

This Bulletin is Dedicated:

In loving memory of:

Rev. Cyril Jack Mercer

August 4, 1927 to December 8, 2022

**December 24, 2022, 7:30 P.M.
Christmas Eve Carols and Communion**

Leading Worship: Rev. James Ravenscroft
Leading Music: Bob Rose and Senior Choir
Ushers: Kim, Jerry, Kaitlyn & Laura Mayo,
Marilyn Adams & Jean Thompson

We Come to Worship

PRELUDE

WELCOME; ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND AND KINSHIP

We give thanks for the land and the Indigenous peoples who steward it.

SOLO

LIGHTING OF CHRISTMAS CANDLE AND OPENING PRAYER

One: Throughout Advent we have given thanks for the long nights that are so much a part of this time of year, a natural invitation to slow down, to ponder new possibilities, to dream and be renewed.

Two: The Christmas story which we celebrate tonight also invites us to dream, to consider what it means for God to draw near to us in the birth of Jesus on a dark night long ago, and how we can we put the light-filled words of the angels into practice in our lives.

One: And so we light this candle, a light inviting us to dream, to hope, to consider new possibilities for ourselves and our world.

(A member of a family lights the centre candle.)

All: Creator of day and night, we pray with hope on this Christmas Eve. In Jesus you drew near to us in love, inviting us to see you in a new way, and so to change the way we look at one another. May our hearts and minds be opened to all that this means, and to embody it in our lives. We pray in the name of your Word made flesh, Emmanuel. Amen.

OFFERTORY: *We receive offerings given for the work of God's love in the world. Tax receipts issued at year-end if donor's name and address are provided. In gratitude we sing together "In the Bleak Midwinter" VU 55.*

We Listen

READINGS AND CAROLS

Poem: "Earth and Heaven" by Susan Palo Cherwien

Carol: "Once in Royal David's City" (*Voices United 62*)

Gospel (Part 1): Luke 2:1-7

Carol: "Angels We have Heard on High" (*Voices United 38*)

Gospel (Part 2): Luke 2:8-16

Anthem: "Still, Still, Still" (*Voices United 47*)

Gospel (Part 3): Luke 2:17-19

MESSAGE: "The True Gift of Christmas"

We Respond

CAROL: "See Amid the Winter's Snow" (*Voices United 76*)

WELCOMING ALL TO THE TABLE

One: ...Jesus' birth was a gift of hope to the world. We experience that same hope this night, for he is present, bringing us peace.

All: He is with us as we share in table fellowship. As we break bread and share the cup, may we know his love and his joy.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: God be with you. **All: And also with you.**

One: Open your hearts. **All: We gladly open them to God.**

One: Let us give thanks. **All: It is good to give thanks and praise.**

Gracious God, it is good to give thanks, for you have always been, creative and creating, sharing your hope-filled love with all that is. Within the darkness of an unborn universe, you dwelt in eternal possibility. But then you spoke your Word and all of time and space sprang into light and life. In the embrace of your creative love, you brought to birth shining suns and awesome planets, the life-light of blue-green earth, blessed with abundant life.

But that was not the end of your speaking. In many places and times, you shared your wisdom, including with your people Israel, and blessed with Torah, called them to be a light to all nations. With gratitude for all the ways you have entered covenant with us, we join the whole company of heaven in singing your glory:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts, all praise be given!

All your glory fills the earth; all your power fills the heavens. Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Blessed is the one who came, bringing love and light divine. Blessed is the one who comes through this meal of bread and wine. Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

(Sing to tune for "Angels We Have Heard on High")

One: Then, Redeeming God, you spoke once more to a young woman named Mary, giving life to the dreams of your prophets in the birth of her blessed child Jesus. In fulfillment of the promise made to shepherds, he spoke your Word, announcing your wisdom in all he did, revealing your saving love in all he said.

Then, ever faithful to you, on the night before he died, Jesus sat at table with his friends. He took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body, given for you."

Likewise, he took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my life's blood. Whenever you do this, remember me."

Remembering his birth, affirming his ministry, proclaiming his death and risen life, trusting that you continue to speak in our lives, we give voice to your mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. (x2)

(Sing to Greensleeves, that is, the tune of "What Child Is This")

One: Living God, as we celebrate his memory, we honour your abiding presence with us. Open our hearts to your Spirit with us and in this meal. As the gifts of bread and wine are a sharing in Christ, so may we grow in his likeness, living expressions of your Word as we share your love with all in need of it, especially those of us who are far from home seeking shelter, children who do not even have a manger to sleep in, any who live in fear of oppression, who hunger and thirst for peace. Nourished by this sacred meal, may we be sent out, both blessed and a blessing, proclaiming your wisdom and peace with our words and with our lives.

Eternal God, we give you praise: Through Your Word made flesh, in the power of your Spirit, all glory is yours God forever and ever.

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, amen. (x2)
(Sing to the tune of "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly")

THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Lord's Prayer) (Voices United p. 921)

SHARING COMMUNION

You are invited to open the package with bread and juice, eating the bread after the minister does, and likewise waiting before drinking the juice.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *(in unison)*

God of grace and goodness, we celebrate your Word born among us in the sharing of this sacred meal. As Jesus' birth revealed the gifting of your love to all people, may we be strengthened to extend the same in all that we say and do. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

We Leave to Serve

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

CHRISTMAS LITANY

BLESSING:

One: Go forth with joy and hope, go forth in love and peace:
for the One we call Emmanuel, God-with-us, has been born.

All: We go forth blessed to share God's blessing to the world!

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

MUSICAL POSTLUDE

DONATIONS:

We acknowledge the following donation to the Memorial Fund:

*In Loving Memory of Wife - Dorothy Hapgood, Daughter – Joanne Hapgood, BN.,RN, Granddaughter - Bethany Danielle Pike, Parents -Phyllis Hapgood and Richard Hapgood, Stella Stratton, Chelsey Stratton, Sister In Law - Marilyn Sheehan, and Sister In Law - Daphne Ralph. From W. David Hapgood.

*In memory of Dorothy "Dot" Hapgood from Victoria Styles.

We acknowledge the following donations to the Bethany Pike Memorial Camp Fund:

*In Loving memory of Daughter - Bethany Danielle Pike, Mom – Dorothy (Dot) Hapgood, Sister - Joanne Hapgood, BN., RN, Parents - Olive and Roy Pike, Grandparents - Stella and Chesley Stratton, Phyllis and Richard Hapgood. From Stephen, Susan, Rebecca and Kyle.

*In memory of Bethany Pike, from Susan L. Pike and Michael Kavanagh.

*In memory of Bethany Pike from Theresa Rahal and Horace Noseworthy

We acknowledge the following donation to the Choir Fund:

In loving memory of Blanche and William Hollett from Fred Hollett

We acknowledge the following donation to the General Fund:

*In loving memory of Rev. Cyril Jack Mercer from Karen, Tom, Kelsey and Kaitlyn Brown.

*In memory of loved ones from Sidney and Menetha Dyke

We acknowledge the following donation to the Bridges to Hope Fund:

* In memory of loved ones from Sidney and Menetha Dyke

We acknowledge the following donation to the Cemetery Fund:

* In loving memory of Husband, Bas Jamieson, Father - Capt. Walter Blackwood, Mother - Mildred Blackwood, Brother - Walter Blackwood Jr., Sister - Ida Blackwood from Lorna Jamieson.