

Cochrane Street United Church

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



December 24, 2019 **Christmas Eve Communion Service** **9:00 p.m.**

Minister: Rev. Miriam Bowlby, B.A. (Hons) M.Div. (*on sabbatical*)

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Eric Hillier

Minister of Music: Patricia Young

Director of Music: Evan Smith

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WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*Thank you for joining us at Cochrane Street United Church for our Christmas Eve Communion Service. Our Service this evening will proceed unannounced and as written in the Order of Service. You are invited to stand as you are able when indicated by **

Worship Leaders: Oliver Dingwell & The Rev. Karen Thorne
Musician: Maggie Power

PRELUDE:

CALL TO WORSHIP

*PROCESSIONAL CAROL: *Once in Royal David's City* #62VU
IRBY

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER: (unison)

Mysterious God,

You come to us this season

softly as a mother's sigh,

and as startling as the cry of a newborn baby.

Come into our hearts, we pray,

that we might be cradled in your love

and stirred by your glory.

We pray in the name of the One whose coming we celebrate,

Jesus Christ, the child born in Bethlehem. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING:

Paula & Tim Reynolds

Reader 1: Over the Sundays of Advent we have been lighting
candles to mark the approach of Christmas.

*Reader 2: The candles have served to remind us of hope, peace,
joy, and love – gifts God has promised to us in the birth
of Jesus.*

Reader 1: Each week another candle has been added to the glow, and
our wreath has shone more brightly.

*Reader 2: We first lit the candle of hope, praying that the flame of hope
may always burn within us (light purple candle).*

Reader 1: Then, we lit the candle of peace, recalling God's desire that
peace be within us and among us (*light purple candle*).

Reader 2: *We lit the candle of joy, anticipating the coming of God's justice and peace with joy in our hearts (light pink candle).*

Reader 1: *On Sunday, we lit the candle of love, singing praise for God's love and goodness expressed in this world (light purple candle).*

Reader 2: *The weeks of waiting are now over. Tonight we light the Christ candle to proclaim that the child who is born will be a light to all the world. With the lighting of this candle, may we welcome the Christ-child into our hearts (light centre white candle).*

SUNG RESPONSE: *A Candle is Burning (vs. 5)*

#6VU

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.

AWAY IN A MANGER

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY VOLUNTARY

OFFERTORY HYMN: *What Child Is This? (vs. 3)

#74VU

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.

The King of Kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

GREENSLEEVES

***OFFERTORY PRAYER: (unison)**

God of Christmas,

May these gifts open others to the blessings you give this Season:

the gift of childlike wonder;

the gift of radiant hope;

the gift of peace which passes all understanding;

the gift of joy which knows no bounds.

With these gifts, we bring ourselves, O God,

in response to the greatest gift of all:

the child of Bethlehem. Amen.

WE HEAR AGAIN THE STORY

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION: (unison)

God of ancient story,
in Jesus you became the Word made flesh.

As we hear your Word this night:

open our hearts,

open our eyes,

open our lives,

so we can find the true message of Christmas
within your Living Word. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*

The people who walked in darkness.

Read by: Ruth Lenser

Response: The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***RESPONSIVE READING:** *Psalms 98 (pg. 818^{VU} – Refrain 2)*

Sing a new song unto God!

Read by: The Rev. Eric Hillier

THE THIRD LESSON: *Titus 2:11-14*

The grace of God appears.

Read by: The Rev. Karen Thorne

Response: The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***CAROL:** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

#48VU

MENDELSSOHN

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 2:1-20*

The Birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

Read by: Mr. Oliver Dingwell

Response: The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON:

Oliver Dingwell

SOLO:

O Holy Night
Alana Fraize, soprano

Adolphe Adam

WE FEAST AT THE TABLE OF THE INFANT CHRIST

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Dear Friends in Christ:

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy;

God welcomes us all and invites us to the table.

Let us confess our sins and our brokenness,

confident in the forgiveness that the child born in Bethlehem brings.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (unison)

**O God revealed in ordinary places,
we wonder if we might have missed your coming
had we been there:**

**with the stable too out of the way,
the cradle too makeshift,
the animals too noisy,
the shepherds too crude,
the carpenter too tough,
the mother too young,
the night too dark and too cold.**

We have a preference for carols, lights, and trees;

for cherub-cheeked children;

for gift exchanges and shopping day countdowns.

Forgive us for not seeing you

in out-of-the-way places and in unlikely people,

in this season of endless possibilities and wonder. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS:

We hear again the message of the angel,

“Do not be afraid, I am bringing you Good News of great joy,

for unto you is born this day, in the city of David,

a Saviour who is Christ the Lord!”

Through that birth,

God’s unending and unconditional love is given to us.

The joy of Christmas is that God loves us,

God will always love us, just as we are.
We are a forgiven and loved people.

Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

INVITATION TO THE TABLE:

God has always been in the habit of taking ordinary things
and turning them into extraordinary testaments of God's love.
First it was a teenage girl who became God's mother,
and a manger that became God's bed.
Then there were shepherds in the field who became the first believers,
and stars in the sky that became the first church steeples.
Tonight, we come to this ordinary table with ordinary bread and cup,
trusting that God will be here, born anew in our world once more.

So come.

Come with your heart on your sleeve.
Come with your hopes and your fears, your dreams and your prayers.
Come with your doubt and your anger, your joy and your faith.
Come—bringing all of who you are.
For God was there in the beginning of creation.
God was there that silent night so many years ago,
and God is here with us now.
You are in the presence of a love that knows no limits.
So come. This meal is for you.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST:

May the Peace of the newborn Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the Peace of Christ.

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

SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God of starry nights—
You are the God of the impossible.
You are the God of new life in the midst of Roman imperialism.
You are the God of stars in the darkest sky.
You are the God of love in the midst of our greatest fear.

You sent your son into this world to teach us
what impossible love looks like:

Love without limits,
Love without hesitation,
Love without holding back.

And the whole world is better for it.

Tonight we come to this table, craving a reminder of that love,
singing the song of the angels: **(#38VU)**

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

On this Christmas night, we remember Christ's birth, but also his death.
We remember that on the night before he died,
Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks to you,
he broke it, and gave it to those who sat with him, saying:
"Take and eat.

This is my body, given for you.
Whenever you do this, remember me."

In the same way he took the cup, saying:
"Drink this.
This is the cup of the new covenant in blood.
Whenever you do this, remember me."

Great is the mystery of faith:
**We remember that death cannot kill the love of God.
Christ was born on this night,
Christ died, and Christ lives again.
We know that you, O God,
continue to be born unto us each day.**

As we break this ordinary bread and pour out this ordinary cup,
remind us of Mary who treasured the ordinary moments—
the smell of hay and the look of that sleeping baby—in her heart.

Help us to do the same,
for your beauty and fingerprints are everywhere.

As we gather around the table as a community,
remind us of the people who showed up at that manger scene,
the magi and the shepherds,
and may we remember that all are welcome at your table,
regardless of class, age, race, gender, orientation, size, or status.

As we lift our voices together in prayer and in song,
remind us of the many people who said “No”
to Mary and Joseph that night,
as well as the people who finally said, “Yes, there is room here.”
May we be people who are always in the habit of saying,
“Yes, there is room here. There is room for you,
your dreams, your hopes, your fears, and your love.
All of you are welcome at the table of God.”

God of Alleluias and angel choruses,
Surround us with your light this night,
for the gospel reminds us that you drew near to us
long before we ever drew near to you,
and even in our absence, you continue to draw near to us.
So it is with joy in our hearts that we return to this table,
drawing near to you.

Strengthen us. Hold us.
Equip us to tell the story of your good news.

Send, O Infant God,
your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,
that all who share in this bread and cup
may be the body of Christ:
light, life, and love in the world.

Through Christ, the Word made flesh,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most holy,
now and forever. Amen.

We gather these and all of our prayers,
thankful that you have given us your Son in infant form,
and now we turn to you, singing together, (#44VU)
Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne, Most holy be your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done
on earth, in heav'n the same.
Give us this day the food we need, for-giv-en may we be;
Into temptation do not lead; from evil set us free.

Yours is the kingdom; unto you in grateful love we bow;
And yours the pow'r; Lord, let us view
your mighty presence now.
The glory yours; your praise be sung throughout the world again
In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue forevermore! Amen!

The Bread which we break,
is our sharing in the story of Christmas.
The Cup for which we give thanks,
is our sharing in the story of Christmas.

*The communion table is open to everyone without a single exception.
You are invited to come forward through the centre aisle, receive the
bread (gluten-free option available) and the small glass of grape juice.
You can then place the small glass in the basket provided,
and return to your pew using the side aisles.*

*If you choose not to commune, you may remain seated and join us in
singing the communion hymns, or you may come forward with your arms
crossed over your chest to receive a blessing.*

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime #71VU

JESOUS AHATONHIA

All Poor Ones and Humble #68VU

OLWEN

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

God of starlight,
we came to this table hungry—
Hungry for a glimpse of you.
Hungry to hear the sound of angel choruses.
Hungry for a meal in which all might be fed.

God of manger scenes,
we came to this table with our hearts on our sleeves,
our prayers on our lips,
and our hopes on our hearts.

God of Christmas,
we should not be surprised that you met us here.
All of all of us.

And you fed us here.
All of all of us.

And so we see you, amid the winter's snow,
And so we feel you, sending your joy into the world
And so we sing of you, the "Son of God, Love's pure light"
For you alone are worthy.
You alone are God.
And again, we are in awe.
Gratefully we pray,
Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SPREAD THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS

***PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE: (unison)**

**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.**

***CAROL:** *Silent Night*

#67VU

STILLE NACHT

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWERS: Flowers in the sanctuary are from June & Barry Hatfield in memory of Alex, Violet and Ted Reid, who are her dad, mom and brother

ANNOUNCEMENTS: If you wish to have an announcement included in the bulletin, please have it into the office by Wednesday 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 EMERGENCIES AND FUNERALS: While Rev. Miriam is on sabbatical, Rev. Bruce Kearley will be covering all pastoral emergencies and funerals. You can reach him at (709) 739-9025

DECEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- DEC 24 (9:00 pm) – Communion Service (Oliver Dingwell, Rev. Karen Thorne)
DEC 29 (11:00 am) – Christmas Fables & Hymns (Paula & Tim Reynolds)
JAN 5 (11:00 am) – Epiphany (Oliver Dingwell)
JAN 12 (11:00 am) – Baptism of Jesus (Rev. Bruce Kearley)
JAN 19 (11:00 am) – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany (David Peters)
JAN 26 (11:00 am) – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany (TBA)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday, January 5 (12:15pm) – Potluck Lunch with Cochrane Centre Tenants, hosted by the Church Council.

Sunday, January 12 (11:00am) – Sunday School Commences

New Year's POT LUCK Brunch: The Church Council invites the congregation to participate in a New Year's Pot Luck lunch immediately after worship service on **January 5, 2020**. The residents at Cochrane Centre have also been invited to join us to begin the New Year with a community brunch. The Church Council looks forward to this gathering to mark the new decade.

COCHRANE STREET TENANTS CHRISTMAS BASKETS: As part of the Cochrane Street family, the congregation can provide a donation toward the purchase of grocery gift cards for the tenants at Cochrane Centre. If you wish to contribute, please place a donation in an envelope marked Cochrane Centre Gift Cards in the collection plate at this Sunday's worship service or drop it off at the church office.

YOUTH RETREAT: The First Dawn Eastern Edge Steering Committee for Youth Events is excited to be offering a one day Youth Retreat on **JAN 11, 9am–6pm**, at First United Church in Mount Pearl. As we are offering this retreat with **no registration fee, we are hoping that local congregations would be willing to offer to donate** to our event. Please contact Rebecca Pike (Rebecca.pike@nl.rogers.com, 764-3740) if you can help. Registration: <https://forms.gle/dguodShj32nAR9qQA!!>

UPCOMING SERVICES

DECEMBER 29TH 11 AM

Christmas Fables and Hymns
Service leaders Paula & Tim Reynolds

JANUARY 5TH 11 AM

Guest preacher Oliver Dingwell
Potluck after church – bring something to share!

MEMORIALS

*In Memory of mother and father, Irene & Walter Tucker,
from Linda Facey and Marilyn Pardy and Families*

In Memory of the Drodge Family, from Betty Barnes

*In Memory of mother and father, Leah & Lewis Bursey,
and brother Gordon, from Doug & Joan Bursey*

*In Loving Memory of Dorothy & David Peters,
from son David Peters*

*In Memory of Ken Reynolds, a son, brother, father, husband,
brother in law, and uncle, With Love from Sonia, Paula & Tim,
Leah, Allen & Justine and Sarah Reynolds and Geralyn Lynch*

*In Memory of my parents, Lorraine & Les Critch,
from daughter Karen Critch*

