

## **St. Andrews Presbyterian Church**

*traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.*

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**Dec. 24, 2023 at 7 p.m.**

### **WELCOME –**

Christmas Eve is – in my mind – an evening of great beauty. About 3 p.m., many stores started to close and by 6 p.m. just about everything was locked up. It's the only evening the year that 99 per cent of the business world shuts down. In homes and in churches around the world, we gather and sing. Not just any song, but carols reserved for this time of year. Familiar tunes that are brought back to life for one or two days out of 365. The old tunes, the old words, the old carols. But in a mysterious way, they can be new every time they are sung.

### **PRAYER –**

#### **CAROL – O come all ye faithful**

Isaiah 7:14 -- Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Luke 2:1-7 -- At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

#### **CAROL -- O Holy Night**

**Luke 2:8-12** (NLT) -- That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

### **CAROL -- 138 While Shepherds Watched their flocks**

Luke 2:13-15 (NLT) -- Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." 15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

### **CAROL -- Mary's Boy child**

Luke 2:16-20 -- The shepherds "hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. 17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, 19 but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20 The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

### **CAROL -- Go tell it on the mountain**

**Isaiah 9:6-7** -- For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne

and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

### **CHRIST CANDLE SLIDE**

**Leader:** We lit the first candle, the candle of hope, affirming that we place our hope in Jesus, the light of the world, the Lord of the nations, and the Saviour of God's people. We lit the second candle, the candle of joy, affirming that our joy springs from the strength of Jesus' presence with us. We lit the third candle, the candle of peace, affirming that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who comes to reconcile us to God, to each other, and each one to self. We lit the fourth candle, the candle of love, affirming that God showed his love to us in sending Jesus, His Son, that we might live through Him.

**ALL:** To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Leader:** Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

**ALL:** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

**Leader:** We light this candle, proclaiming that Christ, the light of the world, is born!

### **The Christ candle is lit.**

**ALL:** May all peoples and nations put their hope in Jesus, the Saviour of the world. May our joy in Christ Jesus overflow. May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. May grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, be with us in truth and love. May Christ, the light of the world, live in each of us and in all of us together, that we may fulfill Jesus' call to His followers to be the light of the world, until He comes again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **CAROL -- 154 Silent Night**

**John 1:1-5** -- In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He existed in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. <sup>4</sup> The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

**CAROL -- Hark the Herald Angels sing**

**BENEDICTION** – May the hope, joy and love of Christ be with you – go in peace.

**CAROL -- Noel, Jesus is born**