



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we live, work and worship as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

December 21st, 2020
A Quiet Evening of Reflection
(Bold indicates unison)

Prelude: Noel Angevin
Noel "Puer nobis nascitur" Franck
Nicholas le Bégue

Words of Welcome: Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald
No matter who you are, where you come from, how you come to be here,
what you believe or what you are questioning, you are welcome in fullness.

We sing together: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (V. 1, 5, 6) (with Flute & Organ) VU 1
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. R

O come, O Dayspring, from on high,
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,

and death's dark shadows put to flight. R

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

May this spark of Divine Energy be a beacon of hope to all.
We welcome Christ to brighten and ground our journey.

Lighting of the Rainbow Candle:

Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

We light the Rainbow Candle acknowledging with grace that Gower Street United Church is an Affirming congregation. Diverse, vibrant, and open, we are committed to love, hope, joy and peace.

Gathering Words:

Rebecca Pike

We gather this evening in the name of Christ,
the one who gives rest to the weary,
healing to the sick,
joy to the sorrowful,
and welcome to the lost.

God calls us together in the Spirit.

Praise be to God for the gift of new life given in Jesus Christ.

Gathering Prayer:

Rev. Grant Stuckless

Loving and generous God,
in the quiet of the evening, we come to you,
trusting that you hear our prayer.

We gather in this space with friends and strangers.

Seeking your peace and comfort.

We come with feelings of hurt,
sadness and anger, relief, and maybe hope.

**We know that your love is deep enough
and profound enough to accept our emotions,
our fears, and our longings that go beyond words.**

**Even as candle break through the darkness of a room,
let your light, dear Christ, break through the darkness of our souls.**

Give us the courage to open our eyes and hearts to your healing love.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

We sing together: O Little Town of Bethlehem

VU 64

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.

**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.

How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessed gift of 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.

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.

We listen to God's Word

Scripture: Luke 2:32-35

Rev. Grant Stuckless

Meditation

Rev. Miriam Bowlby

Candle lighting:

Rev. Miriam Bowlby

We light this candle to acknowledge the tears.

(A candle is lit)

(Silence)

We pray together:

Rev. Miriam Bowlby

We open our hands to you, Tender God.
We extend our hands in prayer,
aware of each breathe you offer,
aware of your calming presence.
We offer you our tears-
The tears that we have cried in the quiet hours of the morning,
The tears of anger and hurt,
The unexpected tears shed in the middle of crowded places,
The tears that spilled out of control,
The tears not yet shed.
You are so near, dear God, that you can wipe away the tears that spill down our cheeks.
We offer you all these tears,

and we look forward with hope to a time when our tears will be transformed into tears of joy. Amen.

The Light of Blessing

Scripture: Luke 2:36-38

Rev. Oliver Dingwell

Meditation

Rev. Oliver Dingwell

Candle lighting:

Rev. Ian March-MacCuish

In this time of silence, think of those who have touched your life in times of need.

We give thanks for these individuals.

(A candle is lit)

(Silence)

We pray together:

Rev. Ian March-MacCuish

O memory-giver, thank you for the storehouse of good memories that are ours.

May these blessed memories give us hope, inspiration and comfort during this Christmas season.

We ask that you touch us with your love and compassion during these holidays.

Thank you for your blessings. Amen.

We sing together: There Is a Balm in Gilead (with flute)

VU 612

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole.

There is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. R

If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus
and say, "He died for all." R

The Light in Grief

Scripture: Mark 1:1-3

Rev. Ian March-MacCuish

Meditation

Rev. Kathy Brett

Candle lighting:

Rev. Kathy Brett

In silence and in faith, let us name the rough, crooked and broken places within us.

As we light the candle of grief, let us ask God to shine the healing light of Christ upon our way.

(A candle is lit)

(Silence)

We pray together:

Rev. Kathy Brett

**In the midst of festive seasons, let us draw a quiet breath.
Mid the lights and celebrations, let us hold the grief of death.
Here is the place for every sorrow, in the manger gently borne.
Every hurt will find its healing in the Son, who lights each morn. Amen.**

We sing together: In the Bleak Midwinter (v. 1, 4)

VU 55

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.**

The Light of Hope

Scripture: Mark 1:4-8

Rev. Bill Mercer

Meditation

Rev. Bill Mercer

Candle lighting:

Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray

Let us now place ourselves in the light of hope, and in silence,
open our hearts, and our spirits to the Holy Spirit of God promised by John.

(A candle is lit)

(Silence)

We pray together:

Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray

**God, give us a heart for the journey; we pray.
Not the one broken by pride, handcuffed by pain, stunted by fear.
But humbled heart, forgiven and forgiving.
Fearless in the fight for truth and the service of
all those hurting individuals, we pass along the way to Bethlehem.
Put heart into our step, a new hope, we pray. Amen.**

We sing together: 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (v. 1, 4) (Flute and voice)

VU 71

**'Twas in the moon of wintertime,
when all the birds had fled,
that mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light, the stars grew dim,
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:
Jesus your King is born,
Jesus is born,**

in excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free,
the angel song is true,
the holy child of earth and heaven
is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy:
 Jesus your King is born,
 Jesus is born,
 in excelsis gloria.

Ministry of Music: All Poor Ones and Humble

Robert/Davis Arr. Routley

We Respond to God's Word

Prayers for the community and the world

Rev. Miriam Bowlby

Invitation to light candles:

Rebecca Pike

Some of us may grieve the loss of a parent, spouse, child, friend or lover.
It may have been through illness, separation or death.
Many of us know the deep sadness we feel from losing a job, a dream, or a direction.
We may feel forgotten by God, so we come with deep prayers.

We invite you to light a candle to symbolize your prayer coming to light.
Do it as a prayer of gratitude for your loved one, who touched your life profoundly,
as a way of celebrating your time together.

Offer it as a prayer for rebirth and new hope: a prayer for guidance,
for new dreams and new possibilities. Light the candle for a prayer
that is too deep for words. When all the candles are lit,
there will be a quiet moment, and then we will sing Silent Night.

(Silence)

We sing together: Silent Night (Carl, Grace, Doug)

VU 67

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.

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.

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.

Worship Leaders:

Rev. Miriam Bowlby, Cochrane Street United Church
Rev. Kathy Brett, Topsail United Church
Rev. Oliver Dingwell, Cowan Heights United Church
Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray, Gower Street United Church
Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald, Gower Street United Church
Rev. Ian March-MacCuish, First United Church
Rev. Bill Mercer, Wesley Street United Church
Rebecca Pike, Gower Street United Church
Rev. Grant Stuckless, Pouch Cove-Bauline Pastoral Charge

Thank you to our Musicians!

R. Carl Goulding, Organ
Doug Dunsmore, Vocals
Grace Dunsmore, Flute

Thank you to our Video Editor!

Ken Butt

Worship inspired by Linda Wheeler and Mark Aitcheson, 2001, Worship for all Seasons 11, Selections from Gathering, Year A and Gathering, Advent, Christmas & Epiphany, various years.