

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David

1544 Grafton Street at Blowers, Halifax, N.S.

WELCOME!

CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDELIGHT SERVICE 2016, 7 pm



(1)

Prelude:

Let us kneel in the darkness, until we see God's light emerge. Let us wait with hope filled hearts, as Christ's image grows within us and shows us life. Let him speak to us and teach us love, until we open our hearts to be his home.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2) (silence in the darkness)

Call to Worship:

Come and see! **We hear the call of Love, ringing in our ears.**

Come and see! **We see the light of stars and candles, leading the way.**

Come and see! **We long for a sign, an experience, to know God face to face.**

Come and see! **We come, to be part of God's story of Love.**

Lighting the Christ Candle:

John Sommerville

Carol: *Good Christians all rejoice* (2-3)

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We greet your coming, God, with wonder: **You come to be with us; yet you remain far greater than we can imagine. You are near; yet your wisdom sets you apart from us. You appear among us; yet we cannot describe your glory.**

We greet your coming, God, with repentance: **We are more or less satisfied with ourselves; but your presence exposes our sin and failure. We are self-confident; but you challenge our confidence in ourselves. We are proud of our understanding; but you show us that we do not know everything.**

We greet your coming, God, with joy: **We had no true idea of what you are like; but you have shown us yourself in Jesus Christ. We felt our human life could be of no importance to you; but you have shown its value by appearing among us in human form. We are aware of the gulf between us and you; but you have bridged it with love. God, we greet your coming in Jesus Christ our Lord!** (2)

*Carol: *Oh come all ye faithful*

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Come away, come away, come today to Bethlehem.

Come adore on bended knee, one whose birth the angels sing.

Come away, come away from your noisy celebration, to a place of quietness and peace.

Come with wonder, come with awe. Take your place among sheep and cattle.

Sing with joy, praise God, for the time of promise has come. Sing the good news of Emmanuel: God-with-us! Born in Bethlehem!

*Carol: *O little town*

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A prayer for Christmas Eve: *There is nothing I can give you which you have not; but there is much, very much, that while I cannot give, You can take.*

*No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. **Take***

heaven! *No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present instant. **Take peace!** The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet*

*within our reach is joy. **Take joy!** There is a radiance and glory in the*

*darkness, could we but see, and to see we have only to look. **I beseech you to look!** Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by the covering,*

cast them away as ugly, or heavy, or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendour, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.

Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there, the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys, too, be not content with them as joys.

They, too, conceal diviner gifts. Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering- that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven.

And so, at this time, I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks, and all the shadows flee away.

-Fra Giovanni (Christmas Eve, 1513 A.D.)

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we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ... they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

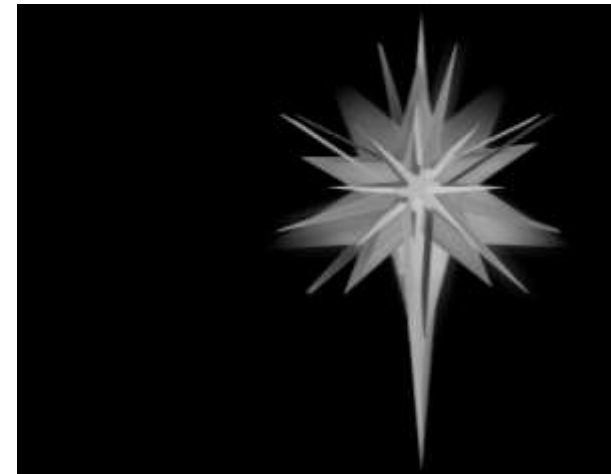
As magi of old offered their gifts, we too open our treasures to offer to the work of Christ's Church. We hope you enjoy this Christmas Eve Candlelight service and find meaning in the message. This is a generous congregation. Help us reach our goal of \$128,500 by December 31,2016!

*During offering: **Noel: Christmas Eve, 1913 by Lee Holdridge***

*Carol *What child is this? (3)*

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Offering Prayer



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Sussex Carol by Bob Chilcott

Psalm 96 *O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendour; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."* *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.*

Gesu Bambino by Linda Spevacek

Luke 2: 1-20 **Town of Bethlehem** (Scripture readers: Ken McRobbie and Colin Blanchard)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and

wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**Carol O Little town of Bethlehem (1-2)*

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Angels' Song

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

**Carol: Hark the herald angels sing*

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Prayer: God of birth, God of light, in this time of song and prayer and silence, reawaken in us the awe of Christmas.

As we hear again the story of a young woman and a surprising visitor, remind us that we are called to respond to you in unexpected ways. And when we leave this place, may we be willing to sing praises for the birth that we prepare to celebrate.

Holy Night Silent Night by Ruth Elaine Schram

Gather at the Manger

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place,

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which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

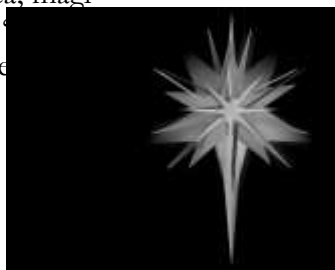
*Carol: *Away in a Manger* 149

Message: Joy to the World!
 A Christmas Prayer: (together) **O God, whose mighty Son was born in Bethlehem those days long ago, lead us to that same poor place, where Mary laid her tiny Child. And as we look on in wonder and praise, make us welcome him in all new life, see him in the poor, and care for his handiwork the earth, the sky and the sea. O God, bless us again in your great love. Amen.**

*Carol *What child is this? (1 and 2)* 161



Matthew 2 (selected): In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?' For



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BEARING GOD'S LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

(Tapers are lit while these carols are sung)

On Christmas Night (1&4)	162
The snow lay on the ground (1&4)	157
Seen amid the winter's snow (1,4,5)	168



Blessing *This Christmas I wish for you light to overcome the darkness. This Christmas I wish for you love to draw us closer to one another. This Christmas I wish for you peace the same the angels sang. This Christmas I wish for you starlight to follow on your way home. This Christmas I wish for you promise to keep*

hope alive for you. This Christmas I wish for you God newly born and in the flesh. This Christmas I wish for you Jesus Christ born this night - joy of the world.

*Joy to the World 153

Postlude: The First Noel by Paul Halley

Thank you to: St. David's Choral Scholars: Lisa Webb, Sarah Richardson and Ian Gilmore.

Thank you to John Sommerville, Cara Lappin, Ken McRobbie and Colin Blanchard. Our greeters are Phyllis Morrison and Mac Mackay.

