

# Christmas Eve & Day, December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## The Regional Ministries of Brome-Missisquoi

Prelude: Medley of Carols

### Our Announcements

May the grace our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Almighty God**, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Lighting of Candle for Christmas Candle

God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us today with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

### O Come All Ye Faithful (CP #118)

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;

#### Refrain:

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2 God of God, Light of Light,  
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;  
very God, begotten not created: [Refrain]

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God, glory in the highest: [Refrain]

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy  
morning,  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
[Refrain]



### Territorial Acknowledgement

In this holy time and place, we acknowledge with respect that we gather on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Wôbanakiak (Abenaki) First Peoples.

**May the living Christ lead us all on pathways of reconciliation and peace. Amen.**



**Isaiah 9:2-7**

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. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For 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. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**O Little Town of Bethlehem (#120)**

1 O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all on earth.

3 How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous Gift is given  
as love imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of God's heaven!  
No ear may hear his coming  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in;  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.

**Christmas Poem - by Mary Oliver (1935-2019)**

Says a country legend told every year:

Go to the barn on Christmas Eve and see  
what the creatures do as that long night tips over.  
Down on their knees they will go, the fire  
of an old memory whistling through their minds!  
[So] I went. Wrapped to my eyes against the cold  
I creaked back the barn door and peered in.



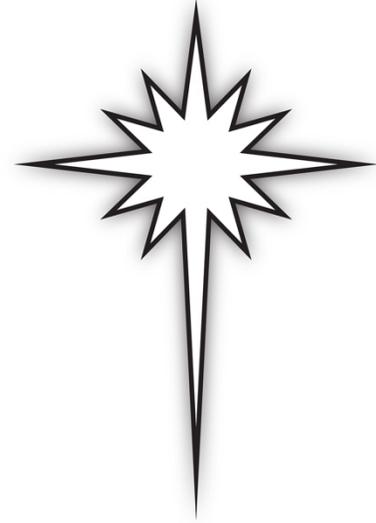
From town the church bells spilled their midnight music,  
and the beasts listened –  
yet they lay in their stalls like stone.

Oh the heretics!  
Not to remember Bethlehem,  
or the star as bright as a sun,  
or the child born on a bed of straw!  
To know only of the dissolving Now!

Still they drowsed on –  
citizens of the pure, the physical world,  
they loomed in the dark: powerful  
of body, peaceful of mind,  
innocent of history.

Brothers! I whispered. It is Christmas!  
And you are no heretics, but a miracle,  
immaculate still as when you thundered forth  
on the morning of creation!  
As for Bethlehem, that blazing star

still sailed the dark, but only looked for me.  
Caught in its light, listening again to its story,  
I curled against some sleepy beast, who nuzzled  
my hair as though I were a child, and warmed me  
the best it could all night.



### **While Shepherds Watch (#136)**

1 While shepherds watched their flocks by  
night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down  
and glory shone around.

2 "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind;  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and humankind.

3 "To you, in David's town, this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

4 "the heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid."

5 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

6 "All glory be to God on high  
and on earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to me  
begin and never cease."

## **Luke 2:1-20**

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. 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 Savior, 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 favors!"

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, 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.

**The Sermon:** The Rev. Tim Smart (on Christmas Eve)  
The Rev. Tyson Rosberg (on Christmas Day)

### **The United Church Creed**

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.  
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

**The Prayers of the People** – Cynthia Pagé

### Confession and Absolution

Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness:

#### Most merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned against you, in thought, word and deed,  
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy upon us and forgive us,  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.



May Almighty God have mercy on us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sin,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### The Peace

#### Away in a Manger (CP #126)

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay;  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus -- look down from on high  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with you there



**Eucharistic Prayer # 2** *page 196 in Boof of Alternative Services* (Sanctus # 719)

### The Lord's Prayer and Communion

**Silent Night** (#119)

1 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.

2 Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight:  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing alleluia,  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born!

3 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.

**Prayer after Communion:**

**All your works praise you O, Lord/** And your faithful servants bless you. Gracious God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May we, who share his body, live his risen life. May we, who drink his cup, bring life to others. We, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope that you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Joy to the World** CP# 154

1 Joy to the world! The Lord is come:  
let earth receive the King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns:  
let us glad songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let wrongs and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as our sin is found,  
far as our sin is found,  
far as, far as our sin is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

May God fill you with joy to bring this good news to others this night. Go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you always. Alleluia! Alleluia!! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Postlude:** First Nowell by Gordon Phillips (1908-1991) Organist, Sarah Hoblyn