

Flowers in the sanctuary are from June & Barry Hatfield

Welcome to Cochrane Street United Church

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*please stand as you are able

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.

PRELUDE:

INTROIT VU #59: Joy to the World vs. 1

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.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see your congregational email for detailed announcements.

*LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE & PASSING OF THE PEACE:

The light of Christ is with us
Here. Now. In this place.

In Christ, although we are many,
We are one.

Let our hospitality towards each other reflect God's love.
The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

REFLECTIVE MUSIC VU #64: O Little Town of Bethlehem

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.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

A boy has been born for us;
A child has been given to us.
And his name shall be called

**Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God,
Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace.**

Once we were no people;
Now we are God's people.

Once we walked in darkness;
Now we have seen a great light.

PRAYER OF APPROACH:

**May the God of the stable
help us to see the wonder of Christmas:
the wonder of children who can hardly wait,
the wonder of Mary and Joseph who feel
the power of God's love,
the wonder of the shepherds who hear the Good News,
the wonder of Magi who kneel and offer their gifts,
the wonder of the ages
that God would come in such a simple birth. Amen.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Will & Carrie Parsons

Reader: Over the four weeks of Advent we have been lighting candles to mark the approach of Christmas.

Reader: The candles have served to remind us of hope, peace, joy, and love – gifts God has promised to us in the birth of Jesus.

Reader: Each week another candle has been added to the glow, and our wreath has shone more brightly.

Reader: We first lit the candle of hope, praying that the flame of hope may always burn within us (light blue candle).

Reader: Then, we lit the candle of peace, recalling God's desire that peace be within us and among us (light blue candle).

Reader: We lit the candle of joy, anticipating the coming of God's justice and peace with joy in our hearts (light pink candle).

Reader: This past weekend, we lit the candle of love, singing praise for God's love and goodness expressed in this world (light blue candle).

Reader: The weeks of waiting are now over. Tonight, we light the Christ candle to proclaim that the child who is born will be a light to all the world. With the lighting of this candle, may we welcome the Christ-child into our hearts (light centre white candle).

Reader: Rejoice! Christ is born!

All: **Christ is born, indeed! Alleluia!**

Hymn: Hope Is a Star vs. 5

Jesus is born, alive on this night,

sharing his love 'till all darkness is bright

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,

and none shall be afraid.

(words by Rev. Miriam Bowlby)

LEARNING TOGETHER – THE BEST GIFT

HYMN VU #76: See amid the Winter's Snow vs. 1

1 See amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
see, the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;

hail, redemption's happy dawn;

sing through all Jerusalem,

Christ is born in Bethlehem.

OFFERING INVITATION & VOLUNTARY

There are many ways you can offer your financial gifts. As you enter the sanctuary you may lay your offering in the plate. You can send your offering by mail or drop them off in the mailbox. You can donate via eTransfer: csuctreasurer@gmail.com. You can sign up for PAR (Pre-Authourized Remittance) or use the donate button on our website.

OFFERTORY HYMN VU # 81: As With Gladness Men of Old

3 As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger crude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Almighty God,

**as we prepare with joy to celebrate the gift of the Christ child,
embrace the earth with your glory and be for us a living hope;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1 - 20

The Word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN VU # 44: It Came upon the Midnight Clear vs. 1 & 2

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold,
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

SERMON:

SOLO:

At This Table
Soloist: Evan Smith

Idina Menzel

GOING FORTH TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

God has always been in the habit of taking ordinary things and turning them into extraordinary testaments of God's love.

First it was a teenage girl who became God's mother, and a manger that became God's bed.

Then there were shepherds in the field who became the first believers, and stars in the sky that became the first church steeples.

God has always been in the business of taking ordinary things and making them extraordinary reminders of God's love.

Tonight, we come to this ordinary table with ordinary bread and cup, trusting that God will be here, for God has always been here.

So come.

Come with your heart on your sleeve.

Come with your hopes and your fears,
your dreams and your prayers.

Come with your doubt and your anger, your joy and your faith.

Come—bringing all of who you are.

For God was there in the beginning of creation. God was there that silent night so many years ago, and God is here with us now.

You are in the presence of a love that knows no limits and cannot help but to draw near. So come. This meal is for you.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of starry nights—

You are the God of the impossible.

You are the God of new life in the midst of Roman imperialism.

You are the God of stars in the darkest sky.

You are the God of love in the midst of our greatest fear.

You sent your son into this world to teach us what impossible love looks like—

Love without limits,

love without hesitation,

love without holding back.

And the whole world is better for it.

Tonight we come to this table, craving a reminder of that love, singing the song of the angels:

Sung Response: (#38VU)

Gloria, in excelsis deo!

Gloria, in excelsis deo!

On this Christmas night,
we remember Christ's birth, but also his death.
We remember that on the night before he died,
Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks to you,
he broke it, and gave it to those who sat with him, saying:
"Take and eat.

This is my body, given for you.
Whenever you do this, remember me."

In the same way he took the cup, saying:
"Drink this.

This is the cup of the new covenant.
Whenever you do this, remember me."

Great is the mystery of faith:

We remember that death cannot kill the love of God.

Christ was born on this night,

Christ died, and Christ lives again.

We know that you,

O God, continue to be born unto us each day.

As we break this ordinary bread and pour out this ordinary cup,
remind us of Mary who treasured the ordinary moments—the smell
of hay and the look of that sleeping baby—in her heart. Help us to do
the same, for your beauty and fingerprints are everywhere.

As we gather around the table as a community, remind us of the
people who showed up at that manger scene—the magi and the
shepherds—and may we remember that all are welcome at your
table, regardless of class, age, race, gender, orientation, size, or
status.

As we lift our voices together in prayer and in song, remind us of the
many people who said "No" to Mary and Joseph that night, as well as
the people who finally said, "Yes, there is room here." May we be
people who are always in the habit of saying, "Yes, there is room
here. There is room for you, your dreams, your hopes, your fears,
and your love. All of you are welcome at the table of God."

God of Alleluias and angel choruses— Surround us with your light
this night, for the gospel reminds us that you drew near to us long

before we ever drew near to you—and even in our absence, you continue to draw near to us. So it is with joy in our hearts that we return to this table—step by step—drawing near to you.

Strengthen us. Hold us.

Equip us to tell the story of your good news.

Send, O God,
your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,
that all who share in this bread and cup
may be the body of Christ:
light, life, and love in the world.

Through Christ, the Word made flesh,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most holy,
now and forever. Amen.

We gather these and all of our prayers,
thankful that you have given us your Son in infant form,
and now we turn to you, praying together,

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. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of Wine

The body of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the bread of life.

The blood of Christ.

Thanks be to God for the cup of blessing.

Prayer after Communion

God of starlight,

we came to this table hungry—

Hungry for a glimpse of you.

Hungry to hear the sound of angel choruses.

Hungry for a meal in which all might be fed.

God of Christmas,

we should not be surprised that you met us here.

All of all of us.

And you fed us here.

All of all of us.

And so we see you, amid the winter's snow,

And so we feel you, sending your joy into the world

And so we sing of you, the "Son of God, Love's pure light"

For you alone are worthy.

You alone are God.

And again, we are in awe.

Gratefully we pray, Amen.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

VU # 60: O Come All Ye Faithful vs. 1, 3 & 5

- 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.
- 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**

VU # 91: The First Nowell vs. 1 & 4

- 1 The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
REFRAIN: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. **R**

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

Holy God, Dreamer of dreams,

We offer Cochrane Street United Church to you. We are your people, this is your church. We come to you seeking your guidance, your purpose, your vision. Align our will with yours, so that we will be willing to do whatever it takes to carry out your plan. We ask you to

break through in new ways in our church. Show us the great ministry you have in store for us. Help us dream your dreams. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, giving us the vision, boldness, and confidence to do all that you call us to do. Amen.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

SUNG BENEDICTION VU #67: Silent Night

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!
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.

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.

POSTLUDE

Please take your bulletins with you when you leave the pew.

UPCOMING SERVICES

DECEMBER 27TH

Online service on our Facebook & YouTube pages

JANUARY 3RD

Online service on our Facebook & YouTube pages

JANUARY 10TH 11 AM

Online and In-person



MEMORIALS

*In Loving Memory of my dear parents, Alex & Violet Reid, and brother, Ted,
From June & Barry Hatfield*

*In Loving Memory and Thanksgiving for my special and dear friend,
Margaret Elaine (Lewis) Kalkins, From Ian Barrett*

*In Memory of my brother, Dennis Riche, who was a member
of your congregation, From brother, Jerry and Family*

*In Loving Memory of mother and father, Irene & Walter Tucker,
From daughters Linda Facey and Marilyn Pardy and Families*

*In Memory of brother, Gordon Bursey,
mother & father, Leah (Nicol) and Lewis Bursey,
From Joan & Doug Bursey & Family*

In Memory of Grace Oakley, From Judy & Ed Stratton

In Memory of Reginald Howell, From son, Oscar, and Family

*In Loving Memory of Helen & Horwood Guzzwell,
And Anne & Bill Bourne, From nieces,
Ruth & Catherine Ruth Davidge*

In Memory of the Drodge Family, from Betty Barnes

In memory of Loved Ones from Cheryl, Byron, Ellice and Allana

In loving memory of Rev. Fred and Eileen Bradbury From Carolyn and Gerald

In Memory of my parents, Lorraine & Leslie Critch, from Karen Critch

In Memory of my mom and dad, Fred & Isabelle Percy, From Joyce Grimes

In Loving Memory of Bill Knight and Family and Loved Ones, From June

*In Memory of Ken Reynolds, a son, brother, father, husband, brother-in-law
and uncle. With love from Sonia, Paula & Tim, Leah, Allen & Justine
and Sarah Reynolds and GERALYN LYNCH*

