born who will change the world."  
1: But the people said, "How can a baby change the world?"  
2: The angel said, "Pay attention to this child. He will show you God's way."  
1: Remembering Zechariah and Elizabeth, we lit this candle of Possibility.

**All: In the circle of God's light, all things are possible.**

- 2: Remembering Mary, we lit this candle of Risk.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we dare to risk.**

1: Remembering the shepherds, we lit this candle of joy.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we live with joy.**

2: Remembering Joseph, we lit this candle of Courage.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we live with courage.**

1: Remembering Jesus, we light this candle of the Way of Jesus.

**All: In the circle of God's light, we live the Way of Jesus.**

*(Light the white candle.)*

## **SUNG RESPONSE**

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

## **PRAYER OF APPROACH:**

**Holy God, now in the silence,**

**whisper of joy which comes into every life. Now in the  
comfort of carols, sing of hope which takes away the  
despair which envelops us.**

**Now in familiar words heard anew, speak to us of grace which is  
born into barren lives, of peace which is birthed in war's  
shadowed fears.**

**Now leaning next to those who have always been a part of us,  
and those from whom we have been apart,  
remind us of your heart which always accepts us,  
always welcomes us.**

**Now in the love which is ours forever, draw us closer to your heart,  
so we can be surprised by wonder, swaddled in serenity,  
embraced by tenderness.**

**Now touch us once again with the fulfillment of Christmas. Amen**

**\*HYMN: Little Town of Bethlehem (vs. 1, 4) # 64 VU**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

**We watch for packages to arrive and Christmas cards to be  
delivered, but we do not keep our eyes open for God's  
coming.**

**We expect our Christmas 'wish list' to be filled, but we hope you do  
not expect to transform our lives. We notice our neighbours'  
decorations, but we do not notice the little, the least, and the  
lost walking down our streets.**

**Forgive us, Saving God, for our misplaced priorities.  
May we watch for your coming,**

may we reach out to those in need,  
may we wait for hope to come, even as Jesus Christ,  
our Lord and Saviour, arrives to live in our hearts.

*Silence is kept*

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The good news is made known to all people:

Christ Jesus was born to save us from our sins.

**Glory and praise to the only wise God, who fills us with healing  
and hope. Amen.**

## **A DECLARATION OF FAITH AT CHRISTMAS**

**I believe in Jesus,**

**and in the beauty of the Gospel that began in Bethlehem.**

**I believe in him whose spirit glorified a little town;**

**of whose coming only shepherds and Magi saw the sign,  
and for whom the crowded inn could find no room.**

**I believe in him whom kings of earth ignored**

**and the proud could never understand;  
whose paths were among the common people;  
whose welcome came from people of hungry hearts.**

**I believe in him who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible;**

**whose cradle was a mother's arms;  
whose home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth;  
who looked at others and made them see**

**what his love saw in them;**

**who by his love brought sinners back to purity  
and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.**

**I confess my everlasting need of God;**

**the need for forgiveness for greed and selfishness,  
the need of life for empty souls,  
the need of love for hearts grown cold.**

**I Acknowledge the glory of all that is like Christ;**

**the steadfastness of friends,  
the blessedness of homes,  
the beauty of compassion,  
the miracle of many hearts made king at Christmas,  
the course of those who dare to resist  
all passion, hate and war.**

**I believe that only by love expressed shall the earth be purified.**

**I acknowledge in Christ, a faith that looks beyond our present evil,  
and I pray that this redemption may begin in us now.**

\*HYMN:

Silent Night

# 67 VU

LEARNING TOGETHER (*Children's Story*)

OFFERING INVITATION & VOLUNTARY

\*OFFERTORY HYMN VU #81: As With Gladness (vs. 3)

3 As they offered gifts most rare  
at that manger crude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Today, O God, we are reminded that you are with us, as near to us as our own breath. May these gifts show our care. May they be part of your justice, touch lives, and change hearts. Amen.

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Our God, by whose command time runs its course: bless our impatience, perfect our faith, and, while we await the fulfillment of your promises, grant us hope in your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 9: 2–7

Reader: Charlie Pope

The Word of the Lord – Thanks be to God

\*HYMN: Gentle Mary laid her child

# 46 VU

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 2: 1–20

Reader: Jalna M<sup>c</sup>Master *Shepherds & angels & Birth of Jesus*

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – Thanks be to God

ANTHEM: In the Bleak Midwinter, *by Darke*

SERMON:

SOLO: Who Would Imagine A King, *sung by Abra Whitney*

## HOLY COMMUNION

\*HYMN:                    In the Bleak Midwinter (vs. 1 & 2)                    # 55 VU

May God be with you.

**and may God be with you.**

People of God, open your hearts.

**We open our hearts to the One who comes to us.**

People of God, give thanks to the Living God.

**We praise the One who offers comfort and peace to us.**

Acclamation, thanksgiving, songs of joy are the gifts we offer to you, God of all the ages. You uttered the Word and mountains burst forth; your Breath blew upon the waters, and stirred life into being; you reached down and shaped us in your own image, from the dusty paths you trod.

In our impatience, we refused to wait for your glory, and rushed into sin's sweet embrace. Yet you were willing to outwit our foolish wisdom, and outwait our childish tantrums, sending the prophets to cry out of your desire for us to return to you.

But we continued to reject their inviting words of comfort. Finally, when we continued to cling to death's strong hand, you clothed your Word with human flesh, that we might meet you face to face.

**So with those who have waited for you in every time and place,  
with those who seek to live faithfully for you in these days,  
we lift our songs of hope to you:**

*(verse 3 of "In the Bleak Midwinter")*

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,

Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;

But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,

Worshipped the Beloved, with a kiss.

All holiness is yours, Righteous God, and blessed is your Word for whom we wait, Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace. When we had lost our way, he came to straighten out the path to you. When we wept at our being lost, he came to comfort us. When we had fallen hopelessly at the feet of death, he gathered us up in his arms to carry us home to you.

**As we come to this Table, we remember the mystery of the One  
who died that we might live forever:**

*(verse 4 of "In the Bleak Midwinter")*

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.

As your Spirit moves upon the gifts of the bread and the cup, may we be touched with unexpected hope and the power of patience.

As we wait for Christ's return, we would fill the empty dreams of the world with your vision of peace and wholeness; we would feed the lost with the bread of hope; we would gently lead the exiled back to your Kingdom.

Then, when the end of time comes, and our waiting is over, we will gather around your Table in the new heaven and new earth, where righteousness is our friend and justice lives next door, and you are our God forever and ever, Creator of goodness, Friend of the lost, Spirit of joy.

We pray as Jesus taught: (VU #921)

## **FRACTION AND DISTRIBUTION**

### **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

**Life-giving God, may we, who share Christ's body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world.**

**Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation will live to praise your name. Amen**

**\*HYMN:**

**Joy to the World**

**# 59 VU**

### **PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE**

**Holy God, Dreamer of dreams,  
We offer Cochrane Street United Church to you.  
We are your people, this is your church.  
We come to you seeking your guidance,  
your purpose, your vision.  
Align our will with yours,  
so that we will be willing to do  
whatever it takes to carry out your plan.**



**We ask you to break through in new ways in our church.  
Show us the great ministry you have in store for us.  
Help us dream your dreams.  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, giving us the vision,  
boldness, and confidence to do all that you call us to do.  
Amen**

## **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

**\*SUNG BENEDICTION VU #73: The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy (vs. 1)**

1 The virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
and they say that his name is Jesus.  
    He come from the glory, (*clap, clap*)  
        he come from the glorious kingdom.  
    He come from the glory, (*clap, clap*)  
        he come from the glorious kingdom.  
    Oh, yes! believer! Oh, yes! believer!  
    He come from the glory, (*clap, clap*)  
        he come from the glorious kingdom.

## **POSTLUDE**

*Please take your bulletins with you when you leave the pew.*

# **MEMORIALS**

*In memory of Loved Ones,  
From Cheryl and Byron Briggs and Family.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday,	DECEMBER 24	11AM CHRISTMAS EVE <b>COMMUNION</b> CSUC – Rev. Karen Bursej
Sunday,	DECEMBER 31	No Worship Service at CSUC
Sunday,	JANUARY 7	Rev. Peggy Johnson
Wednesday,	JANUARY 10	Putting Away Christmas Decorations
Sunday,	JANUARY 14	Bert Riggs
Sunday,	JANUARY 21	Bert Riggs
Sunday,	JANUARY 28	Rev. Peggy Johnson

### **ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH**

extends to the congregation of Cochrane Street  
a warm welcome and invitation to join them for any and all  
of their worship services during the advent season this December.

December 24	11:00 am Communion; <b>4:30 pm Family Service;</b> 7:00 pm Candlelight Service
December 31	<b>11:00 am Guitar Group;</b> NO Eventide

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** If you wish to have an announcement included in the bulletin, please have it into the office by Thursday at noon.

**NO SCENTS MAKES GOOD SENSE!** A friendly reminder that members of our congregation are sensitive to scented products. Thank you for helping create a safe environment in which we can all fully participate.

**PASTORAL COVERAGE FOR CSUC:** Rev. Peggy Johnson is covering all pastoral emergencies and funerals. She can be reached at (709) 685-9223 or by email at: [peggyjoanjohnson@hotmail.com](mailto:peggyjoanjohnson@hotmail.com). If Rev. Peggy is not available, please contact Paula Reynolds at [pt2reynolds@gmail.com](mailto:pt2reynolds@gmail.com).

### **OFFICE HOURS DURING CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS:**

TUE, DEC 26	Out of Office	TUE, JAN 2	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
THU, DEC 28	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	THU, JAN 4	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
FRI, DEC 29	9:00 am – 3:30 pm	FRI, JAN 5	9:00 am – 3:30 pm

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:** As per Canada Revenue Agency, only contributions received before December 31 will be included on 2023 official receipts.

**BRIDGES TO HOPE ITEM OF THE MONTH:** For each month of 2023, Bridges To Hope will be suggesting a much needed food item for members of our partner congregations to consider for donation. For the month of **DECEMBER**, we are suggesting canned meat. Other non-perishable items are also welcome! Stay tuned for monthly helpful suggestions in 2024!

**2024 CHURCH CALENDARS** : There are 11 left at a cost of \$10.00. If anyone is interested, please contact the Church Office ([info@cochranestreetuc.com](mailto:info@cochranestreetuc.com), 722-3023,) to place an order.

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS – REMOVING & STORING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:**  
Council is seeking volunteers to assist in removing and storing Christmas Decorations from the Sanctuary on Wednesday, **January 10, 2024, 10:00am**. Anyone who wishes to volunteer and help out is asked to be at the church at 10am. Many hands make light work.

**FIRST DAWN EASTERN EDGE OFFICE and BOOKSTORE** on 320 Elizabeth Avenue will be closed for Christmas break beginning Friday, December 22, 2023, and reopening Tuesday January 2, 2024. In the event of emergency, please contact (709) 691-3524.





## **CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS**

*In Memory of Loved Ones, From June Knight*

*In Memory of brother Gordon Bursey & wife Peggy, and  
Mother & Father, Lewis & Leah, From Douglas Bursey*

*In Memory of Horwood & Helen Guzzwell  
and Bill & Ann Bourne, From Anonymous*

*In Loving Memory of a Special and Dear Friend:  
Margaret Elaine (Lewis) Dakins, From Ian Barrett*

*In Memory of The Drodge Family, From Betty Barnes*

*In Loving Memory of Helen & Horwood Guzzwell,  
and Anne & Bill Bourne,  
From nieces, Ruth and Catherine Ruth Davidge*

*In Memory of Mother and Father, Irene & Walter Tucker,  
From Linda Facey*

*In Loving Memory of Mom & Dad, Violet & Alex Reid,  
and Brother Ted Reid, From June & Barry Hatfield and Family*

*In Memory of my brother, Ken, who died on Christmas day 2016  
and my mother, Sonia, who died last year on December 23.*

*They are always remembered at Christmas.*

*From Tim Reynolds.*

