

A silhouette of a nativity scene against a dark blue night sky. On the left, three camels are walking towards the right. In the center, a wooden manger is visible with several figures inside, including Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus. The background features a bright star with rays emanating from it, and several smaller stars are scattered across the sky.

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. Jesus is here!*

*2 Corinthians 9:15*

West River United Church

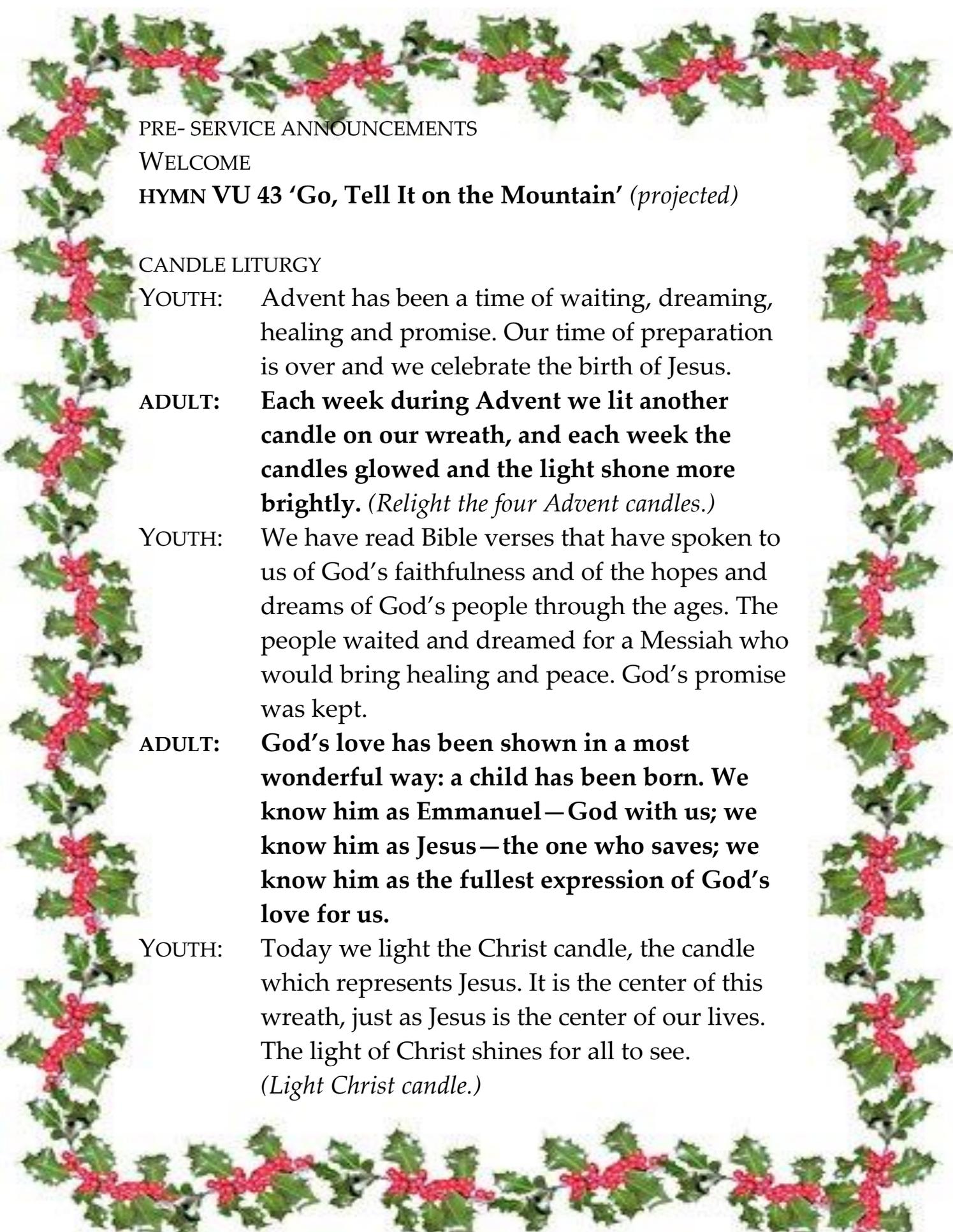
Rev. Barbara J. Cairns

Andrea Rogers

and all members of West River United Church

Christmas Eve Service, December 24th 2018, 4 p.m.

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PRE- SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME

**HYMN VU 43 'Go, Tell It on the Mountain'** (*projected*)

CANDLE LITURGY

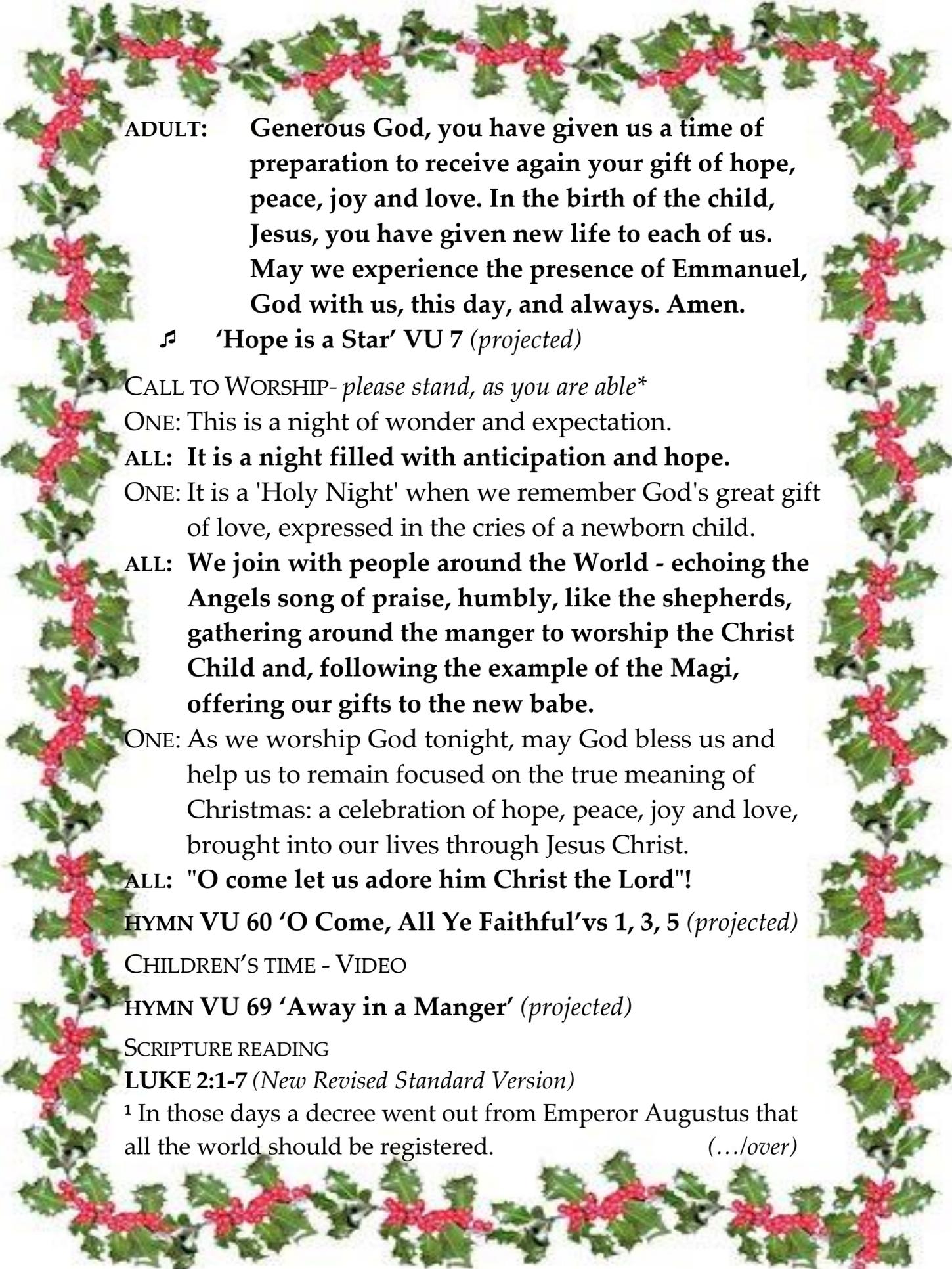
**YOUTH:** Advent has been a time of waiting, dreaming, healing and promise. Our time of preparation is over and we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

**ADULT:** **Each week during Advent we lit another candle on our wreath, and each week the candles glowed and the light shone more brightly.** (*Relight the four Advent candles.*)

**YOUTH:** We have read Bible verses that have spoken to us of God's faithfulness and of the hopes and dreams of God's people through the ages. The people waited and dreamed for a Messiah who would bring healing and peace. God's promise was kept.

**ADULT:** **God's love has been shown in a most wonderful way: a child has been born. We know him as Emmanuel – God with us; we know him as Jesus – the one who saves; we know him as the fullest expression of God's love for us.**

**YOUTH:** Today we light the Christ candle, the candle which represents Jesus. It is the center of this wreath, just as Jesus is the center of our lives. The light of Christ shines for all to see.  
(*Light Christ candle.*)



**ADULT:** Generous God, you have given us a time of preparation to receive again your gift of hope, peace, joy and love. In the birth of the child, Jesus, you have given new life to each of us. May we experience the presence of Emmanuel, God with us, this day, and always. Amen.

♪ 'Hope is a Star' VU 7 (*projected*)

CALL TO WORSHIP- *please stand, as you are able\**

ONE: This is a night of wonder and expectation.

ALL: **It is a night filled with anticipation and hope.**

ONE: It is a 'Holy Night' when we remember God's great gift of love, expressed in the cries of a newborn child.

ALL: **We join with people around the World - echoing the Angels song of praise, humbly, like the shepherds, gathering around the manger to worship the Christ Child and, following the example of the Magi, offering our gifts to the new babe.**

ONE: As we worship God tonight, may God bless us and help us to remain focused on the true meaning of Christmas: a celebration of hope, peace, joy and love, brought into our lives through Jesus Christ.

ALL: **"O come let us adore him Christ the Lord"!**

HYMN VU 60 'O Come, All Ye Faithful' vs 1, 3, 5 (*projected*)

CHILDREN'S TIME - VIDEO

HYMN VU 69 'Away in a Manger' (*projected*)

SCRIPTURE READING

**LUKE 2:1-7** (*New Revised Standard Version*)

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. (*...lover*)



<sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> 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.

MARY WONDER'S

**HYMN VU 74 'What Child Is This'** (*projected*)

SCRIPTURE READING

**LUKE 2:8-14** (*New Revised Standard Version*)

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> 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: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"



**HYMN VU 48 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'** (*projected*)

SHEPHERDS WONDER

**LUKE 2:15-18** (*New Revised Standard Version*)

<sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

**HYMN VU 75 vs 1-4 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks'** (*projected*)

**LUKE 2:19-20** (*New Revised Standard Version*)

<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

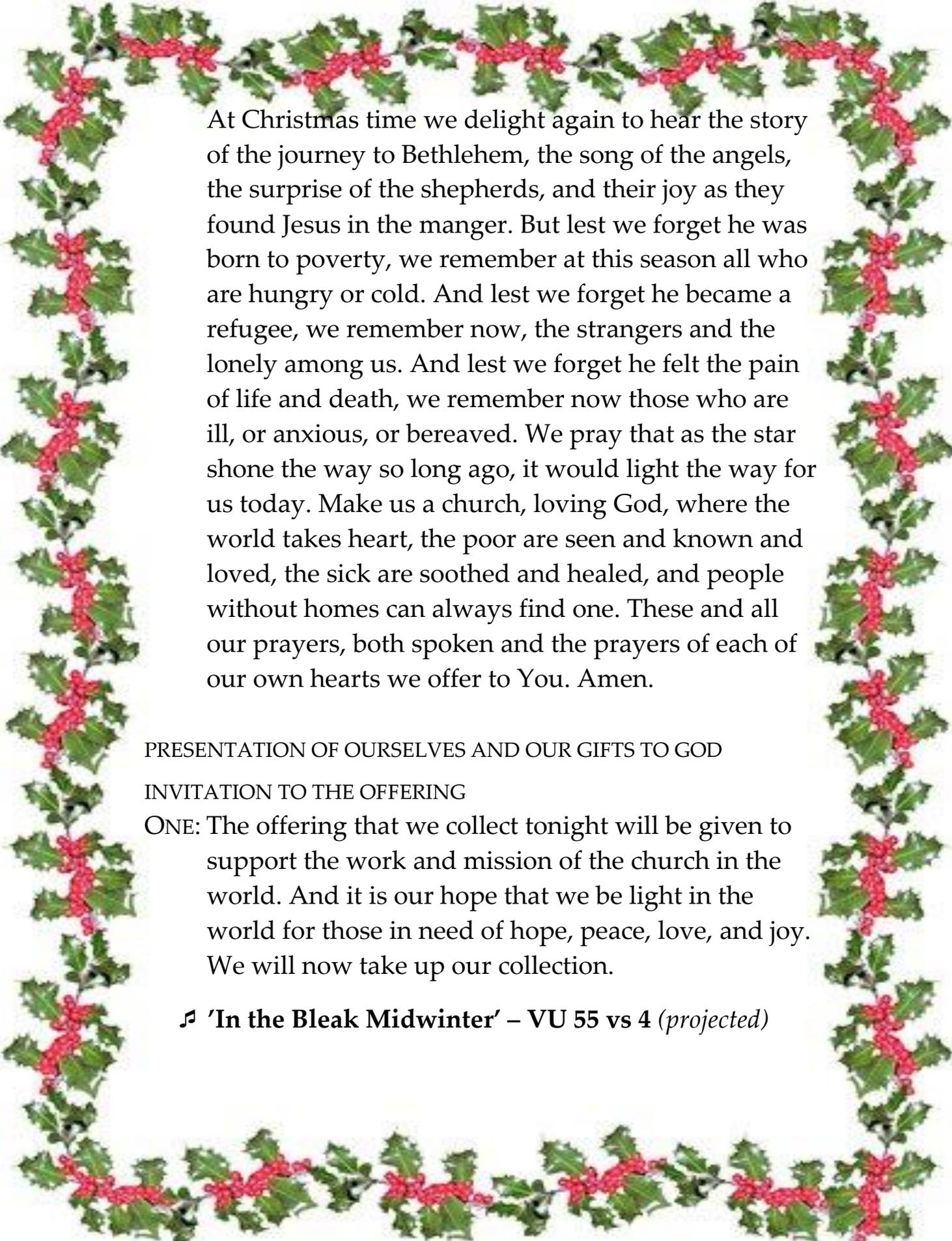
WE WONDER

**HYMN VU 67 'Silent Night, Holy Night'** (*projected*)

PASTORAL PRAYER

ONE: God of grace and power, as we stand on the verge of Christmas Day, we pray that we might keep our focus on the birth of Jesus; The love he brings, the peace he bestows, the hope he carries, and the joy in our hearts.

(.../over)



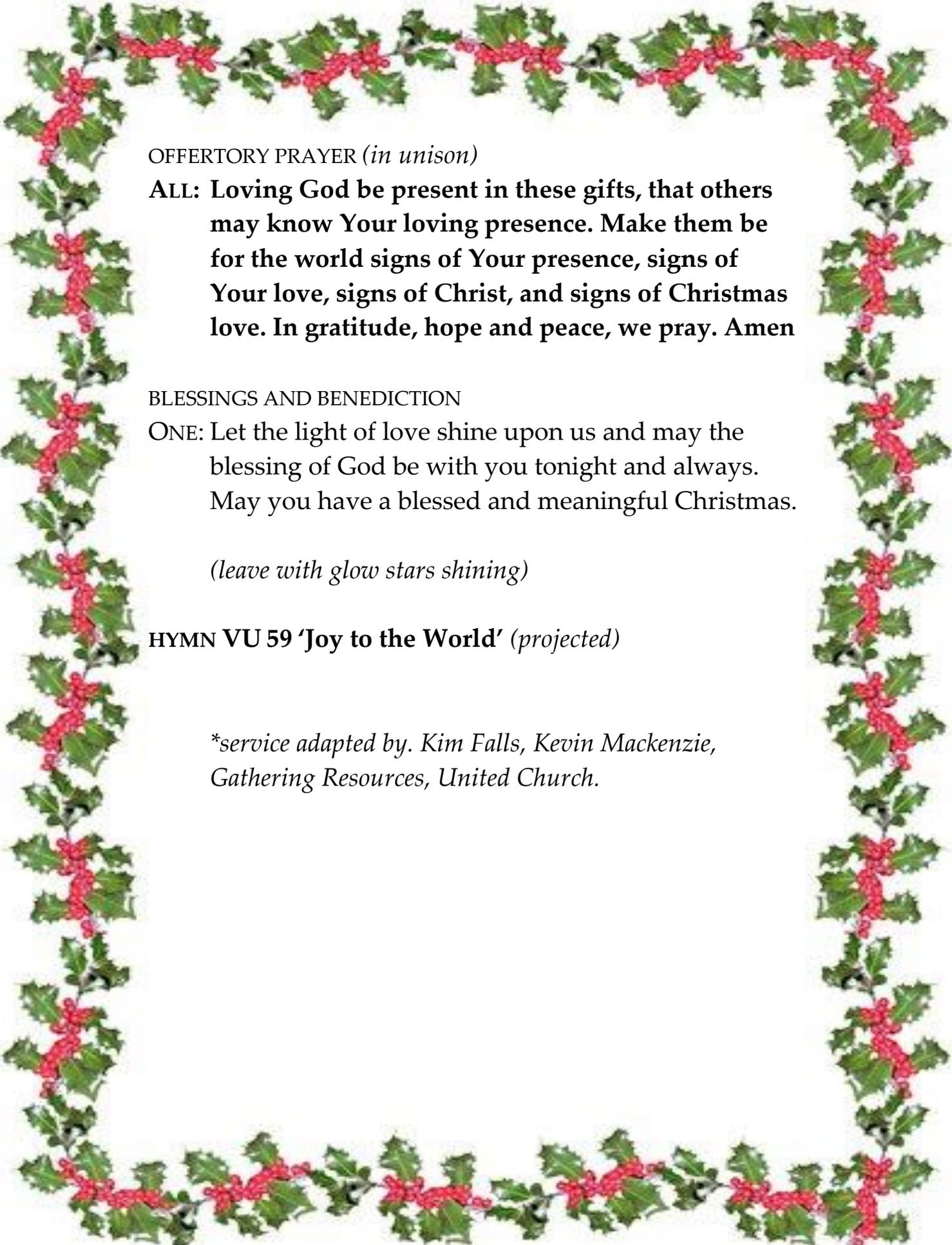
At Christmas time we delight again to hear the story of the journey to Bethlehem, the song of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and their joy as they found Jesus in the manger. But lest we forget he was born to poverty, we remember at this season all who are hungry or cold. And lest we forget he became a refugee, we remember now, the strangers and the lonely among us. And lest we forget he felt the pain of life and death, we remember now those who are ill, or anxious, or bereaved. We pray that as the star shone the way so long ago, it would light the way for us today. Make us a church, loving God, where the world takes heart, the poor are seen and known and loved, the sick are soothed and healed, and people without homes can always find one. These and all our prayers, both spoken and the prayers of each of our own hearts we offer to You. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

ONE: The offering that we collect tonight will be given to support the work and mission of the church in the world. And it is our hope that we be light in the world for those in need of hope, peace, love, and joy. We will now take up our collection.

♪ **'In the Bleak Midwinter'** – VU 55 vs 4 (*projected*)



OFFERTORY PRAYER (*in unison*)

**ALL:** Loving God be present in these gifts, that others may know Your loving presence. Make them be for the world signs of Your presence, signs of Your love, signs of Christ, and signs of Christmas love. In gratitude, hope and peace, we pray. Amen

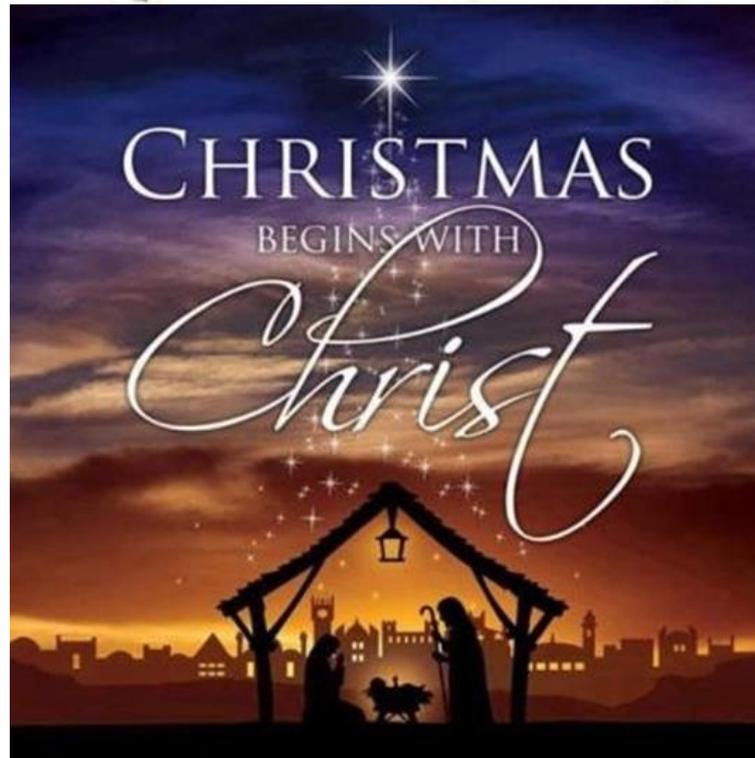
BLESSINGS AND BENEDICTION

ONE: Let the light of love shine upon us and may the blessing of God be with you tonight and always. May you have a blessed and meaningful Christmas.

*(leave with glow stars shining)*

HYMN VU 59 'Joy to the World' (*projected*)

*\*service adapted by. Kim Falls, Kevin Mackenzie,  
Gathering Resources, United Church.*



*May the light of His love  
shine brightly on you this  
Christmas  
and carry you through the New  
Year.*

*Merry Christmas*