

**Christmas Eve 2021
Pre-Recorded Worship Service**

MUSICAL PRELUDE

WELCOME, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND AND KINSHIP

CAROL: "Christmas in the Harbour"

Refrain:

**Toora-loora-loora-lay,
Christ the King was born today;
Hark the Herald Angels say,
It's Christmas in the harbour.**

Church bells ring out loud and clear,
People come from far and near;
All men drink their Christmas cheer,
It's Christmas in the harbour.

Younger faces all aglow,
Smile beneath the mistletoe;
Yule log embers brightly glow,
It's Christmas in the harbour. **R**

Children sleep without a sound,
All nestled in their eider down;
Snow is falling softly down,
It's Christmas in the harbour. **R**

Younger know, they dance and sing
And join in all the jannying;
Peace on earth, good will to men,
It's Christmas in the harbour. **R**

LIGHTING OF CHRISTMAS CANDLE

One: Over the weeks of Advent, we lit a candle for each Sunday in preparation for this joyful day. Let us be mindful of the flames before us, aware of the light that flickers within and around us. *(pause in silence)*

As we now light our Christmas candle, let us focus on the flame, God of a newly dawned day, we rejoice in this time of celebration, grateful that Christ's light has come into the world.

All: As he shone with God's presence, may we too be a flame of love for everyone around us.

SUNG RESPONSE: "A Candle Is Burning" *Voices United 6, v.5*

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.**

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, we gather tonight in joy, muted as it may be this year.
In the birth of Jesus, we experience your love and peace.
As we pray together, may our ears be attuned to your song of hope,
our hearts open to the promise of your grace made known in Christ,
In whose name we pray and whose birth we celebrate. **Amen.**

Poem: "Earth and Heaven" by Susan Palo Cherwien

Out in space
Away from earth
There is no horizon
No line of reference
To shape and orient
the rays of sun
as they slip into view.
No dawning
as we know it.
A horizon is a planetary phenomenon.
It is an earthly occurrence.
Heavens and earth
seem well separate and established
by the horizon.
Well divided and apart
by that imaginary line.
From our viewpoint it is so hard to see,
so hard to imagine
that earth is in the heavens,
that earth is part of the heavens.
Perhaps it would
take the power that made them
to know that heaven and earth
can come together
in the same space.
(Welcome, Holy Child)

SOLO: "O Holy Night" - Glen Warren

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in the night
have seen a great dawning;
those who lived in a land of deep shadow —
on them light has shined.

For you have broken the yoke of their burden,
and the rod of their oppressor.
A child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

Solo: "The Angel Gabriel" - Glenda Winsor

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN FOUR PARTS

This version of the main story of Christmas is an audience participation story, adapted from a "Whole Congregation Pageant" written by Dave Anderson (who got the idea from our moderator, the Rt. Rev. Richard Bott)

You are invited to choose one of the characters in the story. When the name of the character is spoken in the story, respond with said lines:

EMPEROR: "It's all mine"

ANGELS: "Hallelujah, Hallelujah"

MARY: "Oh my!"

JOSEPH: "It's okay"

SHEPHERDS: "Come 'ere sheep"

INNKEEPER: "Sorry, no room"

Interspersed are 3 verses of "Once in Royal David's City" Voices United 62
Verse 1 is sung part way through, Verse 2 to follow, then Verse 3.

Verse 1: 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.

Verse 2: 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.

Verse 3: 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.

MESSAGE: “The True Christmas”

TRIO: “Mary’s Lullaby” – Andie Winsor, Becca-Ann Bartlett, and David Malone

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: God of light and love, we give you thanks. As we celebrate the feast of Jesus’ birth with one another with more muted tones than we would like, make us mindful what this night is really about, not parties and gifts, not even being with family and friends, but the revelation of your saving love in the world. God, hear our prayer.

All: Praise to you, O Emmanuel.

One: As we ponder the meaning of Christmas, we are reminded that Jesus’ birth calls us to reach out, to give of ourselves, and respond to the needs of anyone in our world in need of love and care. Like Mary and Joseph, forced to travel far from home, there are many who live in oppressive situations. May we consider the needs of the many displaced people in our world. God, hear our prayer.

All: Praise to you, O Emmanuel.

One: There are many in our world, who like the people of the first century, live under unjust leadership. We pray that all global leaders will keep the needs of their people at heart and that we may be leaders as well, working for real change in our world. God, hear our prayer.

All: Praise to you, O Emmanuel.

One: Like the shepherds there are many of us who are looked down upon for who we are and the work we do. We pray for the unemployed and under-employed, for the many whose jobs are once more threatened as we face new restrictions. May we reach out with compassion to one another, especially to those of us who are struggling in so many ways. God, hear our prayer.

All: Praise to you, O Emmanuel.

One: As we greet one another from sidewalks and over facetime, offering like angels heartfelt wishes for peace, we pray for all peacemakers and peacekeepers. May there be true peace in our world and may the good will we feel continue beyond Christmas to be lived all year round. God, hear our prayer.

All: Praise to you, O Emmanuel.

One: As we celebrate in these days may we remember those who are alone, in hospital, homebound, fearful because of the ongoing health crisis. Open our eyes to see where we can lift up others and bring them your love.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS (The Lord's Prayer)

SHARING OF LIGHT: "Silent Night" *Voices United 67*

The light whose birth we celebrate is born in our hearts. To represent that sharing of light, dim the lights in your home and light your candle.

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.

CHRISTMAS LITANY

Blessed are you, O Christ, restoring our hope for a world made new.
Blessed are you, O Sun of Righteousness, shining with God's love.
Blessed are you, O Son of Mary; born a child and sharing our humanity.
Blessed are you O Emmanuel, born to set us free.
Blessed are you, O key of David, coming to rule the nations.
Blessed are you, O Incarnate Word, descendant of Jesse's tree.
Blessed are you, O Holy Wisdom, burning with God's truth.
Blessed are you, O Radiant Dawn, splendour of the Father's light.

BLESSING

HYMN: "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" *Voices United 43*

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain

that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. **R**

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth. **R**

Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. **R**

MUSICAL POSTLUDE

