

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In memory of grandparents Levi & Jesse Drodge and parents Mother Olive Barnes & stepfather Ralph Barnes from Olive Barnes.

In memory of Rev. Fred Bradbury and Lorraine Critch from Carolyn Bradbury and Gerald White.

In memory of Irene Tucker from husband, Walter Tucker, and daughters, Linda Facey and Marilyn Pardy and families.

In memory of mother and father Leah and Lewis Bursey and brother Gordon Bursey by Doug Bursey.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Downhome Publishing Inc.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from The McMaster Family.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Maynie Frampton.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Eldred and Louise Butt.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Bea & Charlie Pope.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Laura Baker.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Joan O'Leary.

In memory of Lorraine Critch from Mary Andrews.

In memory of Robert Cooze from Paula & Tim Reynolds.

In loving memory of Ken Reynolds, son, brother, husband and father love Sonia, Tim, Paula, GERALYN and Leah.

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PRELUDE

*SUNG INTROIT:

- 1 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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
- 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: R

*WELCOME

*PASSING OF THE PEACE:

Let our hospitality towards each other reflect God's love.
The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

REFLECTIVE MUSIC #6: A Candle is Burning

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 WORSHIP:

A boy has been born for us;
A child has been given to us.
And his name shall be called

**Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God,
Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace.**

Once we were no people;
Now we are God's people.

Once we walked in darkness;
Now we have seen a great light.

PRAYER OF APPROACH:

**O God of angel song,
shepherd surprise, stable warmth, and birthing cry:
dawn in our darkness,**

**sing through our silence,
surprise us with wonder and with joy this holy season.
O come to us, Emmanuel. Amen.**

***HYMN # 59: Joy To The World**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Allanah, Will and Carrie

Reader: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 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" (Luke 2:1,3-4).

Reader: We light this candle as a symbol of the prophets who renew our faith and remind us of what may be. (Light Purple Candle)

We light this candle as a symbol of the shepherds, agents of the gospel and redeemers of the world. (Light purple Candle)

We light this candle as a symbol of Mary, mother of God, bearer of the Way. (Light Rose Candle)

We light this candle as a reminder of Joseph. (Light purple candle)

Reader: Tonight, angels far and near sing tender lullabies; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

People: Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth – regardless of circumstances – reminds us of the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. And now we know... He is born and nothing will ever be the same!

(Light the Christ Candle at the centre)

Hymn: Hope is a Star vs. 5

Jesus is born, alive on this night,

sharing his love 'till all darkness is bright

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

(words by Miriam Bowlby)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of truth and grace,
in Jesus Christ you came among us
as a light shining in the darkness.
We confess that we have not welcomed the light,
or trusted the good news to be good.
We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst,
expecting little, and hoping for less.
Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,
so that we may receive the fullness of your grace,
and live in the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

Fear not, I bring you tidings of great joy for all people!
Christ our Saviour is born. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen

CHILDREN'S TIME

***HYMN 44: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear**

OFFERING INVITATION & OFFERTORY VOLUNTARY

***OFFERTORY HYMN #55 vs. 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

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Creator of Joy,
we wait with excitement and impatience.
Surround us with your stillness,
quiet us with your Spirit,
that we might be ready to receive the light of the world.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 62:6 – 12

Reader: Emily Keeping

The word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1 – 20

The word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

SOLO: O Holy Night – Alana Fraize

SERMON:

***HYMN # 76: See Amid the Winter's Snow**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

SUNG INVITATION TO COMMUNION

(Tune #36: Angles From the Realms of Glory)

All who come with hearts confessing

Thus approach this table now.

Let us with the Saviour's blessing,

In God's presence humbly bow.

come and worship, come and worship,

worship Christ, the newborn King.

May the bread of life enfold us,

May the wine instil the love

Of the Christ child, long foretold us,

Now proclaimed from heaven above.

come and worship, come and worship,

worship Christ, the newborn King.

One: God is with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give God our thanks and praise!

All: Alleluia!

One: Blessed are you, God of all!

From the very beginning –

from before there was a beginning – you were.

You loved all into being – in a God-moment, a point, a flash, an AHA!

And from that moment all creation has expanded – grown. Alleluia!

All: Alleluia! Amen!

Two: In love, you created everything that is,
from the smallest to the largest: earth, air, fire, water –and life!
Life in all its shapes and sizes,
some we can only begin to imagine.
You looked at all life and you celebrated!

One: And you created us – humankind –
people of every shape and size, young and old,
with our wondering & our wandering, with our fears & our hopes,
with our joys & our pains... and you loved us.
And you love us! Alleluia

All: Alleluia! Amen!

Two: So often, we wandered away from your hopes for us:
that we might seek justice, that we might love each other,
that we might love you.

Over and over again, you sent teachers –
grandmothers & grandfathers, prophets, priests and storytellers,
to call us back to your love.

One: When the time was right, you sent the Christ to live with us.
To know, in the way that we know,
every moment of every day – of what it means to be human.
In Jesus, questions were asked and answers were given,
tears were shed, laughter burst out –
and the cry for your lived love was shared again,
“God’s kingdom is coming! God’s kingdom is here!”
In the vulnerability of a tiny baby,
born of a young mother and a rough carpenter,
worshipped by the world’s least and the world’s powerful,
he called us back to your love.
Christ calls us back to your love. Every moment. Every day.

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy One,
God of love and life –
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the one who comes in God’s Name!
Hosanna in the highest!**

Two: We remember that on the night that Jesus was betrayed, taken and tried, he also sat down for a meal of celebration – a meal remembering your saving Love. He gathered with his friends and disciples, like we gather, tonight, and like many of us will gather tomorrow. He took the bread and blessed it, saying, “Blessed are you, God of all Creation, who brings the grain from the earth.” Then he took the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, “Take this. Eat it – all of you. This is my body, given for you.” He took the cup and blessed it, saying, “Blessed are you, God of all Creation, who brings the fruit from the earth!” Then he gave it to all who had gathered, saying, “Take this. This is the cup of my promise – my blood shed for you and for the world, that sins would be forgiven.” “Each time you eat bread, and drink... remember me.”

One: So, on this night, when we remember his birth, we remember, too, the gifts of his life, his death, and his life evermore. We share the words that he gave to us, praying to God who is like our Mother, like –

**All: Our Father, in heaven,
holy is your name.
We ask that your kingdom would come
here, on earth, as it is in your heaven.
Give us, today, what we need.
Forgive us our sins –
as you help us to forgive those
who have sinned against us.
Save us from all that would harm us.
Keep us from all that is evil.
Your kingdom. Your power. Your glory.
Now and forever. Let it be.**

Two: Holy One, on this Christmas night,
we ask that your Spirit would transform us, and these gifts,
that we might be Christ's body, alive to your Life! Alleluia!
All: Alleluia! Amen!

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of Wine

The body of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the bread of life.

The blood of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the cup of blessing.

The Prayer After Communion

With this taste of the Bread of Life,

With this taste of the Cup of Love,

Send us into the world, God –

So that we might whisper of your coming,

So that we might live your birth,

Now and forever. Amen.

Communion Liturgy by: Richard Bott: liturgy.richardbott.com

***HYMN # 67: Silent Night, Holy Night**

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

POSTLUDE

T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Heather McMaster, congregation member

T'was the night before Christmas and throughout Galilee
shadows were falling, from the hills to the sea
People were gathered in village and town
for Caesar had ordered a head count be done.
Every man must return to his family home
to be counted and taxed by the rulers in Rome.

In one little village, by name Bethlehem
more people arrived than could fit in the inn.
With every room taken, there was nowhere to stay
so one weary couple had to rest in the hay
out in the stable – they were told that was all
out in the stable – by the animals' stall.

So Joseph helped Mary and made her a bed
out of the straw where the donkeys were fed
for Mary was worried and weary and worn
nearing the time that her child would be born
and she hadn't imagined the way things would be
but trusting in God, they prayed quietly.

Now out on the hills, at that time of the night
shepherds were sitting around a fire's light.
All day had been spent leading the sheep
but now they were settling down for a sleep.
The shepherds kept watch and talked of their work
Of cold nights, of storms, of heat, dust and dirt.

Then up in the sky, where the moon might have been
a glow of light shone, that the men hadn't seen.
They stood up to watch and the light shone like the sun.
They were frightened and fearful, they wanted to run
but where could they go to escape from the light.
What foe could this be and how could they fight.

But stranger, still stranger, they heard music now.
They heard someone singing, but they didn't know how
or where, came those voices, from within or without.
They came as a whisper, they came as a shout

and the sky was aflame: so they fell to the ground
and begged to be spared from this magical sound.

Then one quiet voice said, "Be not afraid
we bring you great news of the birth of a babe,
down in the village, see Bethlehem there
a child has been born for the whole world to share.
Born in a stable, yet he'll be a great king
Go now and greet him, whose praises we sing."

And the song of the angels filled up the sky
singing their praise to the Lord God on high,
"Hallelujah to the people of the earth
Peace and goodwill this day of Christ's birth."
Then their final few notes, faded and died
and the Shepherds were left with the glow in their eyes.

They stood up and looked all around at each other.
The sheep were still safe, still huddled together
so they thought and they said, "Perhaps we should go
down to see Bethlehem village below."
So they left and they came to the place they were told
Where Joseph and Mary had come in from the cold.

And there was the child, as the angel had said
laid in the hay, in a crib, for his bed.
Then Mary and Joseph shared with them their joy
and they fell down and worshipped at the feet of this boy
who would be the world's Saviour, shepherd and king
born on this night, born for us, a blessing.

HEATHER McMASTER, CHRISTMAS 1997