

Christmas Eve Communion

December 24 2025 | 9:00pm

MP

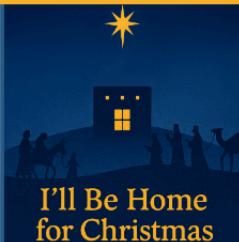
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Image: Mary: Love Forever Being Born by Iconographer Kelly Latimore, printed with permission

Gathering in the FBCH Sanctuary

Prayer candles are available in the north transept if you would like to light one as part of your prayer this morning. For more information about the life of FBCH, visit our website: fbchalifax.ca or like us on social media.



I'll Be Home
for Christmas

*Stand as you are able

Wifi Password for FBCH Guest: youareloved

Christmas Medley Prelude

Leander Mendoza, vocals & piano

Ringing of the Trinity

"There is reason the sky gets dark at night, we were not meant to see everything all the time. We are meant to rest and trust even in the darkness."

-Morgan Harper Nichols

Summoning Prayer

Rusty Edwards

(by Bruce Powers)

The impossible is about to happen in a manger.
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
**those who lived in a land of deep darkness,
on them has the light shined!**

This is the evening when creation stood still and held its breath,
for God was doing the most unbelievable, dangerous thing.

**This is the evening when God embraced humanity
from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.**

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth. Amen!**

Silent Reflection



*Carol

123 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

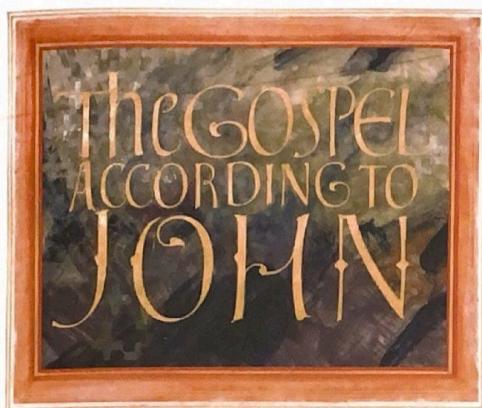
1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un - furled,
3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf-fered long;
4 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
5 For lo, the days are has-tening on, by proph-ets seen of old,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heaven-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world:
be -neath the heaven-ly hymn have rolled two thou-sand years of wrong;
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow,
when with the ev - er - cir-cling years shall come the time fore - told,

"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gra-cious King":
a - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov-ering wing,
and we at war on earth hear not the tid - ings that they bring;
look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing:
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,

the world in sol - emn still-ness lay, to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an - gels sing.
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the an - gels sing!
O, rest be -side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing.
and the whole world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

The "it" of the first line of this text by a Unitarian minister does not refer to the birth of Jesus, but to "that glorious song of old," the angelic tidings of peace on earth. The restored third stanza laments how often the noise of human strife has obscured that message.



IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. **H**E WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD, ALL THINGS CAME INTO BEING THROUGH HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM NOT ONE THING CAME INTO BEING. WHAT HAS COME INTO BEING IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE. **T**HE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS DID NOT OVERCOME IT. THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD, WHOSE NAME WAS JOHN. **H**E CAME AS A WITNESS TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT ALL MIGHT BELIEVE THROUGH HIM. **H**E HIMSELF WAS NOT THE LIGHT, BUT HE CAME TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT, THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH ENLIGHTENS EVERYONE, WAS COMING INTO THE WORLD. **H**E WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD CAME INTO BEING THROUGH HIM; YET THE WORLD DID NOT

11 KNOW HIM. **H**E CAME TO WHAT WAS HIS OWN, & HIS OWN PEOPLE DID NOT ACCEPT HIM. **B**UT TO ALL WHO RECEIVED HIM, WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME, HE GAVE POWER TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, WHO WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD OR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH, OR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD. **A**ND THE WORD BECAME FLESH & LIVED AMONG US, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF A FATHER'S ONLY SON, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.

15 John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'" **16** From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. **17** The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

19 **T**his is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He confessed & did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." **21** And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." **22** "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." **23** Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" **24** He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord!'"

24 as the prophet Isaiah said. **25** Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. **26** They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" **27** John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, **28** the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal."

29 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. **30** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him & declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" **31** This

Reader For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.

All Thanks be to God.

*Carol

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king.
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the vir-gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the in-car - nate de - i - ty,
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, "Hark, how all the welkin rings." The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg's introduction of moveable type.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.

MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr. William Hayman Cummings, 1855

MENDELSSOHN

7.7.7.7.D with refrain

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

SACRED FEAST

The Peace

Celebrant The angels said it to startled shepherds and Jesus said it to frightened followers. And now these words which come from heaven are shared to make us whole and make us one:

All Peace be with you.
 And also with you.

Invitation to the Feast

Celebrant Holy God,
In the beginning was darkness, mystery, and you. By your own Word, you created life out of the darkness, calling forth all plants of the earth, all fish of the seas, all creatures of the land and forming human community. You forever transformed our darkness.

Ever-persistent and ever-loving God,
Jesus was born in the night, lived and loved in dark times, drawing the lost and forgotten, the hurt and the wounded, the oppressed and depressed to the wellspring of life. He changed water into wine, called unheralded workers to be disciples, preached good news to the poor, healed the sick and beckoned people to love their neighbour. By his baptism, suffering, death, and resurrection, he revealed the depths of your love and your power to transform darkness into the place of your creative, liberating, and transformative presence. Amen.

Thanksgiving

Celebrant Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who walks with us the road of our world's suffering,
and who is known to us in the breaking of bread.

During his final meal before his death, he took bread.
And when he had blessed it, he broke it
and said to his disciples, "This is my body. It is given for
you. Do this to remember me."

Later in the meal, he took a cup of wine;
and after he had given thanks he said,
"In this cup is the new relationship with God made
possible because of my death. Drink it, all of you... to
remember me."

So we will do as Jesus did.
We take this bread and this wine,
the produce of the earth and the work of human hands
through which Jesus has promised
to make himself known.
And as he said a prayer before sharing,
let us follow his example.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Creator, 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, for ever and
ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread & Pouring of the Wine

Celebrant All of you who hunger and thirst
for a better life,
for a deeper faith,
for a better world,
here is the bread of life: feed on it with gratitude;
here is the cup of salvation: drink from it and believe.

All **These are the gifts of God for the people of God.**

Celebrant So come to this table,
you who have much faith
and you who would like to have more;
you who have been here often
and you who have not been for a long time;
you who have tried to follow Jesus,
and you who have failed.
Come, it is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

Sharing the Feast of Christ

Those worshiping online are invited to partake of communion from home. Use whatever bread you have. Pour a cup of juice or wine. If you do not have that, water will be fine (Jesus once changed water into exquisite wine).

Music for Reflection

Leander Mendoza, soloist
Gesu, Bambino -Pietro Yon

***Recessional Carol (next page)**

Silent Night, Holy Night! 122

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth-er and child! Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and
 glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heaven-ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - diant beams from thy ho-ly face, with the dawn of re-deem - ing
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav-en-ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

The tradition that this carol's tune was created for guitar accompaniment at its first singing on Christmas Eve 1818 seems reliable, though a recent find shows that the text was about two years old. But there is no question that this is now a favorite Christmas carol worldwide.

TEXT: Joseph Mohr, 1816; stanzas 1-3, English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863;
 stanza 4, English trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell, 1863, alt.
 MUSIC: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818
 Korean Trans. © The Christian Literature Society of Korea

STILLE NACHT
 Irregular

Benediction

Rusty Edwards

Postlude

Lynette Wahlstrom, Organ

Fantasia on "Silent Night" -Wilbur Held

Donations

All contributions to FBCH support our mission and ministry and are greatly appreciated. Offering boxes are located at the side doors at the back of the Sanctuary. You can also go to our website fbchalifax.ca and click on the Ways to Give link for information about how to financially support the ministries of FBCH, including e-transfers or setting up recurring donations.