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Minister: *Rev. Susan Reed*  
Pianist/Choir Director: *Joanne Diplock*  
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*Our Mission...*

*to be an accepting Christian community dedicated to living, sharing and teaching the Word of God.*

*We respect all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, mental wellness, and ability.*

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Christmas Eve

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*\*The asterisk invites all to stand, if they are able. **Bold** print indicates a congregational response.*

## GATHERING TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE *(Music played with permission under license #A-620529 One License)*

*~Joanne Diplock*

### GREETING

*(Adapted from Juanita Austin; from *Gathering A/C/E 2016-2017*.)*

CALL to WORSHIP *(inspired by Isaiah 9:2-7)*

*(Written by Richard Bott; from *Gathering A/C/E 2020-2021*.)*

*Unto us a child is born!*

**Unto us a son is given!**

*He will establish and uphold God's kingdom,*

**with justice and with righteousness,**

*from this time on and forevermore!*

**O come, let us adore him!**

*O come, let us adore him!*

**O come, let us adore him – Christ, the Lord!**

\*OPENING HYMN: VU #60 – "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (v. 1, 3, 5) (Oakeley/Wade)  
*(Words reproduced with permission under license #A-620529 One License)* *~Joanne Diplock*

- 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;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God in the highest: R**
- 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: R**

## WELCOME

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND

*We acknowledge that we meet on Treaty 1 land, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Metis nation. We are thankful for these first inhabitants, and we commit to working together towards justice, truth and reconciliation.*

### LIGHTING of the PEACE CANDLE

*As we light this candle, we pray for peace:*

**peace in our hearts,  
peace in our homes,  
peace in our world.**

*As we await the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,*

**O God, we pray for peace. Amen.**

### SHARING the PEACE of CHRIST

#### OPENING PRAYER

(Written by Frances Flook; from *Gathering A/C/E 2018-2019*.)

**Loving and gracious God,  
we thank you once again for the gift of Jesus Christ  
born in us tonight.**

**May the hope he brought be with us in all things.**

**May the peace he promised become a reality in our world.**

**May the joy of his forgiveness  
be experienced by each one of us here.**

**May the love he showed be mirrored in our lives  
and in our life together.**

**On this night, we give you thanks and praise  
for the love you showed in giving us the gift of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

STORY: "Jesus' Christmas Party" by Nicholas Allan  
~Rev. Susan Reed

#### HYMN: VU #69 – "**Away in a Manger**"

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(Kirkpatrick)  
~Joanne Diplock

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a 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 the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

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

## LISTENING FOR AND REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

### INTRODUCTION to the WORD

*(based on Isaiah 9 and Luke 2)*

*(Adapted from Mary Scifres; from The Abingdon Worship Annual 2019.)*

*A Child is born for us, a Son given to all the world.*

**As we hear the familiar story this night,  
may we listen anew for signs of God's glory and grace.**

Scripture Reader: *Betty Clark*

### **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 Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

## **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 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!'*

*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.*

### Words of Response:

*This is the Good News of God!*

*This is the Good News of Jesus Christ!*

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

### CHOIR ANTHEM:    **"Calypso Lullaby"**

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*~Joanne Diplock*

### STORY:    "The Focus"

*~Rev. Susan Reed*

REFLECTION: "Shifting our Focus"

~Rev. Susan Reed

HYMN: VU #38 – "Angels We Have Heard on High"

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(French traditional)

~Joanne Diplock

- 1 Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**
- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heavenly song? R**
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
Christ whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. R**
- 4 See him in a manger laid,  
whom the choirs of angels praise;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while our hearts in love we raise. R**

RESPONDING TO GOD IN PRAYER AND ACTION

ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING ~the Fehr/McMillan family

(Adapted from Jane Doull; from *Gathering A/C/E 2010-2011.*)

*We light again the Advent candle for hope –*

**hope for ourselves, hope for God's beloved world.** *(the 1<sup>st</sup> candle is lit)*

*We light again the Advent candle for peace –*

**peace in our hearts and peace on earth.** *(the 2<sup>nd</sup> candle is lit)*

*We light again the Advent candle for joy –*

**joy to the world, joy alive in the depths of our being.** *(the 3<sup>rd</sup> candle is lit)*

*We light again the Advent candle for love –*

**The promise of God's love for us and for the world.** *(the 4<sup>th</sup> candle is lit)*

*The hour has come.*

*Hope blossoms with new beginnings and fresh possibilities.*

*Peace shines stronger and brighter than war and violence.*

*Joy has come to the world, warming the cold of night.*

*Love is alive among us,*

*waking us from lonely slumbers, stopping us in our haste,*

*refreshing us in places of deepest need.*

**Jesus is born – Christ, God’s Chosen One,  
the Light of the World.** *(The Christ candle is lit)*

*Joy to the world!*

**Thanks be to God!**

**\*SUNG RESPONSE: #33 MV – “Jesus Came Bringing Us...”**

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(traditional)

~Joanne Diplock

**Jesus came bringing us hope,  
Jesus came bringing us hope,  
Jesus came bringing us hope,  
Hallelujah forever more!**

**Jesus came bringing us peace,  
Jesus came bringing us peace,  
Jesus came bringing us peace,  
Hallelujah forever more!**

**Jesus came bringing us joy,  
Jesus came bringing us joy,  
Jesus came bringing us joy,  
Hallelujah forever more!**

**Jesus came bringing us love,  
Jesus came bringing us love,  
Jesus came bringing us love,  
Hallelujah forever more!**

**Jesus came bringing us \_\_\_\_\_,  
Jesus came bringing us \_\_\_\_\_,  
Jesus came bringing us \_\_\_\_\_,  
Hallelujah forever more!**

## INVITATION to the OFFERING

(Written by Sheryl Spencer; from *Gathering A/C/E 2019-2020.*)

## THE PRESENTATION of our TITHES and OFFERINGS

Offertory Music *as the offerings are collected*

~Joanne Diplock

**\*Offering Verse** *sung to the tune for “Away in a Manger” VU #69*

(Written by Gord Waldie; from *Gathering A/C/E 2009-2010.*)

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~Joanne Diplock

**O Christmas has come now the baby is here.  
He lies in the manger, the saviour most dear.  
To you, child of Mary, our gifts now we bring.  
We lay them before you while praises we sing.**

\*Offertory Prayer

**O God, in this season of giving gifts,  
receive and bless the gifts we offer here.  
May they be used to share your hope,  
your peace, your joy, and your love  
with all the world,  
in Jesus' name. Amen.**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory forever and ever.  
Amen.**

SENT INTO GOD'S WORLD

COMMISSIONING (Adapted from Larry Doyle, Bob Root and Darrow Woods; from *Gathering A/C/E 2013-2014*.)

*The child is born.*

**May our hearts be filled with hope, peace, joy and love.**

*Let us hear in our hearts the news of the angels.*

*Let us ponder the miracle of this night.*

**Let us live in the world as people of the light.**

*We are not alone. God is with us.*

**Thanks be to God!**

\*HYMN: VU #59 – "Joy to the World"

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(Watts/Handel)

~Joanne Diplock

- 1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
let earth receive her 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 earth! the Saviour reigns:  
let all their 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 sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground:  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the earth 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.

### BLESSING of LIGHT

(Written by Susan Lukey; from *Gathering A/C/E 2003-2004*.)

*Carry the light of Christ with you this Christmas Eve.*

*Let the light fill your homes and your lives.*

*Let the light brighten your darkness.*

*Share the light with all you meet*

*so that they too may know the good news.*

*What is the good news of this night?*

**Christ is born! Thanks be to God!**

### CANDLE-LIGHTING

*Jesus Christ, Light of the World, born this night for you.*

### CLOSING HYMN: VU #67 – "Silent Night, Holy Night"

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(Mohr/Grüber)

~Joanne Diplock

- 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 Hallelujah,**  
**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.**



## BLESSING

(Written by Kim Falls from *Gathering A/C/E* 2018-2019.)

## CHORAL BENEDICTION

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**May the Lord go with you,  
let him take your hand.  
Keep His love within you,  
until we meet again. Amen.**

(Price/Besig)

~Joanne Diplock

## POSTLUDE *(Music played with permission under license #A-620529 One License)*

~Joanne Diplock