



# West River United Church

*'... seeking, sharing, celebrating abundant life in Christ'*



Rev. Barbara J. Cairns

Andrea Rogers Family & Youth Coordinator  
and all members of West River United Church

Epiphany Sunday

January 3, 2021

Year B

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

ONE: As we gather to share worship, let us pause to remember that we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded and traditional territories of the Mi'kmaq. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with its people.

## PRE- SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WELCOME\*

ONE: Lift your eyes and look around. The light of the babe of Bethlehem shines from the face of each one here. Let us now greet that light, rejoice that we are here together, and share the peace of Christ with a wave. Christ is our joy and our hope. *(Please share the peace of Christ with a friendly wave)*

♪ **O Come All Ye Faithful – VU 60 – vs 1 & 5**

**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;**

**Oh, come, let us adore him;  
Oh, come, let us adore him;  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Christ, the Lord.**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given.  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing;

Oh, come, let us adore him;  
Oh, come, let us adore him;  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Christ, the Lord.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE (IN UNISON)

ALL: **Light shines in the darkness.**

**A star guides our way to the Christ-child.**

**Hope is born again.**

♪ **Christ Be Our Light**

**Christ, be our light!**  
**Shine in our hearts.**  
**Shine through the darkness.**  
**Christ, be our light!**  
**Shine in your church gathered today.**  
**(repeat)**

CALL TO WORSHIP\*\*

ONE: Arise, shine; for your light has come!

ALL: **The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.**

ONE: Lift up your eyes and look around!

ALL: **We shall see and be radiant; our hearts shall rejoice.**

ONE: For the Lord will be our everlasting light and our glory!

ALL: **And so we bring God our worship in humble expectation.**

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.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all  
with one accord  
sing praises to  
our heavenly Lord,  
that hath made heaven  
and earth of nought,  
and with his blood  
our life hath bought.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER \*\*\* (*in unison*)

**ALL: God of promise and light, open our eyes this morning, that we may see Your light in the darkness. Open our hearts, that we may perceive Your promises of justice and righteousness fulfilled in the babe of Bethlehem. May we, like the Magi, have a star to guide us on our journey quest to find the one who will truly set us free. May this time of worship bring us closer to You, that the good news of the birth of light and love will transform our lives. Amen**

**Together we pray the words that Jesus taught us saying:  
Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed by 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  
for ever and ever. Amen.

MINUTES FOR MISSION

TIME FOR ALL AGES

♪ **Away in a Manger – VU 69**

Away in a manger,  
no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus  
laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky  
looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus  
asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,  
the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus,  
no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus;  
look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side  
until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,  
I ask you to stay  
close by me forever

**and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children  
in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven  
to live with you there.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION \*\*\* (*in unison*)

**ALL: God of light and of life, we praise You for your creation, and for the Word made flesh in the child born in Bethlehem. Open our hearts and minds in this time of worship. Just as You led the Magi by the star, lead us by Your Spirit beyond the limits of this world's expectations, to the life where You make all things new through Christ, our Morning Star. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE \*

**ONE: As certain as the dawn follows the night, so is the promise of God's forgiveness and love for us all. Arise and shine, follow the star, find the light of the world born in Bethlehem, and be transformed from darkness into light.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

**ISAIAH 60: 1-6** (*New Revised Standard*)

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the Earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

**MATTHEW 2: 1-12** (*New Revised Standard*)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory – this was during Herod's kingship – a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the

Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified – and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly: It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear. From you will come the leader who will shepherd – rule my people, my Israel."

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time! They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh. In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

### **♪ Arise Your Light Has Come – VU 79**

**Arise, your light is come!  
The Spirit's call obey;  
show forth the glory of your God,  
which shines on you today.**

**Arise, your light is come!  
Fling wide the prison door;  
proclaim the captive's liberty,**

**good tidings to the poor.**

**Arise, your light is come!  
All you in sorrow born  
bind up the broken-hearted ones  
and comfort those who mourn.**

**Arise, your light is come!  
The mountains burst in song!  
Rise up like eagles on the wing;  
God's power will make us strong.**

SERMON – Rev. Barbara J. Cairns

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

♪ **I am the Light of the World – VU 87**

**I am the light of the world!  
You people come and follow me!  
If you follow and love  
you'll learn the mystery  
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and the shepherds  
have found their way home,  
the work of Christmas is begun. R**

**To find the lost and lonely one,  
to heal the broken soul with love,  
to feed the hungry children  
with warmth and good food,  
to feel the earth below, the sky above. R**

**To free the prisoner from all chains,  
to make the powerful care,**

**to rebuild the nations  
with strength and good will,  
to see God's children everywhere. R**

**To bring hope to every task you do,  
to dance at a baby's new birth,  
to make music in  
an old person's heart,  
and sing to the colours of the earth. R**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING\*

ONE: We have seen the light of the world. We have been called to follow the star of promise. Like the Magi, let us bring our gifts to honour the babe of Bethlehem and bring the light to all the dark places in our community and our world.

PRESENTATION OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

**♪ In the Bleak Midwinter – VU 55 – vs. 4**

**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.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER (*in unison*)

**ALL: God of light and promise, we bring our gifts to further Your work in a dark world. May they bring Your light to those overwhelmed by darkness, pain and loneliness. Accept these gifts of money and time, indeed, the gift of our very selves. Let them shine for all to see, and be brought into the sphere of Your love and grace. Amen.**

BENEDICTION \*\*\*\*

ONE: Let us go forth in the light of God's star, committed to a journey of faith and courage.

**ALL: We go forth with the light of Christ in our hearts. We are eager to learn the mystery of all we are meant to do and be.**

ONE: Let us live in tenderness toward all people.

**ALL: We shall share the gifts we have received.**

ONE: May the blessings of God,  
Creator, Christ and Spirit,  
be with us now and all our days.

ALL: Amen.

♪ Joy to the World – VU 59

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.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:  
let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods,  
rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat  
the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground:  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as  
the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth  
and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## POSTLUDE

*\*Ministry Matter, 2021. Worship Annual.,*  
*\*\*Presbyterian Church of Canada Prayers.*

'O Come All Ye Faithful': English trans. Frederick Oakeley 1841, et al, French trans. Claude Rozier 1950 Music: attrib. John Francis Wade ca. 1743

'Christ Be Our Light': Words and Music: Bernadette Farrell © 1993

'The First Nowell': Words: English traditional carol, ca. 17<sup>th</sup> century, alt. Music: English traditional melody, harm. John Stainer 1871, desc, and harm Healey Willan 1926 Refrain harmony and descant copyright © Oxford University Press, Inc.

'Away In a Manger': Words: Author unknown Music: William James Kirkpatrick 1895, arr. Desmond Hassell 1992 Arrangement copyright © 1992 Desmond Hassell

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'Joy to the World': Words: Isaac Watts 1719, alt. Music: attrib. George Frideric Handel 1742, arr. Lowell Mason 1836