



## **Christmas Eve Communion Service 2023**

*2018 The United Church of Canada*

CENTERING WORDS

OPENING PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:1-19

### **SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION**

This liturgy is built around the beautiful carol “In the Bleak Midwinter” (Voices United 55). The words of the Sanctus-Benedictus are neatly substituted with the words of the hymn, which also speak of the angels’ adoration and praise. The carol verses act as a response to the communion prayers and encourage congregational participation.

God be with you. **And also, with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**  
Let us give thanks to God. **It is right to give**  
**God thanks and praise.**

God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace to recall your vision of hope for all people and for your world.

Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child. Through your prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice. In Jesus, you revealed your way of forgiveness and love. Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—your promise for the restoration of all creation.

As we gather to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus, the child born into obscurity, amid fear and uncertainty. We remember the fragility of that revelation, as well as the hope he stirred and imagination he inspired, and we read together verse 1 of

**(VU55 vs.1)**

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow; snow on snow.  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern: temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker; the author and finisher of our faith.

We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death, and we read

**(VU55 vs. 2)**

**Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth  
sustain;**

**heaven and earth shall flee away when he  
comes to reign;**

**in the bleak midwinter a stable place  
sufficed**

**the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.**

On that night, in the midst of great confusion  
and fear, Jesus broke bread with friends,  
saying, "This is my body, which I give for you  
and for all. When you do this, remember me."

With a blessing, he took the cup and offered it  
to them saying: "This cup is God's covenant  
which is given for all. When you drink this,  
remember me."

**(VU55 vs. 3)**

**Enough for him, whom cherubim worship  
night and day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of  
hay.**

**Enough for him, whom angels fall down  
before,  
the ox and ass and camel which adore.**

Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God. Bless us,  
these gifts, and what we do here, so that we  
might sing your song of love for your people  
and for your world.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

...Hear our prayers, O God,  
**and in your mercy, answer.**

We pray these things, trusting in God's  
faithfulness revealed:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

(VU55 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 one I would do my part;**

**yet what I can I give him—give my heart.**

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BLESSING

Minister - Rev. Karen Lumley

Lay Worship Leader - Rita Swan