

St. Paul's United Church

First Sunday of Advent/Bring a Friend to Church Sunday

10:30 a.m. November 27th, 2016

* Please stand as you are able, sit as you prefer *

Prelude

Noel with Variations

Balbastre

Part 1: We Gather in Community

1-Greeting

2-Introit:

Don't Be Afraid

MV 90

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
and I have promised, promised to be always near.

3-Welcome & Announcements

4-Call to Worship/Candle Lighting Liturgy (Responsive):

Advent is a time for the human heart to wait, while trusting God's eternal time.

How long, O Lord, how long?

For those waiting for answered prayer:

grant your steadfast patience.

For those waiting in the face of uncertainty:

grant unshakeable confidence in your sovereign provision.

For those waiting for justice and mercy to reign:

grant a glimpse of your glory in our wounded world.

For all of us waiting for God's kingdom to come:

grant that we may have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.

First candle is lit

Sung Response: Christ be our Light (vs 1 and refrain)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

**Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.**

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

5-Prayer of Approach

Tween Singers: The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

Time for the Young at Heart:

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Words of Instruction & Invitation:

God's Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, "and the wolf will lie down with the lamb".

Here at this table we get a foretaste of God's banquet. This is indeed God's table, not the church's, and so

all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.
We come to taste the grace eternal, we come to see that God is good.

The Great Thanksgiving:

God is with us,

we are not alone.

Christ is present here,

the Spirit moves within us.

Let us give thanks to God,

in memory and in hope.

Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.

Over the ages you have called (...) would surround the world.

They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.

And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way.

Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus.

Promising her that in her son the world would be changed.

And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

O come, O come Emmanuel

And also we lift our voices in song, singing together the praises of ages: *(MV #203 tune: Kingsfold)*

The Story Remembered:

Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.

We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition

to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.

And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.

And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.

After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.

Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.

We remember how he poured his love out to all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.

And in our remembering we sing the mystery of faith:

(MV #204 tune: Kingsfold)

The Spirit Transforms:

God, you poured your Spirit (...) have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality. And the people all sang:

(MV #205 tune: Kingsfold)

And now, as beloved children of a loving Parent, we pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...

The Bread we break is the Bread of Life. The Cup we Share is the Cup of Promise. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

Gift of Music: Of the Father's Love Begotten VU 61

Prayer After Communion (Unison):

God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen

6-*Hymn of Praise: O Come, O Come Immanuel VU 1

8-Prayer of Confession (Unison):

God, we are ready now. We want peace now. We long to receive the Prince of Peace in our world today. But don't delay too long, Holy One, for soon we'll be busy with parties, and decorating, and baking, and shopping. Our lives are crammed so full, we find it hard to calendar you in; we find it hard to locate the time to welcome the Light of the World. We need your help, O God. Teach us to set aside our party wardrobes, and clothe ourselves in Jesus Christ. Guide us into true readiness, even though we do not know the date and time, when true peace will reign. Wake us up; shake off the cobwebs of our complacency; and take us with you on the path up your holy mountain. Plant your peace within us, so that each day, each moment, we may be ready for the harvest of your love. Amen.

Assurance of God's Love

Part 2: We Listen for the Voice of the Spirit

9-Sung Prayer for Illumination: O Radiant Christ Incarnate Word VU 84 (vs 1)
O radiant Christ, incarnate Word, eternal love revealed in time:
come, make your home within our hearts, that we may dwell in light sublime.

10-Scripture: Romans 13:11-14 Allison Gorrill

One: Herein is wisdom.

All: Thanks be to God.

11-Anthem A Shoot Shall Come Forth Horn

Scripture: Matthew 24:36-44 Pastor Sarah

One: This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Praise be to you, O Christ.

12-Message

Living in an Advent-y Time

Pastor Sarah

13-*Hymn of Praise: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus VU 2

Part 3: We Respond to the Spirit

14-Invitation to Offering

Offertory

God's Son is Coming

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***Dedication Verse:** (Words by Sandra Jenkinson. Sung to "Good King Wenceslas.")

Here our gifts we offer, God, thankful for your blessings.

**Take them, Spirit, use them to spread the hopeful message
that Christ comes to bring to us life for all creation.**

May our gifts help bring to all love and transformation.

***Dedication Prayer (Unison):**

In hope we give our lives to you, in peace we live each day.

With joy we'll serve and worship you, Your love shall guide the way.

**O God, who gave yourself to us in Jesus Christ, your son,
inspire and guide, empower us until your kingdom come. AMEN**

15-Prayers of the People

16-*Hymn of Praise: It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

VU 44 (tune 507)

17-*Blessing and Sending Forth (Responsive):

As we enter into the cold and bitter season of waiting,
may we find warmth in faith.

As we enter into this season of hoping,
may we find holy space.

As we enter into this season of spending,
may we find ways to offer our spirits to the life of the world.

Go with the blessing of God, the bursting of Spirit, the love of the Child within and yet to be birthed. Amen.

18-*Choral Closing: May the God of Hope

VU 424

**May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.**

**May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.**

**Praying, let us work for peace;
singing, share our joy with all;
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.**

Postlude

Toccata on "Veni Emmanuel"

Long

We invite you to stay and enjoy the postlude

Announcements

Greeters:	Nov 27:	Alma & Walter Bidlake
Ushers:	Left Side:	Allison Gorrill & Roger Miller
	Middle:	Isabel Green
	Right Side:	Ann & Harold Raper
	Upstairs:	Hope Brewer & Darrell Bruce
Coffee Hour:	Dec. 4:	Worship Committee

Sympathy and prayers of the congregation are extended to Margaret Nelson and family in the death of Don Nelson whose funeral will be held here this afternoon at 3 p.m.

A donation has been made to the Foundation in memory of Thomas Bell by Doug Warman.

2017 Offering Envelopes are ready this morning in Fraser Hall as well as your Christmas Letter and flyer. Please ensure you pick yours up today.

Bring a Friend to Church Sunday is today! Welcome to all family and friends who join us in worship of God. Following the service we will have a soup and sandwich pot-luck. As before, the pot-luck fellowship is FREE and open to all. Come and share in the bread that sustains body and soul.

Guided by Grace, Love, and Light: Will **NOT** be taking place this afternoon and will continue next week, December 4th.

TWO HENS & A ROOSTER! The Junior Sunday School Class (3 to 6 year olds) will be having a sale in the Fraser Memorial Hall during coffee time following this morning's service. The class is raising money to buy two hens and a rooster for a deserving family in a developing country. Their goal is to raise at least \$50. Items for sale will include farm fresh eggs, homemade cupcakes, chocolate fudge, and cups of hot chocolate.

The **UCW** will be having a sale in the Hall after Church this morning of items that were left over from the Bazaar.

Thinking of joining the church family? We'd love to have you! On December 11th, Joy Sunday in Advent, we will be **welcoming new members** to the congregation. If you would like to be a part of this celebration, contact Pastor Sarah or Rev. Richard for more information.

Spirit Sisters, will be meeting this **Monday November 28th** to continue journeying through The *Power of a Praying Woman*. Gathering in the **Ladies' Parlour, start time 7:00 PM**

Men's Conversation Group will gather this Tuesday, **Nov. 29th** continuing with *Three Ways of Grace*. The group gathers for **conversation and coffee at 6:45** and begins the session with prayer at **7:00 pm in the Ladies Parlour**.

Thanks to all our Sunday School volunteers so far this fall! We still need a leader for the December classes so please prayerfully consider how you might offer your gift of leadership in this. If you know you will be available for a month in the new year, please contact Rev. Richard Bowley(458-1183 or rev.bowley@outlook.com)

SHARE THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS WITH A CHILD

Please return gifts to the Church today, November 27th. ***DO NOT WRAP YOUR GIFT*** If you have any questions, please contact Caroline Phillips (carrieph74@gmail.com) or call 459-8586.

Grandmothers Helping Grandmothers Annual Wreath Sale

Pickup **TODAY** at 83 Grey St. Please contact Sue Short - 455-5377, Anna Goddard - 459-8771, or Nancy MacGarvie - 455-3026. Proceeds to Stephen Lewis Foundation and Help Lesotho