

# Christmas Eve

**Prelude:** “Little Drummer Boy” – Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca)

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, readings by Annette Skillings and the slides by Tracey Major. Tonight, we have many more folks who helped in this Christmas Eve service. Your contributions make this a special and sacred service. Thank you!

## **Call to Worship:**

**Alice:** We come to sing a new song of something that happened long ago and is still happening even now.

**Carol:** We come to remember what steadfast love feels like in our own flesh.

**Gail:** We come to wander back and through time to find ourselves wondering if there is enough goodness and loving kindness to welcome such tender hope again.

**Evelyn:** We come to make a joyful noise for the reflection of God’s glory we see in newborn babies and to believe that somehow that exact imprint of God’s very being is also in me and you.

**Charlene:** We come to wander through all that feels calm and bright to wonder how our meek souls might receive this news then and now.

**Annette:** We come to see all that will be revealed in God’s incarnation.

## **Hymn:** VU 59 “Joy To The World” Verse 1

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

## **Lighting of the Advent Candle:**

**Alice:** For all that we didn’t know we were waiting for, we light the candle of Hope.  
*(First purple candle of hope is lit).*

**Carol:** For the acceptance we now feel that things are not as they should be, we light the candle of Peace.  
*(Second purple candle of peace is lit).*

**Gail:** For this journey we share together, we light the candle of Joy.  
*(Pink candle of joy is lit).*

**Evelyn:** For the work of birth we share on Christmas, we light the candle of Love.  
*(Last purple candle of love is lit).*

**Alice:** For the good news of great joy for all people, we light this candle.

**Carol:** For the peace on Earth that is promised in this tiny bundle, we light this candle.

**Gail:** For Earth rejoicing and the heavens proclaiming such glory, we light this candle.

**Evelyn:** For the goodness and loving kindness that comes in this newborn cry, we light this candle.

**Charlene:** For all the expectation and wandering hope that has brought us to this moment, we light this candle.

**Annette:** For the Light of the World that shines again with fresh wonder tonight, we light the candle that represents the Light of the World.

*(Christ candle is lit).*

**Hymn:** VU 59 “Joy To The World” Verse 2

2 Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:  
let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

**Opening Prayer:** *By Susan Pepper*

**People:** Come, O Christ Child, be born again to us tonight. Come through the gates and fling open the doors to light up this night and every day into the future with new hope and possibility. Come to wander into this region and into our lives. Wander into what we have so fiercely believed would never change and make known to us again what God can do. Bring your good news of great joy into our wandering hopes and dreams for this world and for all people. Come, O Christ Child, be born to us tonight. Amen.

**Hymn:** VU 59 “Joy To The World” Verse 3

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground:  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

**Opening Prayer:** *By Brian Pepper*

**People:** Wander with us, O Christ, into the mystery of the Word become flesh sent to live among us and share in the simple blessing of the baby child. Wonder with us, what it means for us to have bodies that can touch and heal. Wander with us into familiar words and new questions to discover again how this news that the angels first sang is indeed good news for all people. Come, O Christ, to wonder with us.

**Hymn:** VU 59 “Joy To The World” Verse 4

4 He rules the earth with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## **Christmas Play: “What Does Christmas Mean to You?”**

This is Mike Authier, investigative reporter for TV station CHRS. Today on my show, “Mike With a Mic”, I’m standing on the corner of Talbot Trail and Bloomfield Road, to ask the question, “What does Christmas mean to you?” Here comes a young lady now. Excuse me miss, could you tell our viewers at home, what does Christmas mean to you? (Holds out mic towards person)

Woman 1 (Kathy Authier): Christmas. Well to me it means rush, rush, rush. Decorate the house, put up the outdoor lights, trim the tree, do the shopping, wrap the gifts, write the Christmas cards, do the baking, plan Christmas dinner and on and on and on. Sorry I’ve got to go. I’ve got lots to do.

Mike: Wow! She looked really frazzled! Here comes a gentleman. Maybe he will have a different perspective. Excuse me sir, could I ask you what Christmas means to you?

Man 1 (Brian Authier): Christmas means bills to pay. My wife always goes way overboard with the gifts for everyone. She shops for months leading up to Christmas. I know her heart is in the right place, but every time I look at our Visa account, I get heart palpitations!

Mike: Right. I can feel your pain, man. (Laughingly)  
Here comes a young couple. What does Christmas mean to you two?

Woman 2 (Nancy Jackson): Hey! Aren’t you Mike Authier? I follow you on social media. For us Christmas is Christmas parties! You should see our calendar. It’s totally filled.

Man 2 (Don Jackson): Ya, every night, drinks and hors d’oeuvres at one place, dinners at others. By the time Christmas comes, we’re exhausted!

Woman: Christmas is just one big social whirlwind for us. After Christmas, I have to hit the gym like crazy to work off all those extra Christmas pounds.

Mike: Well, I guess for some, Christmas is just a time to get together with friends.  
Excuse me miss, what does Christmas mean to you?

Woman 3 (Shelley Craig): I work in the Tilbury flower shop and Christmas means working like crazy. Overtime, extended hours, ten times as many orders as usual. I’m run off my feet and barely have time to get anything ready for my own family for Christmas. It’s a big relief for me when Christmas is over. Got to go. I can’t be late for work.

Mike: Ok, thank you. Christmas is a big deal for the retail sector.  
Sir, sir. Could you tell me what Christmas means to you?

Man 3 (George Darnley): Christmas, Christmas. It’s the worst most depressing time of the year! Those darn silly Christmas songs start playing in November. “Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer”. What kind of song is that? It’s all just a commercial ploy by the stores to make more money. Everyone is supposed to be so jolly, but what about us people with no family to celebrate with? Let me tell you, it’s no picnic! I dread it every year!

Mike: Sorry to hear that. Hang in there.

Let's get a teenager's opinion. What does Christmas mean to you?

Teenager (Clinton): Hey, is this going to be on TV? Cool!

Christmas, oh you know, like Jesus in the manger, the star, wise men, shepherds and all that stuff we learned about in Sunday School when we were kids, but honestly I don't think about it all that much. Hey did you see that Netflix series about the boy with the deer antlers?

Mike: Ummm. No. I guess I missed that one.

Excuse me sir. I'm doing a TV show and would like to ask you what Christmas means to you.

Man 4 (Tim Jackson): I'm not really comfortable being on TV, but I guess I can tell you, that now that I'm retired, I have time to do volunteer work and at Christmas, I help with the Community Chest Christmas baskets. We collect and deliver food and toys to needy families in our area. I also help serve Christmas dinner at the homeless shelter. I find it very satisfying and it gives meaning to my Christmas.

Mike: That's a great way to celebrate Christmas.

Here comes a mother and her young son. I wonder what their thoughts are. Can you tell me what Christmas means to you?

Son (Alex): Santa Claus!!! Presents!!! I want an Xbox and a million games for it, lego, a bicycle, an iPad, an iPhone, a puppy, a snowmobile and a real pony!

Mike: Good luck with that. I've heard that Santa has put a ban on delivering real animals for Christmas.

Mother (Judy Jackson): (laughing) I'm trying to make Christmas meaningful and not so commercial, but it looks like I'm not doing a good job so far. He listens to his friends at school and watches all those toy commercials on TV and of course, he wants everything he sees. We do go to church and we try to instill the real meaning of Christmas in our kids. We have a nativity scene set up on our mantel, but in this day and age, it seems the focus has shifted away from religion.

Mike: how true. (turning towards someone else) Miss, could you tell our viewers what Christmas mean to you?

Woman 4 (Janet Leppek): To me, Christmas means traditions and spending time with my family. Every Christmas Eve, my family gathers at our house for tourtiere meat pie. After we eat, we get out little Christmas bags that I embroidered our names on. Earlier we drew names and wrote out a kindness that we would do for that person some time during the year and put it in their bag. We take turns reading out what they say. After that, we all go together to the candlelight service at our church. Another tradition that I follow is making a donation to the Salvation Army Christmas kettle. My grandfather began this tradition and then my mother cared it on. Now it's my turn. I hope these traditions are building happy Christmas memories for my family.

Mike: I'm sure they are. It's interesting the different traditions that families come up with. Look at this couple coming, loaded down with parcels. They look like they're ready for Christmas. Hi. Today on "Mike with a Mic", I'm asking what does Christmas mean to you?

Grandma (Ann Wood): This is a very special Christmas for us. We have a new granddaughter and we're so excited! We've been waiting a long time for this day. Seeing Christmas through the eyes of a child once again, brings us such joy. It brings back the feelings of excitement and awe that we felt as children. To hold the child of my child, especially at this time of year, is magical.

Grandpa (Ken Wood): For me, I get a feeling of continuity and hope for the future. I think of all the wonderful Christmases past that we celebrated with family members who are no longer with us and how they would have loved to see this new generation. We plan on making cherished holiday memories with our granddaughter that she will carry into the future for us. It makes me feel like a part of us will continue on.

Mike: Congratulations on your new family member. This is going to be a very special Christmas for you. Here comes an older woman. Let's get her point of view. Excuse me. I wonder if I could ask you what Christmas means to you?

Woman 5 (Elaine Shanks): When I was younger, I came across an article. I think it was in Reader's Digest. It was called One Solitary Life. It was so meaningful to me that I cut it out and have carried it in my wallet ever since. Could I read it to you?

Mike: Of course, go ahead. I'd like to hear it.

Woman 5: (Reading)

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned--put together--have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary life.

Young man, that sums up what Christmas means to me. Celebrating the birth of that one solitary man who spread the message of peace, love and kindness to all the world.

Mike: Thank you.

And on that note, we will conclude our Christmas Eve show. As you've heard, Christmas can have many meanings. I hope you learned as much as I did tonight.

This is Mike Authier signing off and wishing everyone a merry and meaningful Christmas.

Authoured by Judy Jackson – Thank You!!!

**Hymn: VU 43 “Go Tell It On the Mountain”**

*Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.*

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. R
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Saviour's birth! R
- 3 Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent our salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. R

**Scripture: Luke 2: 1- 7 “The Christmas Story”** *Read by Margaret Dodman*

**Reader 1:** And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

**Hymn: VU 74 “What Child is This?”** *Verse 1*

1     What child is this, who laid to rest,  
      on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
      Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
      while shepherds watch are keeping?  
          This, this is Christ the King,  
          whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
          haste, haste to bring him laud,  
          the Babe, the Son of Mary!

**Scripture: Luke 2: 8 – 15 “The Christmas Story”** *Read by Margaret Authier*

**Reader 2:** And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

**Hymn: VU 38 “Angels We Have Heard on High”** *Verse 1*

1     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!

**Scripture: Luke 2: 16 - 20 “The Christmas Story”** *Read by Margaret Darnley*

**Reader 3:** And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

**Hymn: VU 36 “Angels From the Realm of Glory”** *Verse 1*

1     Angels, from the realms of glory,  
      wing your flight o'er all the earth;

ye who sang creation's story,  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
    come and worship, come and worship,  
    worship Christ, the newborn King.

### **Prayers of the People:**

**Eric:** On a night like this as a child lies in a manger feeling the stiffness of hay itch his bare back we pray for all human flesh; for brown flesh and wrinkled flesh, for dimpled skin and for those that have given a pound of flesh, for those with thick skin and thin, for wandering skin and lost skin, for flesh that longs for human touch and skin that crawls with pain and frustration for what this skin can do.

**People:** **We pray for glory and strength and wonder for all whom God favours. We pray that we have heard and seen something tonight that gives glory to God, our God who became flesh - and lived and breathed and loved and grieved.**

**Eric:** When we wander into this silent night having heard this good news sung again, we pray that all peoples will see the salvation of God. We will catch our breath and dare to believe that this good news beats in our hearts and lives in our skin.

**People:** **We will come to see ourselves as a reflection of God's very being so that we will know, more than we did before, that the promise of salvation for all people will be known in the ways that we choose to love this world and all God's people.**

**Eric:** We pray that we will have enough courage to use our hands and feet to make love known. We will touch and heal. We will smooth out the rough ways of justice and lift the lowly and lonely. We will give each other reason to sing with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven! And on earth peace among all whom God favours!"

**People:** **We pray our meek souls will receive this good news then and now, and be forever changed, as we pray the prayer offered to us by the Christ...**

*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, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

### **Invitation to the Offering:** *By Madeline Shanks*

**We come with open hands and open hearts ready to proclaim the good news we've seen and heard tonight. We come celebrating the births of all new babies, throughout the year. We come to give of ourselves fully on this special night to those we love and care for. We come offering forgiveness to those we may have harmed. We come to give ourselves, so that all might know the glory of God. Come, let us offer the gift we need to give tonight.**

### **Dedication Music:** VU 69 "Away In a Manger" *Verse 3*

3     Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
      close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
      Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
      and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

**Prayer of Dedication:** *by Tracey Major*

**Tracey:** Thank you for everyone's gift. May God bless your gift and make this Christmas the best ever!

**Lighting of the Candles:** *By Ruth Anne and Bob Waites*

**Ruth Anne:** We are reminded of the Holy Spirit's presence lighting our lives, illuminating our community, empowering the world to refocus on the baby who changed everything.

**Bob:** Let us light our candles – one light at a time breaking through the night.

**VU 67: Silent Night, Holy Night:**

- 1     Silent night! Holy night!  
      All is calm, all is bright  
      round yon virgin mother and child.  
      Holy infant so tender and mild,  
      sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2     Silent night! Holy night!  
      Son of God, love's pure light  
      radiant beams from thy holy face,  
      with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
      Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
- 3     Silent night! Holy night!  
      Shepherds quake at the sight:  
      glories stream from heaven afar,  
      heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,  
      Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour is born.

**Prayers:** - Please include these people in your prayers this week.

We have offered prayer for these people each Sunday morning just before the Zoom Service. It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as "In the Spirit We Are One".

Cancer: Tom  
Louise  
Betty  
Alison  
Nancy  
Brian  
Becky  
Barry/ Marsha  
Adrein  
Melissa  
Lloyd  
Flo  
George  
Jenny  
Evan – Concussion  
Shawna  
Sarah  
Donna  
Larry

Louise' Granddaughter - Blake  
Ingrid  
Brenda  
Jim  
Zoe  
Melissa  
Francine  
Gary  
Karen  
Jim  
Sherie & Will  
Hunter – Doctor  
Janet / Tracey  
British Columbia & Nova Scotia  
Rigby Family  
Ethan – Brian Surgery  
Jeannie