

Knox Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Emma Duncan  
December 24, 2025



## Christmas Eve – The Christ Candle

### Declaration of Good News (John 3:16-17)

People of God – hear the Good News: for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Amen.

### Special Music: 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement from Beethoven's Sonata in G opus 79

Sophie Huang on piano

### Carol: O Come, All Ye Faithful (#159, all verses)

### Welcome

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Welcome to our Christmas Eve service – to those who are present in the sanctuary and those who are watching online.

As is our tradition, we will be celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion later in the service. This Sacrament reminds us that Jesus was no ordinary baby, but would grow up to become the Saviour of the world. For those here in the sanctuary, there are gluten free wafers provided with the bread. For those who are watching online, please take some time to get your Communion elements ready.

I offer my gratitude to all who have made this service possible – from the greeters, the musicians, the readers, the Elders, the AV technicians, and those who work behind the scenes.

It is my hope and prayer that you find our time together meaningful as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

## Call to worship (PWS&D Advent Liturgy)

Jeanette and Janine Jaconelli

Leader: In a land ruled by an empire, under the weight of oppression, a young couple search for a place for Mary to give birth, but there was no room at the inn.

People: In the humblest of places, the promised child is born!

Leader: In lowly circumstances, God fulfills the promise to all people. This is the meeting of heaven and earth!

People: The glorious light of that stable burst into the night, announcing a birth that has changed the world. On this night, we light the Christ candle.

## The Christ candle is lit.

Let us pray together:

Living God, may the light of Christ find a home in our hearts, in our congregations and in our world. Hallelujah! Christ is born!

## Special Music: TBD

Hella Hanson

## Christmas Prayers

O Wonderful Counsellor, we gather from near and far to hear an ancient story. This story was first told by the prophets of old who said that a baby would be born in Bethlehem. That baby would grow into a man who would feed his flock in the strength of the Lord and would ultimately give up his life to redeem us. The story of Jesus Christ is the greatest story ever told and we pray that this story will permeate our hearts and minds and transform our world in hope and peace.

O Almighty God, in this season of celebration and joy, we come to you in humble confession. You have given us the greatest gift of all, your Son, Jesus, but our quest to find the perfect gift distracts us. We keep searching for love, hope, peace, and joy in the wrong places, O God. Jesus was born in human flesh, but we fail to see the dignity in the human lives around us.

Forgive us, O God, for our sins are many! Forgive us for forgetting the true meaning of Christmas. Renew in us a sense of awe and wonder as we hear the Christmas story again.

O Everlasting Father, as we offer our worship and praise, we know that there are many who are struggling today. Give strength to those who are trapped in a vicious cycle of war, violence, oppression, and injustice. Send healing to those who suffer because of illness and disease. Grant courage to those who are struggling because of conflict in their families and the stress of the rising cost of living. Bless those who are separated from loved ones either because of long distances or the brokenness of their relationships. Offer comfort to those who grieve. O Lord, there are many reasons why people are afraid and see no reason to celebrate the birth of your Son. Come, Lord Jesus, and let your light shine into the darkness.

O Prince of Peace, guide us by your Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Christmas. Give us the courage of Mary and Joseph. Give us the strength of the shepherds to search for the light of Christ. Show us how to overcome our fear so that we may sing with the angels - "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth, peace."

With confidence that you do hear our prayers, we now pray the prayer that Christ taught us to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Assurance of Pardon

On that first Christmas night, the angels brought glad tidings and their words still echo throughout the ages, "Do not be afraid." Today we celebrate with Christians around the world that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has come to us and to our hurting world. There is no need for us to be afraid because of what Christ accomplished on the cross. Beloved in the Lord – we are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Accept this gift of forgiveness in your life and be at peace with God, your neighbour, and yourself. Amen.

### Children's Time: Christmas Dreams



### First Reading

**Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Isaiah and we will be reading chapter 9, verses 2, and 6-7.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Carol: Once in royal David's city (#166, all verses)**

### Second Reading

**Our 1<sup>st</sup> New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of Luke, and we will be reading chapter 2 verses 1-7.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.

**Carol: While shepherds watched (#138, all verses)**

### Third Reading

**Our 2<sup>nd</sup> New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of Luke, and we will be reading chapter 2 verses 8-20.**

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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.”

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

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

**This is the Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Carol: Angels we have heard on high (#147, all verses)**

## Dedication of our Tithes and Offerings

On behalf of the leadership of Knox, thank you for your generous financial support.

Often the very best gifts are given quietly, even anonymously, and yet such gifts have the power to change lives. God's gift of the Christ Child arrived in a small town, in a humble stable, to a couple no one invited in – and that gift continues to change lives.

The gifts that we present to God this Christmas share in that miracle of new life.

Special Music: Notturmo by Respighi

Sophie Huang on piano

## Song of Thanks: Emmanuel #114

Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
His name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us,  
His name is called Emmanuel.

## Prayer of Dedication

Let us pray. Generous and loving God, there are no words or carols or prayers that could ever thank you enough for the greatest gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. He is our hope and our salvation. Receive our gifts today and bless them so that the world may experience Christ's love and know his peace. Amen.

## Reflection: The Will to Dream - Embodied Promise

### From Pulpit

For the season of Advent, I have been using a resource called the “The Will to Dream” which was published by an American company called Illustrated Ministry.<sup>1</sup> Illustrated Ministry is a progressive Christian company that started making great products for children and their families. Over the years, they have expanded their offerings to include worship planning resources for clergy. This is great because it allows me to coordinate what is heard in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings with what is taught in Sunday School. In the bags that the kids got tonight, they have their own worship bulletin with activities to keep them engaged.

I have enjoyed using this resource because it has focused our attention on the dreams and visions that have been recorded in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments. From Isaiah’s vision of a child being born who would be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) to the visions experienced in the Christmas story. Joseph received a vision from the angel of the Lord in Matthew’s Gospel – “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save the people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21) Mary sang a song of praise called the Magnificat where she envisions the future for her unborn son. (Luke 1:46-55) The shepherds received their own vision – “Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah.” (Luke 2:10-11) And we can’t forget the story of Herod and the wise men that is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. In that story, both

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.illustratedministry.com>

the wise men and Joseph received messages from the Lord through their dreams.  
(Matthew 2:1-21)

The Christmas story is full of dreams and visions. Indeed, these dreams and visions shape our understanding of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Without them, the story would be very different.

For those of you who remember your dreams, the fact that the Christmas story is full of dreams is not surprising, but for people like me who do not remember their dreams, it's makes us think. I only remember my dreams every once in a while, and even then, I can't remember them for very long. And...I have no recent memories of having any nightmares. Based on my own experience – or lack thereof – I have often wondered, who recorded the dreams that we hear about in the Christmas story? How did these dreams get passed on so that they could be recorded in the Gospels for generations of Christians to read and explore?

What would it be like to receive a message from the Lord in your dreams?

Sadly, we will never know the answers to these questions.

But that doesn't mean that we can't have our own dreams based on the Christmas story...

## Walk down to in front of the Communion Table

If we were to have a dream together tonight, what would that be?

Let me set the scene for you...

The sun is about to set and it is getting dark outside. You are dealing with things in your life that make you anxious and afraid. You are struggling in your relationships. You are struggling to make your money last until the next payday. You have people in your life who you are very worried about – loved ones who are sick, friends who are grieving the loss of a loved one, and people from whom Christmas brings no joy. And all of these worries weigh you down BEFORE you turn on the news. There is no doubt that our world is broken. Pick a topic – any topic – climate change, housing, affordability, opioid epidemic, health care, education, the economy, our relationship with other nations. Pick one of these issues and you will find something to be concerned about.

It is getting dark outside. And the light seems far away.

In this midst of this nightmare, a light does start to appear. At first, the light seems far away, but very quickly, it gets brighter and brighter. It also becomes clear that this isn't just any old light from a candle or the flashlight on your cell phone. It is a beautiful, radiant light. It is the dawning of an embodied promise – that God put on human flesh to dwell among us. He did this through this only begotten Son who was born for us. Born in humble circumstances to a young couple who experienced their own fears and anxieties, this child – Jesus Christ, our Saviour, the Messiah, the Lord – would embody the love that God the Father has for all people. A love that is so bright, so strong, so everlasting that we start to realize that this dream doesn't have to be a nightmare.

And that's because God isn't afraid of the dark and neither should we.

No matter what you or your loved ones are dealing with right now, may you dream dreams about God's love for you, made visible through the birth of Jesus Christ. May you dream dreams about peace in your relationships and peace in our world. May you dream dreams that give you joy, happiness, and contentment. May the light of Christ dispel your nightmares and give you hope for whatever comes tomorrow. May you know deep in your very soul that there is no need to be afraid of the dark because Jesus Christ – the embodied love of God – will never leave you.

And now each of us has an opportunity to experience this Good News as we share the Sacrament of Holy Communion together. Through the movement of the Holy Spirit in and around us, may the elements of bread and wine help you bask in the Light of Christ and claim his perfect dream as your own.

Amen.

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

### Invitation

When Jesus was born, there were no videographers present in the stable. There were no paparazzi outside the inn. There weren't even any priests or theologians present. There were no drones following the movement of the shepherds.

And yet, here we are, over 2,000 years after the birth of Christ.

This is part of the mystery of our faith – that generations of faithful men and women have shared the Good News that God has moved into our neighbourhood.

On this holiest of nights, we enter into the mystery of our faith once again to experience the risen Christ, who is the Saviour of the world.

The table of Christ that is set before us is open to all who seek him – dreamers and doers, sinners and saints - all are welcome to share in this Sacrament. The Light of Christ that broke through darkness in Bethlehem so long ago is not reserved for a select few. It is freely available to all people, all around the world.

Beloved in the Lord, I invite you in the name of Jesus Christ, to taste and see that God is good. Amen.

## Apostles' Creed

Let us join together in proclaiming our common faith with the Apostles' Creed.

*Please stand if you are able.*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord,

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Was crucified, died and was buried; He descended to the dead.

On the third day, he rose again;

He ascended into heaven,

He is seated on the right hand of the Father,

And he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,

The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Please be seated.**

## Prayer

God of love, blessed are you for all the wonders of creation. At the dawn of c, you separated the day from the night. You created the vastness of the galaxies down to the tiniest microorganisms. You fashioned us in your own image and in you, we live and move and have our being. With all that we are, we join the world to sing your praise:

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let heaven and nature sing.**

God of hope, as we celebrate your birth here tonight, we acknowledge the great paradox of your life – that you had to die so that we might live.

Though Christ came into the world a helpless infant, he shows us the power of love.

Though he had nowhere to lay his head, we find rest in him.

Though he was poor, he bought us the great treasure of forgiveness.

Though he was rejected by many, he welcomes us all.

Though he died on the cross, he gives new life.

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come. With wonders of his love.**

God of joy, feed us at this table. Holy Spirit, come to us in this time and in this place. Move over our bread and wine. In fellowship with the global Church, pour your Spirit upon all believers so that we may envision a world full of your perfect light. Empower us to be beacon of that light. Strengthen our voices to sing:

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Repeat the sounding joy.**

O Prince of Peace, we are so grateful for the opportunity to worship you on this holiest of nights. May these sacred gifts of bread and wine minister to our souls, inspire our choices, and direct us toward love. We thank you for the sacrificial life of Jesus, who showed us what it means to be fully human. Help us become more like him every day, in both our dreams and actions. To you – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – be all honour and glory are yours, world without end. Amen.

## Institution

Beloved in the Lord, attend to the words of the institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered to us by the apostle Paul:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,  
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,  
"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."  
In the same way he took the cup after supper, saying,  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

On their own, these natural elements of bread and wine are nothing. They are everyday items that were bought in a grocery store or ordered online. And they are too small to satisfy our physical hunger. But through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, these elements are transformed into a joyful mystery that will satisfy our souls.

As the angel said so long ago, don't be afraid to receive these elements into your bodies. They are a beautiful reminder of the hope, joy, peace, and love that we have through Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, come - all who hunger and thirst for God's grace and mercy – come and experience the gifts of God for the people of God!

## Sharing of the Body and Blood

The body of Christ broken for you. // The blood of Christ shed for you.

## Prayer

God of everlasting love, by your grace, our souls have been fed at this feast. Thank you for sending us the Christ child, Emmanuel, God with us! Jesus is the Light of the world and his light is shown to us both in the cradle and in the cross. Give us the courage to be beacons of light who sing with the angels – Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth, peace. In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

Carol: Joy to the World (#153, all verses)

### The Blessing

While we have been in this sanctuary worshipping the Christ Child, the sun has set, so you will be going out into a different environment than when you came into this building.

As we light our candles and sing Silent Night, always remember that no matter how dark it is, Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, and nothing can overcome his light.

Carol: Silent Night (#154, all verses)

*Merry Christmas!*