

December 24, 2011

CHRISTMAS EVE

Welcome to Ellesmere United Church


Unit 160-8960 University High Street, Burnaby, BC, V5A 4Y6
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If this is your first time with us, thank you for coming. Your presence is a blessing for us.

We hope you find a community for worship and a place for personal prayer.

If you have any questions about the order or nature of our community worship, feel free to ask your greeter today, the minister, or the people around you.

We want you to be comfortable and unburdened in our midst, and at peace in your experience of God in worship.

*  Indicates the community standing as able.

@ Indicates the text the minister is reading and reflecting on this Sunday.

Opening of Worship

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: Over the last four Sundays we have lit the four candles that symbolically represent the waiting spirit of faithful followers – those of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Tonight, we light the centre white candle. White is the presence of all colour, of the whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. Hence it symbolically represents the presence of Christ.

(Extinguishes the 4 Advent Candles and lights the Christ Candle)

Community: We welcome the symbolic arrival of the Christ Child into our worship this evening and into our hearts every day!

 **Candle Carol: VU# 6 A Candle Is Burning**

Silent Prayer of Centering

(Let the sounding of the singing bowl lead you into a time of silent centering and with its second sounding bring you back to community.)

Holy Greeting

Minister: The grace of our Sovereign Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Community: **And also with you.**

♪**Song VU# 44 *It Came upon the Midnight Clear***

Prayer (from Voices United)

Minister: Eternal God, in Jesus Christ your light shines in our darkness, giving joy in our sorrow and presence in our loneliness.

Community: **Fill us with the mystery of your Word made flesh, until our hearts overflow with praise and joy, for he is the beginning and the end of all that exists, living forevermore. Amen.**

♪**Invitation to the Scriptures:**

♪**VU# 57 *Oh, How Joyfully***

Epistle:

@Titus 2: 11-14

Minister: This is the witness of the Early Church.

Community: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 96 VU p. 816

Read responsively with Refrain sung.

♪**Song VU #43 *Go, Tell It on the Mountain***

Gospel: Luke 2: 1-7

Lay Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Community: **Write these words on our hearts dear God!**

♪**Song VU# 58 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly***

Gospel: Luke 2: 8-14

Lay Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Community: **Write these words on our hearts dear God!**

♪**Song VU # 64 *O Little Town of Bethlehem***

Gospel: Luke 2: 15-20

Lay Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Community: **Write these words on our hearts dear God!**

♪**Song VU# 46 *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child***

Theological Reflection – Hide and Seek

Musical Reflections

Invitation to Give

♪ *With grateful hearts and open hands*

We bring our tithe this day

To aid your cause, proclaim your love,

And celebrate your way.

O God, who shines most true for us,

In Jesus Christ your Son,

Teach us to walk by faith each day

Until your realm has come!

♪**Song VU# 69 *Away in a Manger***

Prayers of the Community – Voiced and Silent

(If Voiced)

Individual: God hear our prayer.

Community: **And in your love answer.**

Prayer of Jesus (Ecumenical Version)

**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 and Amen.**

♪Song VU# 38 *Angels We Have Heard on High/ Les anges dans nos campagnes*

Closing of Worship

Leader: May the eagerness of the shepherds, the joy of the angels, the determination of the Magi, the faithfulness of Joseph and Mary, and the presence of God's child, be yours this Christmas time.

Community: Having born witness to the miraculous love of God, we go into this holy night in peace.

Closing Blessing

♪Choral Amen.

