

Saint James United Church
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Welcome all visitors and their families who may be worshipping with us this morning through live stream. We pray that you will feel the presence of God's Holy Spirit, as we worship.

St. James United Church, Woodstock, N.B.
Order of service for December 24th, 2020 7:00 P.m.
Christmas Eve.

PRELUDE

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENT

Declaration of Good News: Luke 1:30–33

Welcoming Carol: O Come, All Ye Faithful by Sarah Sharpe

Lighting the Advent Wreath: by Melissa

Advent, the season of preparing, is nearly over. Our waiting is nearly finished. Now is a time of fulfillment and celebration.

In the darkness of night, we give thanks for light.

We light a candle of hope:

hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.

We light a candle of peace:

peace in our hearts, and on earth.

We light a candle of joy:

joy to the world, and within our whole being.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

Please join us on Sunday, December 27th for morning worship at 10:30 a.m., as well as on Live Steam.

What does it mean to have hope amid trying times? Hope is more than a feeling; it isn't simply being perpetually optimistic or having a "hopeful" attitude. Scripture offers us an understanding of hope that is much more robust. Christian hope has heft, endurance, and purpose—and God is its source.

God, "in his great mercy ... has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). And it is our "God of hope" who enables us to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). This reality isn't true only in good times; in fact, it is in dark and difficult times when hope truly shows its mettle.

As Jay Y. Kim writes in "Hope: An Expectant Leap,"

This is what Christian hope looks like. It doesn't ignore fear, anxiety, and doubt; it confronts them. It holds steady, clinging to peace in the midst of chaos. Through life's many treacherous storms ... Christian hope is buoyed by something greater that *has happened* and something greater that *is going to happen again*.

The Body of Christ,
the Bread of Life.

The Lifeblood of Christ,
the Cup of Blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: (unison)

We thank you, God, for breaking into our world and pouring into our lives and our experiences. We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. Amen. Our Father who art in heaven...

Sharing the Christ Light

Carol: Silent Night: Melissa, Zachary, Bryce, Raymond and Barb.
We wish you a Merry Christmas....and a Happy New Year.

Blessing and Benediction

My friends, this is the mystery of God: Emmanuel, God with us. Go in peace knowing that the Spirit of the Christ child is within you, remember to make Him your Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Postlude: We wish you a Merry Christmas....and a Happy New Year.

The bulletin this evening has been dedicated in loving memory of Helen and Richard Likely by Ken and Janet Nichols.

We light a candle of love:
the promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

And now the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.
We light the Christ candle,
the light of the world, the light of possibility. Amen.

Let us pray:

Dear God, we come before you tonight to remember the gift of your Son, Jesus, who is not only Emmanuel, "God with Us," but Savior of all. We thank you for this time and space to worship you. We enter into your presence now with our hearts open to hear from your Holy Spirit as we marvel at the mystery of God becoming man. Help us respond in humble awe and in love for God. In Jesus Christ name we pray. Amen.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

The First Lesson: Genesis 1:26–2:4 by Zachary

Carol: I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day by Melissa Richardson

The Second Lesson: Isaiah 9:2–7 by Adeife

Carol: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing by Melissa

The Third Lesson: Luke 1:26–35 by Kelly

Carol: Oh Holy Night by Melissa Richardson

The Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:1–20: Vanessa Belyea

Carol: Joy to the World by Vanessa Belyea

The Fifth Lesson: John 1:1–14 by Gail Lipsett

Carol: Go Tell It on the Mountain by Melissa

Reflection: THE THOUGHT ABOUT THE BABY

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding of your birth. Bless us and our offering, for we pray in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ name. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Hymn: “Take My Life and Let It Be” verse 1

All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith are welcome here.

God be with you.

And also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Source of Love that knows no boundaries.

Throughout the ages, your songs of liberation have impregnated us with hope for a world where: those considered last and least are first and most; violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and, all siblings work together for peace.

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem; for those who, like the Wise Ones, actively challenge the violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us
in womb and tomb,

in cradle and cross,
in tenderness and compassion.

We join in the Advent prayer of all your people,
“O Come, Emmanuel.”

And, as we wait and watch for your coming among us, we proclaim your goodness.

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

At this time, we pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...all who are ill or alone...all who are close to our hearts...all our sisters who live with fear, oppression or hunger...all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty...for all whom the world counts as last and least. We ask your blessings on...We pray for the church and its many ministries, for nations as they strive for peace and justice, for an end to violence.

God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding,
this wine the medium of our transformation,

this table the foundation of our renewal,
and this community the place of our rebirth. Amen.

At this time, we remember Jesus, who on the night before he died, took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said. “Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.” Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying, “This is the new covenant; remember me.”

Gracious God, Breath of Peace, Source of Love, we pray for your Spirit. Make us, while many, one. Make us, though broken, whole. Make us, despite death, alive. And so, we pray: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Hymn: “Take My Life and Let It Be” verse 2 to 5 while the congregation is served.