

Contemporary Family Christmas Eve Service of Readings, Prayers, Carols and Communion

About Christmas Eve

By the fourth century, Christians had adapted the Roman festival at the winter solstice as a day to celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus. Christ is the Sun, bringing light and life to the world.

Brown Bag Reflection

Opening Hymn *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

Opening Sentence: Do not be afraid; for see- I am bringing you good news of great joy. To us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2: 10-11

Greeting and Call to Worship

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

And also with you.

Merry Christmas! **Merry Christmas!**

The God of Love be praised:

**whose word speaks all things into being,
who is present in the expanse of the universe,
and in the hearts of all people.**

Praise the Living God,

**who comes as a child, full of promise
and hope for the fulfillment of peace.**

Lighting of the Candles (Insert)

The Old Testament Reading from Isaiah 9:2-7

That the angels in Luke name the child the Messiah, in Greek "Christ," recalls oracles such as Isaiah 9, and Christians have seen in Jesus Christ the ancient promises of a coming king fulfilled. Jesus is "wonderful Counselor and mighty God" among us. Thus, Christians hear in this oracle references to the Triune God.

Isaiah 9: 2-7 (Insert)

The Responsive Psalm from Psalm 96

This is one of the praise songs that names God as king and was perhaps used by the ancient Israelites to laud a king at his enthronement. In response to Isaiah 9 and its proclamation of the birth of the Mighty God, Christians sing Psalm 96 to praise Christ as our king. All the gods, all families of all peoples, the very earth, the sea, and the fields all rejoice. Even as we go home to enjoy our Christmas trees, we know that "all the trees of the wood" have shouted in praise to Christ. Yet we remember the promises of Advent: He comes to judge the world.

Psalm 96 Cantate Domino read responsively by the verse

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless the divine name; proclaim the good news of our salvation from day to day.

Declare the glory of the Lord among the nations and the wonders of God among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but it is you, O Lord, who made the heavens.

Oh, the majesty and magnificence of your presence! Oh, the power and the splendour of your sanctuary!

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and power.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due the divine name; bring offerings and come into the courts of the Lord.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before God.

Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord reigns! The Lord who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord who is coming, who is coming to judge the earth.

The Lord will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with truth.

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

Second Reading: Titus 3:4-7 (Insert)

Gradual Hymn O Little Town of Bethlehem

Luke 2: 1-20

Luke 2, the only biblical narrative detailing the birth of Jesus; in contrast to Matthew's interest in high status males, Luke emphasizes the opposite: a pregnant woman, "no place in the inn," and lower-class shepherds. Thanks in part to Luke's talent in storytelling, this narrative has become for many people synonymous with Christmas. The challenge then is to proclaim the truth of this narrative as other than and far beyond stereotypical sentimentality.

The Gospel and 'Worship the Newborn King' and Nativity

Hymn Where You There? (Insert)

Blessing of the Creche

Today we remember Jesus and the story of his birth;

Jesus is our King.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world:

a light no darkness can quench.

The shepherds kept watch by night,
and your glory shone round about them.

The darkness is not dark to you,
the night is as bright as the day.

Let your light scatter the darkness
and fill your Church with your glory.

Holy Jesus, by being born one of us, and lying humbly in a manger, you show us how much God loves the world.

Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven and see you on your throne of glory. **Amen**

Let us pray that God our Father will bless this crib,
and that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary,
may come to share his life in glory.
God our Father, on this day your Son Jesus Christ was born of
the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation:
Bless this crib, which we have prepared to celebrate that
holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and
receive the fullness of life he came to bring, who is alive and
reigns for ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Approach and Confession

From birth you open our lives to amazement, Holy One,
and our imaginations to possibility.

**In the birth at Bethlehem, you show us
that your love finds a way,
that even the firmament of heaven
cannot contain your love for us.**

Today, we pray that your love might be born anew,
that the star of Bethlehem would guide us
to the mangers of this time, in this world.

**Gather us in prayer and hope, O God,
with those who suffer illness,
with those, near and far, who are in want or need,
or in places broken by violence and taut with anxiety.**

Shine your light of healing within us;
help us to tend it and reflect it,
in the name of Jesus, who became the Christ. Amen.

The Prayers of the People response is: **“Hear our prayer.”**

Jesus, whose mother was Mary: we pray for our family, our friends,
our neighbours, and our enemies, Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, cradled in a manger: we pray for lonely people, people who
are sick, people who are homeless, people seeking refuge in a new
place, people in hospital, and for people who are dying, Lord
Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, sharing the stable with the animals: we pray for your
creation, for clean water, an abundance of food, for the
environment, for our responsibility in addressing the climate crisis,
for treating all God’s creatures with dignity and respect, Lord
Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, worshipped by shepherds and kings: we pray for the people
of the world, for the people in leadership, that peace and justice
shall reign throughout the world, Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our Emmanuel: we thank you for the light that you bring to
our lives, may it shine ever brightly this Christmas season and
always, Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer. Amen .**

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn of Offering: *Silent Night*

Prayer over the Gifts (said together)

**Source of light and gladness accept all we offer on this joyful feast.
May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours; for he is
Lord now and for ever. Amen**

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts, **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

O God, most mighty, O God, most merciful,

O God, our rock and our salvation, hear us as we pray.

Call us to your meal, grant to us your life.

When everything was in chaos, you formed beauty and order.

When Abraham and Sarah were childless, you birthed them a son.

When the Israelites were enslaved, you led them to freedom.

David faced Goliath and the widow of Zarephath drought, Naaman, leprosy and Esther the slaughter of her people.

And the stories proclaim that you granted them all your life.

To our world of sorrow, you came as Jesus our brother.

He was born into poverty. He lived under oppression.

He wept at Lazarus' tomb.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave you thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

We remember his death, and let the people say, 'Amen.' **Amen.**
We celebrate his resurrection, and let the people shout, 'Amen.'

Amen..

We beg him to come again, and let the people plead, 'Amen.'

Amen.:

O God, you are Bread: **may we live by this food.**

O God, you are Breath: **may your Spirit enliven our bones.**

O God, you are Fire: **may your church illumine the world.**

O God, you are Fortress: **may there be no more war.**

O God, you are Harvest: **may there be no more hunger.**

O God, you are Light: **may no one die alone or in despair.**

From your throne, teach us justice;

in your sheepfold, give us protection; in your arms may we find peace.

O God, most majestic, O God, most motherly,

Grant to us your life, life as of the Father to the Son

life as of the Spirit of our risen Lord, life as of a tree bearing twelve different fruits, now and forever. **Amen**

The Lords Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us: **Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name.**

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.
God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.

The Communion

The Gifts of God for the People of God. **Thanks Be to God.**

Communion is Received

Closing Prayer

Living God, on this holy night we will gather in our homes to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory; to sing with angels, rejoicing in your work; to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise; to sit with Mary, cradling your love.

May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy: for to us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.

The Blessing:

May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn of Sending Forth: *Joy to the World*

(Adapted from Renewing Worship from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Church of England Blessing of the Creche)

**Poinsettias in St. Thomas' Church
are in loving and fond memory of:**

Arnold and Jean Meek, from the Family

Harold and Beverley Brister, from Leanne and Family

Clayton MacLeod, from Grace and Family

Jim and Laretta Jollimore, from Cheryl and Tommy

Horace and Bessie Meek, from the Family

Nancy and Ryan Baglole, from Bonnie and John

Willard, Janie, and Judy Cole, from Bonnie and John

Brenda Montgomery, from Robert and Family

Dawson and Roma Cole, from Gail, Stan and Family

Margaret and Cory Cole, from Gail, Stan and Family



The Fourth Sunday of Advent -- PROMISE OF LOVE

Reader 1: Through the prophets, God promised a Messiah. In a dream, God promised Joseph that Mary "will have a son, and you will name him Jesus -- because he will save his people." God's promises have been kept.

Reader 2: The birth of a child is a sign that life will carry on. It was through the birth of a weak and vulnerable human baby that God has most closely identified with each of us. The mighty God has become Emmanuel, "God with us." This was astounding news, then, at that first Christmas. It is astounding news now. Christmas is about God, with us.

Reader 1: In the birth of Jesus, God's promise of hope and healing is made in a new and wonderful way. We remember, though, that strength and determination are necessary in fulfilling any promise. Joseph and Mary showed great courage as they responded to God's call.

Reader 2: We relight the Advent candles of waiting in hope, dreaming of peace, and healing with joy. Their flames remind us that God is active in our lives and in the world around us.
(The candles are relit)

Reader 1: God promised to love and care for all that God created. The rainbow is one sign of this promise; the birth of Jesus is another wonderful sign that God has not left

us on our own. The flame of this fourth candle gives us courage for our daily living by reminding us of the promise of Emmanuel -- God is with us. *(The fourth candle is lit)*

(unison prayer)

Loving God, we thank you that you have fulfilled your promise. Emmanuel has come. We rejoice in your faithfulness. Give us courage to respond with love and compassion. Amen.

Christmas Eve -- THE CANDLE OF CHRIST

Reader 1: Advent has been a time of waiting, dreaming, healing, and promise. Our time of preparation is over and we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Reader 2: Each week during Advent we lit another candle on our wreath, and each week the candles glowed and the light shone more brightly.

Reader 1: We have read Bible verses that have spoken to us of God's faithfulness and of the hope and dreams of God's people through the ages. The people waited and dreamed for a Messiah who would bring healing and peace. God's promise was kept. The Savior has come.

Reader 2: God's love has been shown in a most wonderful way: a child has been born. We know him as Emmanuel -- God with us; we know him as Jesus -- the

one who saves; we know him as the fullest expression of God's love for us.

Reader 1: Now, we light the Candle of Christ, the candle which reminds us of Jesus. It is the center of this wreath, just as Jesus is the center of our lives. The light of Christ shines for all to see. (*The Candle of Christ is lit*)

(unison prayer)

Generous God, you have given us a time of preparation to receive again your gift of love and joy and peace and hope. In the birth of the child, Jesus, you have given new life to each of us. May we experience the presence of Emmanuel, God with us, this day, and always. Amen.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

A READING FROM TITUS 3:4-7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph

also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

IN MEMORIAM

The Bulletins used within the Parish
are given to the Glory of God
and In Loving Memory of

MOM

JANIE COLE

December 6, 2009

DAD

WILLARD COLE

January 3, 2010

SISTER

NANCY COLE BAGLOLE

December 7, 1991

NEPHEW

RYAN BAGLOLE

December 7, 1991

SISTER

JUDY COLE

May 7, 2023



With love and fond memories from
Bonnie and John MacRae
Vanessa and Justin Bolster
Stephanie Gallant

IN MEMORIAM

The Bulletins used within the Parish
are given to the Glory of God
and In Loving Memory of

LAURETTA I. JOLLIMORE

who passed away December 21, 2018,
and we laid to rest 5 years ago today,
December 24, 2018

*Your memory is our keepsake
with which we will never part.
God has you in His keeping,
we have you in our hearts.*

Loved and missed every day by
Cheryl & Tommy



December 31 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Readers: Doreen Childs, Darlene L

Prayers of the People: Doreen Cole

Worship Times: 11 am – Parish Worship at St. Thomas'

~~~~~  
St. Thomas' APP, Anglican Powering Potential (new name – formally ACW Anglican Church Women) will be cleaning the church hall on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, 9:00-9:30 am. If you could help us we would appreciate it.

St. Thomas' APP, Anglican Powering Potential (formally ACW Anglican Church Women) will be meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024, at 10:00 am in the church hall for our Annual Meeting. If anyone would like to attend for the social part you are quite welcome. We do a collection at our meetings, but there is no membership fee to attend any of our meetings or functions. All people within the Anglican Church are members. Any questions, please contact Doreen Cole 902-886-2207.

### **Holiday planning and Coverage**

Revd Shirley will be away December 25th through January 8th. Both Licensed Lay Ministers Dennis Cole (902 978 0143)-first contact first week, and Kim Gallant (902 432 9007)-first contact second week- will be available to respond to pastoral and other emergencies, supported by Revd Ned Henthorne (Dec. 25-Dec. 30) and Revd Colin Nicole (Dec. 31-Jan 8). These clergy will also check the PCH visitor list during that time. Kim will be staying at the Rectory/coming in twice daily (she is looking after Lucy) and will check phone messages, mailboxes, and respond as necessary.

Bonnie will be in the office on January 3 but not on December 27.

Dennis and Kim will be leading Parish Morning Prayer Service at 11am on Dec. 31 at St. Thomas' together and with cover between them, Morning Prayer Services on January 7- 9am St. Mark's, 11am St. Thomas' and St. Stephen's. They will be in touch with the Church Wardens should there need to be considerations around cancellations because of inclement weather.

## **WERE YOU THERE**

*Words by Natalie Sleeth*

Were you there, were you there  
on that Christmas night,  
when the world was filled with a holy light?  
Were you there to behold  
when the wonder foretold came to earth?

Did you see, did you see  
how they hailed him King,  
with the gifts so rare that they chose to bring?  
Did you see how they bowed,  
as they praised him aloud at his birth?

Did you hear how the choir of angels sang  
at the glory of the sight?  
Did you hear how the bells of heaven rang  
all through the night?

Did you know, did you know  
it was God's own Son,  
the salvation of the world begun?  
Did you know it was love  
that was sent from above to the earth?  
Did you know it was love  
that was sent from above to the earth?  
Did you know it was love  
that was sent from above to the earth?

## **WORSHIP THE NEWBORN KING**

Worship the new born King  
Worship the new born King  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Come see the star so bright  
Come see the star so bright  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Come hear the angels sing  
Come hear the angels sing  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Come see the shepherds kneel  
Come see the shepherds kneel  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Come see the Holy Babe  
Come see the Holy Babe  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Come see the Holy Sight  
Come see the Holy Sight  
Jesus is our Emmanuel  
Worship the new born King.

Worship the new born King.