

Central Queen Pastoral Charge

United Church of Canada
December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve - Lesson & Carols

GATHERING

Prelude

Music.

Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1 As we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love tonight,

Reader 2 we reflect on these good gifts from God, of God, for us.

(Pause while first four candles are lit)

Reader 1 And now, as we light the Christ candle in the center of our Advent wreath,

Reader 2 we're making space for the grace of Jesus!

(The Christ Candle is lit).

Reader 1 We remember the Advent journey we have taken,

Reader 2 preparing, anticipating, and now celebrating the birth of the Christ Child.

Reader 1 Tonight, our long Advent journey has been fulfilled.

Jesus has been born, sent by God to show us grace.

Call to Worship

Tonight, the long-awaited holy night arrives.
In the stillness, in the flicker of candlelight,
we gather with shepherds and travellers,
with angels and animals,
with all who wait for hope to be born again.

Come, let us enter the story.
Come, let us follow the star.
Come, let us worship.

Opening Carol O Come, All Ye Faithful

VU #60

(Bible will be taken forward during the singing of the open Carol)

Opening Prayer

**Holy one,
you come to us small, vulnerable and fragile,
yet full of glory.
As we hear the ancient story
and as we bring forward the figures of the nativity,
open our hearts to wonder,
open our minds to wisdom,
and our lives to your peace.
Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Lesson 1 The Prophets Foretell Peace

Reader: Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

2 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.

6 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.

7 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.

Action Children to bring the star forward & placed above the stable.

Carol O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VU #1 v. 1,3,5 &7

Come, light of the world, shine in our darkness.

Lesson 2 — The Animals Wait in the Stable

The stable stood quiet under the night sky.
The ox, the donkey, the sheep, the camels-
all waited without knowing what was coming,
only that something holy was drawing near.

Action children to bring items forward
Animals are carried forward and placed in the scene.

Carol Away in a Manger VU #69

Lesson 3 Mary & Joseph Begin Their Journey

Reader Luke 2:1–5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.³ All went to their own towns to be registered.⁴ 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.⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

Action Mary and Joseph are carried forward and placed beside the empty manger.

Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem VU #64

Prayer

**Journeying God, be with all who travel tonight.
make room in us for courage, trust, and love. Amen.**

Lesson 4

Jesus Is Born

Reader Luke 2:6–7

⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

Action The empty manger is taken forward.

Lesson 5

Shepherds in the Fields

Reader Luke 2:8–14

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah,^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’^[c]

Action Shepherds are carried forward.

Carol While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks VU #75

The first to hear the good news were those keeping watch in the night. May we also become watchers for peace.

Lesson 6 **The Shepherds Travel to the Child**

Reader Luke 2:15–16

¹⁵ 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.’ ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Action Shepherds are taken forward to the manger.

Carol Angels We Have Heard on High VU #38

Lesson 7**The Child Is Laid in the Manger**

A moment of quiet; lights dim.

“And Mary gave birth to her firstborn son...”

Action The Baby Jesus is carried forward and placed in the manger.

Carol: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

VU #58

Lesson 8**The Magi Follow the Star**

Reader Matthew 2:1–2, 9–11

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men^a from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,^b and have come to pay him homage.’

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,^a until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped,^b they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ 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.

Action The Magi are carried forward.

Carol We Three Kings

1 We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

2 Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign. [Refrain]

3 Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising,
worshiping God on high. [Refrain]

4 Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. [Refrain]

5 Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Holy one,
for the gifts of wonder, hope, and joy
we give thanks.
We offer ourselves,
that your light may shine through us.
Amen.**

OFFERING

Invitation to the Offering

As the Magi brought gifts to the child,
we offer what we have—
our gifts, our compassion, our lives—
for the work of peace in this world.

Juice and loaf of bread carried forward with offering

Offertory Carol What Child is This

VU #74 v.1

Offertory Prayer

**Receive these gifts, God of love,
and use them to share hope
with your world. Amen.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Gathering at the Table

Invitation to the Table

This night, heaven bends low to earth.
This night, the holy child is born among us.
This night, all who hunger for hope,
all who long for peace,
all who seek a place to belong,
are invited to this table.

Come—
not because you understand,
but because you are loved.
Come—
not because you are certain,
but because you are drawn to the mystery.
This table is wide,
and there is room for everyone.

Great Thanksgiving

May God be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up in hope.
Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Holy one,
in this night of wonder,
when the stars leaned close
and the world held its breath,
you came among us
in the smallness of a child.

You came as light in our darkness,
as comfort in our fear,
as peace deeper than we could imagine.

Long before shepherds heard the angels' song,
long before magi followed a wandering star,
you were with your people—
guiding, calling, gathering us home.

And so, with those who knelt in straw-filled stables,
with those who travelled far seeking meaning,
and with all your people in every time and place,
we join the ancient, unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy God,
God of power and love,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Story of the Meal

Holy one,
on another night—
not unlike this one—
you gathered with your friends at table.

You took bread,
gave thanks,
broke it,
and shared it with them, saying:

"This is my body, given for you.
Whenever you eat it, remember me."

Then you took the cup and said:

"This cup is the promise of new life.
Whenever you drink it, remember me."

And so, remembering the child born among us,
and remembering the one who welcomed the lost,
healed the hurting,
and opened the table to all,
we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

In this meal, love is remembered.
In this meal, love is renewed.
In this meal, love will lead us forward.

Prayer for the Spirit

Pour out your Spirit on us,
and on these gifts of bread and cup,
that in sharing them
we may be strengthened for hope,

renewed in compassion,
and made bearers of peace
for a world longing to be reborn.

Through this holy meal,
unite us with all who gather this night,
in sanctuaries and shelters,
by hospital beds and kitchen tables,
until every person knows
they are beloved beyond measure. Amen.

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

The Bread

The bread of life-
given for you.
May it nourish your spirit
and strengthen your journey.

The Cup

The cup of blessing-
poured out for you.
May it renew your hope
and deepen your joy.

“The body of Christ, broken for you”
“The bread of life given for you,”

Prayer After Communion

Holy One,
you have met us in this meal:
in the taste of bread,
the sweetness of the cup,
the presence of community,
and the quiet mystery of this night.

Send us out
with hearts full of wonder,
hands ready to serve,
and lives shaped by love. Amen.

Christmas Eve Blessing

Go now into this holy night
with the hope of the shepherds,
the courage of the magi,
and the joy of the angels.

May the child born in the stable
be born again in our hearts,
guiding us with peace
and surrounding us with love. Amen.

Action Lights are turned low.

Carol Silent Night, Holy Night VU #67

Closing Hymn Joy to the World VU #59