



Diocese of
New Westminster
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church

serving North Vancouver since 1899

December 24, 2021

Christmas Eve Service

8:00 p.m. Candlelight Eucharist

Celebrant & Preacher: The Reverend Patrick Blaney

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church

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Welcome *We are glad you have joined us for worship this evening.*

Christmas Letter 2021

As I was standing in a long line at the grocery store I got to thinking about the Christian Christmas story. In the past I have mentioned how I find this story both fantastic and at the same time so unlikely. I don't doubt that God would want to become human and walk among us. The God of all creation can do anything, and as our God loves us becoming one of us is a gift to accept and cherish.

But then the story for me becomes logically improbable. If God were to be born human, why would God choose a very young, unwedded couple for this purpose? It seems an unlikely choice for God. If God were to be born into the ancient Israelite culture, why choose Bethlehem as the birth place? Surely Jerusalem with its temple and its history would make more sense. These would appear to be odd choices on the part of God, but the improbable nature of the story just keeps piling on. Jesus was born not in a temple or a place of honour, but in a cold barn with a dirt floor in the middle of the night. Jesus was then wrapped in old swaddling clothes and placed in an animal food trough. If I did not know the Christian story these are not the conditions I would expect God would choose to enter humanity.

The extraordinary nature of this story is still not finished. I do believe that angels would announce God's entry into the world, and they did just that. But they do not come to the authorities or rulers of the region, nor do they come to the privileged and the powerful. Instead the angels come to some of the poorest and most marginalized people in the area – the shepherds watching their flocks by night. You might think the angels would first go to those whose word and testimony would be easily accepted, like the rich and the influential. Instead they choose the opposite end of the social ladder; those in extreme poverty and need.

Lastly Jesus gets visited by three wealthy wise men who give him expensive gifts. Well, I might think to myself, finally this part of the story makes sense. You would expect the Son of God to receive no less. But even this part of the story seems unlikely when you look at it closely. These three wise men are not named and come from some undisclosed region in the far east. Why are they so unknown, so inconspicuous? Surely the story would have been stronger if the rulers of nearby kingdoms had arrived. Authorities from the Kingdom's of Egypt and Phoenicia and

Assyria would have lent far more credibility and weight to the story. So as I am standing in the checkout line I think to myself as unlikely as the Christmas story is, God obviously wanted it just this way. After all the star of Bethlehem was over Bethlehem and not Jerusalem or New York or London for that matter. What Message was God sending by sending Jesus to us in just this way? There are of course many ways you could look at it, but for me it is made most clear in the angelic announcement to the shepherds. Imagine knowing and feeling and living a life of impoverishment, and fear and hunger and prejudice and injustice. Then imagine a host of heavenly angels coming to you, to you specifically, and announcing the Son of God has been born for you. It would be inspiring. It would be fulfilling. It would be life changing. No king or queen, no millionaire or billionaire, no ruler or leader in the world had nor will ever have that experience.

In his ministry Jesus would say that he came especially for those who needed him. At Christmas we celebrate this unlikely story and believe that this miracle recreates itself every year. Jesus is once again coming to those who call for him, coming to those who need him. As I was waiting in the lineup, it was not lost on me that there are so many people this year who need to hear the angels sing of the coming of Jesus. So that is my very wish for all of you. May you and your loved ones be inspired and fulfilled and transformed by the Christmas story. May the peace, hope, joy and love of Christ be with you now and always. Many blessings to you all.

The Reverend Patrick Blaney



The Gathering of the Community

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

All And also with you.

Celebrant Almighty God,
**All to you all hearts are open,
all desires are known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you, and worthily,
magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect

Celebrant Eternal God
**All who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true
light: bring us, who have known the revelation of
that light on earth, to see the radiance of your
heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

Liturgy for the Christ Candle at Christmas - Fulfillment

The Advent time of waiting and preparing is over! We have lit four candles that remind us about longing and peace and joy and love.

(The four Advent candles are lit)

These candles remind us that God promises to be with us, to comfort us, to help us rejoice, and to teach us to love.

Today we celebrate that God has come to be with us in the baby called Jesus.

Today we light one more candle, and we call it the Christ candle.

(The white Christ candle is lit)

This candle reminds us of all God has done for us. God fills us with good things, like hope and peace and joy and love. God is faithful to us. God is with us, now and always.

**All O God, come, travel with us through our lives.
Give us courage to spread your light in the world.
Amen.**

Advent Candle-Lighting *We sing all verses of the hymn.*

Hymn Hope Is a Star

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.**

Refrain:

**When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.**

**Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth.**

Refrain

**Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born.**

Refrain

**Love is a flame that burns in our heart.
Jesus has come and will never depart.**

Refrain

**We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame.
Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.**

Refrain

The Proclamation of the Word

The First Reading:

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

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.
 You have multiplied the nation,
 you have increased its joy;
 they rejoice before you
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.
 For the yoke of their burden,
 and the bar across their shoulders,
 the rod of their oppressor,
 you have broken as on the day of Midian.
 For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
 For a child has been born for us,
 a son given to us;
 authority rests upon his shoulders;
 and he is named
 Wonderful Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore.
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9: 2-7

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All Thanks be to God.

Psalms 96

**O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Honour and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
Worship the Lord in holy splendour;
tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, 'The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity.'
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.**

Psalms Prayer

We worship you, God of glory, in the beauty of holiness, and we joyfully proclaim your just and righteous rule, established for all, through your Son Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

The Second Reading:

A reading from the letter to Titus

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Titus 2:11-14

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All Thanks be to God.

The Gospel— Christmas Eve

Celebrant

The Lord be with you.

All

And also with you.

Celebrant

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

All

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

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 Saviour, 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 favours!'

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.

Luke 2: 1-20

Celebrant
All

The Gospel of Christ.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

The Reverend Patrick Blaney

Time for Reflection

Nicene Creed

Celebrant Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

All **We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of
God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,
light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not
made, of one Being with the Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was
made man. For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father.
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and
glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of The People

The Church: Archbishop Lynne McNaughton our Metropolitan, Bishop John Stephens, Linda Nicholls our Primate, Mark MacDonald the Indigenous Archbishop of Canada and Patrick our Priest. Bishop Brent Alawas, and the Clergy and People of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines. Our companion parish, St John the Evangelist Mission and Outstations, Pasnadan The Reverend Tristan Bati-el. The Deanery of Royal City/South Burnaby – The Revd Greg Jenkins, Regional Dean; The Deanery of Point Grey – The Revd Christine Rowe, Regional Dean.

The Local Community: City & District of North Vancouver, Queen Mary Community School.

The World: *We give thanks for the words of your son, Jesus Christ,
which shook the earth and opened our eyes to your coming reign,
assuring us that even when the world is thrown into chaos
your tenderness and lasting love remain as our sure hope.*

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Those in Need: For those who are sick, hospitalized and in need of our prayers. This week, our prayers are requested especially for these members and friends of our St. John's faith community: Kelly, Dorothy D., Jaye E., Elle D., Allison M., Pat K., Yvonne M., Leone J., Flo L., Doreen S., Joan C.' Also for Andy and Raili M., Meherunissa, , Karen C., C.L.J.T., Sandro Y., Lesley G., Ron and Rosemary P., Peri, Maria., Liam, Avis R., Jean W., Laurence W., Jean S., Zina F., Elizabeth B., Frankie and J.J.T.

The Dearly Departed: Those we no longer see, but they live forever in our hearts.

In Thanksgiving: In our cycle of prayer, we pray for these members of our faith community: Flo Legebokow, Connie Little, Gillian Lyles, Tracey MacLennan and Annelise Weddigen, Margaret Mainwaring, Peri Mainwaring and family and Galina Martyniuk.

Confession and Absolution

Celebrant Dear friends in Christ,
 God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy;
 God welcomes us
 and invites us to this table.
 Let us confess our sins,
 confident in God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept.

Celebrant Most merciful God,
All we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us,
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy upon you,
 pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
 confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
 and keep you in eternal life;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Sharing of The Peace

We stand as we are able and greet our neighbours in the peace of Christ.

Celebrant May the peace of Christ always be with you.
All And also with you.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Representatives of the people present the gifts of bread and wine for the Eucharist (with money and other gifts for the needs and responsibilities of the Church) to the deacon or celebrant before the altar. Your thoughtful and generous gifts enable our worship and ministry to our world. We thank you.

Doxology



Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken (1637–1710).

The Prayer Over the Gifts

Celebrant
All

Source of light and gladness,
accept all we offer on this joyful feast.
May we grow up in him who unites our lives to
yours; for he is Lord now and for ever. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving/Eucharistic Prayer 3 (DoNW)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
All And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
All We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Celebrant Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the mystery of his incarnation was made perfect man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; in him we have seen a new and radiant vision of your glory. Therefore with all the angels of heaven, we lift our voices and sing our joyful hymn of praise to proclaim the glory of your name.

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Celebrant We give thanks to you, Lord our God,
 for the goodness and love
 you have made known to us in creation;
 in calling Israel to be your people;
 in your Word spoken through the prophets;
 and above all in the Word made flesh,
 Jesus your Son.
 For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate
 from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer
 of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil,
 and made us worthy to stand before you.

In him, you have brought us out of error into truth,
out of isolation into community, out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and
death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus
Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to
you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
and said, " Take, eat: this is my body which is given
for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."
After supper he took the cup of wine;
and when he had given thanks,
he gave it to them, and said,

Celebrant

"Drink this, all of you:
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this for the remembrance of me."
Therefore, Father, according to his command,

All

we remember his death,
we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory;

Celebrant

And we offer our sacrifice
of praise and thanksgiving
to you, Lord of all;
presenting to you, from your creation,
this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God,
to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts,
that they may be the sacrament
of the body of Christ and his blood of the new
covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice,
that we, made acceptable in him,
may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
In the fullness of time,

reconcile all things in Christ, and make them new,
 and bring us to that city of light
 where you dwell with all your sons and daughters;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church,
 and the author of our salvation;
 by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father,
 now and for ever.

All

Amen.

Celebrant
All

As our Saviour taught us to pray, let us say,
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant

We break this bread
 to share in the body of Christ.

All

We, being many, are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.

The Communion

Celebrant The Gifts of God, for the people of God.
All Thanks be to God.

All who love God and desire Christ are welcome to receive communion at this table. Gluten-free wafers are available. Please let the Eucharistic Administrator know if you wish to receive one. Anyone desiring a blessing should fold their arms across their chest after receiving communion, as an indication to the priest.

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant Father of all,
**All tonight you have united earth and heaven
 in sending your Son to take our human nature.
 May we who have tasted heavenly things
 share in the life of his eternal kingdom.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.**

Hymn***Silent Night***

**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**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night
Son of God, oh, 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
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth**

The Doxology

Celebrant
All

Glory to God,
**Whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

Recessional Hymn - Joy to the World

**Joy to The world! the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing**

**Joy to the world! the Savior reign
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy**

**He rules the world 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 wonder wonders of His love**

Dismissal

Celebrant

The Lord be with you.

All

And also with you.

Celebrant

Go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Our worship is now over, and our service begins.

All

Thanks be to God.

We wish you all a wonderful Christmas.



