

Music Video Do You Have Room?

Welcome & Announcements -see bulletin

Lighting the Advent Candles

L: In this season of expectant waiting, we have held hope in our hearts,

P: hope that in the vulnerable infant Jesus is our promise for transformation.

the candle of Hope is lit.

L: Hope leads us to pray for peace, acting peacefully to cultivate harmony in all our relations.

P: In that peace, we find the Prince of Peace.

the candle of Peace is lit.

L: Peace transforms into joyful celebration: walls torn down, chasms filled, barriers levelled, valleys bridged.

P: Joy inspires us to dance with abandon.

the candle of Joy is lit.

L: Joy embraced fosters love that makes all things new

P: and, in that newness, we discover the deep meaning of love shared.

the candle of Love is lit.

L: Love self-given through self-emptying, through humility,

P: shows us the Christ, still completely vulnerable, yet filled with promise.

the Christ candle is lit.

Gathering Hymn Words by Gord Dunbar, Tune: VU # 227

In the manger newborn baby,
squalling and weak;
humble mother, desperate, maybe,
while angels speak.

Is his life a love endeavour;
Can the chains of sin he sever?
Will he change the world forever,
Though lowly meek?

Call to Worship

Shepherds, where are you going? Can we go, too?

We are rushing off to Bethlehem. The angels came and told us that a baby was born. Not just any baby, but God's baby, Jesus.

This baby is God's gift of hope and peace, joy, and love for the whole wide world. The angels will watch the sheep, but we've got to go. There is no time to waste.

We are so excited. We are filled with joy! We must see this child, this baby Jesus.

Yes, you can come with us, but you must hurry!

Thank you, shepherds, for your faith and your gift of love. We will join you on this Advent adventure.

Hymn *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, VU # 44

It came upon the midnight clear,	Still through the cloven skies they come,	Yet with the woes of sin and strife	For lo! the days are hastening on,
That glorious song of old, From angels bending near the earth,	With peaceful wings unfurled; And still their heavenly music floats	the world has suffered long; beneath the angel strain have rolled	By prophets seen of old, When with the ever-circling years
To touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, goodwill to all	O'er all the weary world: Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hovering wing,	two thousand years of wrong; and warring human-kind hears not	Shall come the time foretold, When peace shall over all the earth
From heavens all gracious King!"	And ever o'er its Babel sounds The blessed angels sing.	the love song which they bring O hush the noise, and cease your strife,	its ancient splendours fling, And the whole world send back the song
The world in solemn stillness lay		to hear the angels sing.	Which now the angels sing.
To hear the angels sing.			

Gathering Prayer

L: We strain to hear the angels sing, O God, and we search for signs of shepherds coming to town.

P: Help us to notice, to be aware, to accept, and to celebrate the joyous events of this night, and enkindle within us the warmth that can only come from your true Spirit and through Jesus Christ.

L: Oh, the mystery of this night! Tonight, stirs something deep within us: excitement, joy, and that touch of something spiritual.

Be assured this night that whatever has drawn you into this church, God is a part of it. God is a part of you. You are a blessed creation of God: loved always, forgiven when you need it and created for good.

P: Thanks be to God! What a Merry Christmas!

Ministry of Music *Dream a Dream*

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-7 - The Birth of Jesus NIV

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Music Video [Away in a Manger](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4Jcl_ax2OE) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4Jcl_ax2OE

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:8-12 NIV

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Hymn [Angels We Have Heard on High](#), VU # 38

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:13-20 NIV

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Hymn [Angels We Have Heard on High](#), VU # 38

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

REFLECTION: The Innkeeper's Monologue, by Evelyn McLachlan

"Do you have room?"

Really?!

"Do you have room?"

What is this couple thinking?! It's the census for goodness' sake. Everyone has returned home.

"Do you have room?"

L: Have they looked around? Don't they see that you can barely move through the streets of Bethlehem?

P: "Do you have room?"

L: Sure...how about under the table in the kitchen?! There's already my husband, two children, and the cat in our bed. I have lots of room!!

Well, that's what my husband and I were about to say to this couple, but then my husband looked up as he was in the middle of the next sentence, "This is the census...no we do not." And it was at that point he stopped, staring at this young couple with their loud donkey. And then he gave me "the eye" with the nod of his head. He wanted me to look.

I didn't want to look. If I looked, then I might find a corner for them, and I knew we couldn't take another two people, let alone a donkey. But of course, I had to look. I shouldn't have looked. It wasn't just two people; it was like two and nine-tenths of a person, as she was so pregnant. I thought maybe she would have her baby right there and then.

"Do you have room?" Sigh.

"Yes, follow me. Right over here. Leave the donkey there. Don't just stand there, Ishmael, help her off the donkey." My husband and this young woman's husband helped her into the barn. There was something different about the barn that night, though. It was usually filled with deep shadows at night. I never really liked going there. Figured I'd step on a chicken or bump into one of the cows. But the animals were all really quiet. No noise, no mooing.

And the barn was not shadowed at all. It was bright. It felt like there was a star right in it. But the star was outside. Brilliant. I have never seen such a star. Seemed like it was shining just on our little barn.

"Do you have room?" That question will haunt me forever. It was nothing much. Wasn't really a room. But it was safe. It was out of the cold. It was dry. And more than that, it was private...even with the cows, chickens, horse, and the mice. I guess we did have room that night.

Something happened in that room-in that room, underneath the star. I'm still trying to understand it all. Caesar's army was patrolling the streets, collecting taxes from everyone. People were angry and scared. There was a rumour that Herod wasn't happy either and that he was sending his forces out to do some very evil business, but I won't get into that.

In the midst of all this chaos, there was this star, just shining. People were talking about it. Finally, I had everyone taken care of, everyone bedded down for the night. I thought I could finally collapse in bed and get a few hours' sleep before having to get up to make some porridge in the morning. But then, I heard a sheep. I thought, *Oh, isn't that nice*. Closed my eyes. More bleating. I opened my eyes and thought, "*We don't have sheep. Why are there sheep?*" I sat up. More bleating and now talking.

I looked out the window and there were sheep. Everywhere. I dragged Ishmael to look out. He yawned and agreed that there were sheep, and then he crawled back into bed. Sigh! So, I went down to see what was going on. They were all in the barn. Sheep and shepherds, everywhere you looked. I was about to shoo them all out when I heard a couple of the shepherds talking, and what they said shook me.

They were talking about angels, the star, our stable, and God's Messiah. It wasn't making much sense. So, I kept listening. They were remembering the writings from the scroll of Isaiah, that a prophet would be born, and he would be the Saviour of the world. I was about to laugh...and then I saw it.

I saw the light from the star shining on the manger, and in the manger, there was a baby. A baby! And at that moment, I knew. How could I not know? This baby was the hope of the world. This baby was God's love...in the flesh. Even though this baby was the child of this peasant man and woman, I knew that this baby was also mine.

In that brief moment, I knew I had room. I HAD room!! I had room for love. I had room for hope. I had room for forgiveness. I had room for God.

Of all the things that happened that night, I knew I would always have room. But I still needed some sleep. As I returned to my room, to my life, I knew that Bethlehem would be waking up soon, wanting food in their belly and wanting to get into their own little world. And they would not even realize that a Saviour had just entered into the world. I wondered if they would have room for him.

What a night that was...a silent night...a holy night. And to think I almost missed it, in our own home. We had room. We had room not only in our home, but in our lives. The difference that has made in our relationships with one another and in our faith...well, it's just so hard to explain, except to say, there is always room.

Sometimes it's an unexpected place that we might not normally have thought to make room...like my stable! Do you have room? Maybe not in the guest bedroom or even the garage or the shed that stores your snowblower. Where might the Christ child find room? May you make room in those places in your life where you help friends get to a doctor's appointment, or when you find time to visit them. Maybe you will find room to greet someone who is new to you at church. Maybe you have room in the busiest parts of your life, when you stop whatever it is you're doing, take a moment to breathe and to notice what is around you. We may not always realize where or when it is that we are to make room. Our stable turned out to be the most important part of our inn. What about you? I hope you will find room...it will indeed be so worth it! Thanks be to God!

Parting Prayer A Christmas Prayer, VU # 66

**As once you came in the hush of darkness, O God,
so still our hearts now by the wonder of this night.
Make us wise with the wisdom of a little one,
that truth might be born afresh in us.**

**Let not our hearts be busy inns with no room,
but doors opened wide to welcome a Holy Guest,
who is Jesus Christ, alive with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.**

Parting Hymn Go Tell It on the Mountain, VU # 43

Refrain	While shepherds kept	Go tell it on the	The shepherds feared	Down in a lowly manger
Go tell it on the	their watching	mountain	and trembled	the humble Christ was
mountain	Over silent flocks by	Over the hills and	when lo, above the	born,
Over the hills and	night	everywhere	earth	and God sent our
everywhere	Behold throughout the	Go tell it on the	rang out the angel	salvation
Go tell it on the	heavens	mountain	chorus	that blessed Christmas
mountain	There shone a holy	That Jesus Christ is	that hailed our Saviour's	morn.
That Jesus Christ is	light.	born.	birth.	Refrain
born.	Refrain	Refrain	Refrain	

Benediction:

We wish you a merry Christmas, in July, and every day in your hearts!

Choral Amen

Extinguish the Candles