



BETHEL UNITED CHURCH

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Minister: Rev. Norm Laird
Music Director: Sarah Makins

November 29, 2009
1st Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Musical Prelude:

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of 1st Advent Candle:

The days grow short and the nights grow long, as the Northern Earth settles into its winter rest, its winter Sabbath. We welcome this rest, but at the same time are a little uneasy. Already we look forward to the lengthening days and the reawakening of natural life.

We light this first candle to hold our hope for the turning of the sunlight in just a few short weeks. We light this first candle to hold our hope that the stories of the star and newborn baby will once more bring a renewed light to our lives.

Carol Sing: Which are your favourite Advent and Christmas carols?

Lighting Candles of Joy and Concern

Passing the Peace of Christ

2

Readings:

Isaiah 11:1-4 *p.640*

Luke 1:26-38 *p.56 - 57*

One: God speaks through human voices.

Response: **God's words are heard in human hearts and minds.**

Musical Pause

Sermon

Hymn: Mysterious Birth (see insert)

Offering: We consider those who are visiting with us this morning to be our guests. As a guest, when the offering plate is passed by you, please do not feel obligated to place anything on it.

Prayer of Dedication: **Loving God, we are your servants in the world and these gifts today are meant to serve as well. May we be blessing, may our offerings be blessing, as we give freely for the well-being of all who live. Amen**

Minute for Mission: 'Relief and Justice-seeking Go Together'

Prayers of and for the people and the prayer from Jesus

Hymn: 9 VU, People, Look East

Benediction

Choral Closing: 37 VU, Gloria

Postlude

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The Life and Work of the Congregation November 29, 2009

Welcome! We are glad you came! **Visitors** are asked to sign our guest book in the vestibule. **All are invited** to the auditorium following the service for refreshments and visiting.

Coffee (regular and decaf.) and juice are being served in the narthex each morning before the service. This is an opportunity to socialize prior to the Sunday worship services and is one way congregations are engaging in the **Emerging Spirit Campaign**.

This morning:

Head Usher: Doug Winmill

Ushers and Greeters: Barb Bourassa
Armand Bourassa

Greeter and Lift Operator: Doug Winmill

Reader: Marj McKinnon

Today's bulletin is sponsored by Davis Morrison and his daughter, Anne, in loving memory of Marguerite Morrison.

'Hanging of the Greens' will be today, Sunday, November 29. We hope you can stay after the service to help decorate our church for the Christmas Season. We will have a potluck lunch prior to decorating. We need as many people to stay as possible, more help is required.

Advent Newsletters are in the mailboxes. Extra copies are on the literature table. If you didn't take yours last Sunday, please do so today, as we will be mailing them out this week. Any letters that you could deliver to your neighbours would save mailing costs. Thank you.

Reminder: UCW Potluck Dinner and Annual Meeting tomorrow, Monday, Nov. 30 at 12:00 noon in the gym.

The Communication and Contact Committee will again be preparing Christmas Flowers for 18 to 20 shut-ins to be delivered on December 20. If you are able to help by making a delivery, please contact Barb Bourassa after the service on Dec. 20.

Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday, Dec. 5th/09, at 9:00 a.m. in the Social Hall at Bethel United Church. There will be discussion about Prairie Agriculture and it's future. All men are welcome.

We are looking for **MUSICANS and SINGERS** who might like to participate in our **Sunday services**. If you are one of the musical, or know of someone who is, **please speak to Sarah**.

A potluck with the International Women of Saskatoon will be held on December 12, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at Bethel United Church in the gym. Details to follow.

Hand sanitizer is available on the table in the narthex and in the gymnasium.

Reminder: Anyone attending the Dinner and Play at Rosthern on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009 should be at Bethel United Church by 5:00 p.m. The bus will be leaving the Church at 5:00 p.m.

Hi everyone. Sarah here!! I would like to invite any and all in our happy congregation to take some Christmas carols that we will be singing together in the month of December in worship, out and about to share with others after our Sunday service. Each carol-sing would last about 20 minutes and we would chat a little with the residents after (approx. total time 45 minutes).

We are looking at two dates/locations:

Event #1

Date: Dec. 6th

Location: Luther Towers

Event #2

Date: Dec. 13th, 1:30 pm

Location: Stensrud Lodge

This is another way for us to give of ourselves and share with others without any financial cost.

After Sunday worship, we would simply hop in our cars (if anyone needs a ride let us know) and drive over to the site.

If you are interested, please come and see me at the piano after the service.

SHINING LIGHT ON THE PATH – An Exploration of Modern Mystical Spirituality. Instructor **Norm Laird** who wrote the book "**Just Another Creation Myth**" is teaching this six-week course; the last session is this **Mon., Nov. 30/2009 at 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 pm** at the **Alice Turner Branch Library, 110 Nelson road**. The cost is \$5.00/session or \$25.00 for all six sessions. Sponsored by **Bethel United Church** (call 343-6085). Norm will continue with a new course in the new year.

2010 Bulletin Covers – Cost is **\$30.00** to sponsor a bulletin. Dates available for the next three months in 2010 are **Jan. 17, Jan. 31, Feb. 14**, and the first three Sundays in March.

EGADZ Christmas Party – The Saskatoon downtown Youth Centre at 301 – 1st Ave. North (S7K 1X5) will be holding its Christmas party on Dec. 21, 2009. They estimate that they will need to provide gifts for 230 young people and 30 toddlers. Would you be able to help by donating gift items? Examples of gift items are: toiletries, mitts, socks, T-shirts, toques, art supplies, books, DVD/VHS, toys and stocking stuffers. For more details check out the posted green sheet by the main office door. **Note: donations must be received by Dec. 13-2009.**

Other Church and Community events:

The Fall Concert of the Saskatoon Choral Society will be held on **Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009 at 2:30 pm** at **Grace-Westminster United Church** under the direction of Naomi Friesen and Janet Wilson as accompanist. The Choral Society shares a variety of choral music. Admission: Adults \$10.00, children \$5.00. For tickets please contact Elaine Wanhella at 477-2375 or Peggy Jakes at 374-2443.

Grosvenor Park United Church – Sunday, Dec. 6 at 3:00 pm. 'Kids of Note' Christmas Concert. Call 653-1201.

Zodiac Tapestry Handbells on Saturday, **December 12, 2009 at 7:30 pm** at **Grace-Westminster United Church**.

Oliver Lodge Christmas puddings for sale – Large \$12.00, Small \$7.00 and Mini - \$5.00. Please contact Recreation Dept. to place your order Phone #382-4111 Ext. 34.

Mayfair United Church – Dinner Theatre on **Dec. 3, 4 & 5 at 6:00 p.m.** Sunday, **Dec. 6 - Dessert & show** For tickets call 382-6446. See poster for cost of meal or show.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Dec. 6/09 at St. Thomas More Cafeteria. See poster.

The Sounds of the Season will be today, **Sun, Nov. 29/09 at 2:00 pm** at St. Martin's United Church.

Saskatoon Health Region – Call for Volunteers. Anyone who has questions call **655-5823**. See posted info.

Third Avenue UC Barn Service on the Lawn – **Dec. 6** at **7:00 p.m.** (Christmas Story and Caroling). Noon hour concerts.

The Cecilian Singers present **Christmas Frost, Christmas Joy** on **Sat., Dec. 12th** at **7:30 pm** at **Grosvenor Park United Church**. Tickets-\$12 in advance from McNally Robinson Booksellers, John King of Grace-Westminster or any member of the Singers - \$15.00 at the door, children under 12 are free.

Blue Christmas Service at **Grosvenor Park United Church** on Mon., Dec. 7 at 7:30 pm. Followed by hot cider and cookies.

Christmas Tea and Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 5th from **2:00 to 4:00 pm** at **St. Martin's United Church**. Phone: 343-7101 or smartinsunitedchurch@shaw.ca

Meetings and events this week:

Monday:

- Ladies Fitness, 9:15 am (Gym)
- UCW Potluck and Annual Meeting, 12:00 noon (Gym)
- Cubs, 7:00 pm (Social Hall)
- Shining Light on the Path, 7:00-9:00 pm (Alice Turner Library Branch)

Tuesday:

- Beavers, 6:30 pm (Social Hall)
- Choral Society, 7:00 pm (Sanctuary and Social Hall)
- Venturers, 7:00 – 9:00 pm (Upper Room) 9:00 – 9:30 pm (Gym)

Wednesday:

- Bible Study, 10:00 am (Gym)
- CHEP Good Food Boxes delivered, 2:00 pm
- Scouts, 7:00 pm (Gym)

Thursday:

- Ladies Fitness, 9:15 am (Gym)

Saturday:

- Men's Breakfast, 9:00 am (Social Hall)

Scripture readings for next Sunday, Dec. 6:

Matthew 2:1-12

Stewardship Seconds 2009 - Nov. 29:

Generosity does not ask "What have you done for me lately?" Generosity is giving without counting the cost.

Stewardship discussion last Sunday.

The United Church website says "Christians are called to participate in God's mission – the mission reflected in Jesus' life and ministry. We do that as stewards in every decision about how we (as individuals and in faith communities) use all that God gives us – time, abilities, material resources, relationships – in a lifestyle of discipleship." Jesus talked more about money and wealth and how they affect relationships with God and each other than any other subject. Sixteen of the thirty eight parables relate to wealth or possessions.

We discussed the fact that when we say the word stewardship most people immediately think of money. However, we talked about the fact that stewardship is, or should be, part of every aspect of our lives. It needs to be the basis of our decision making:

- In the management and use of both our own property and church property.
- In the utilization and effective skills and abilities of the congregation.
- In the management of time for both staff and volunteers.
- In the effective and appropriate use of our money for both the present needs and long term planning.
- In how we balance what we give ourselves and what we give others.

We decided we need to be thinking about stewardship in all the changes that are taking place in our church.

Mysterious Birth

Chorus

Sing, for the Light is coming.
Christmas our day is oh, so near.
Sing, for the light is coming.
Emmanuel, God here!

1. As winter fast approaches,
and cold is in the air,
we know that from the darkness,
bright Sunlight will appear. (to chorus)
2. We trust that in creation,
the Artist can be found;
the One who's born within us,
the mystery profound. (to chorus)
3. The ancient tales give witness,
to what we know is true;
our God of incarnation,
alive in me and you! (to chorus)

In northern Europe, many traditions that we now consider part of Christian worship were begun long before the participants ever heard of Christ. Yule or Yule-tide is a winter festival that was initially celebrated by the historical [Germanic peoples](#) as a [pagan](#) religious festival, though it was later absorbed into, and equated with, the [Christian](#) festival of [Christmas](#). The festival was originally celebrated from late December to early January on a date determined by the [lunar Germanic calendar](#). The festival was placed on December 25 when the Christian (Julian) calendar was adopted.

There is evidence of pre-Christian Germanic peoples using wreaths with lit candles during the cold and dark December days as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended-sunlight days of Spring. In Scandinavia during winter, lighted candles were placed around a wheel, and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn "the wheel of the earth" back toward the sun to lengthen the days and restore warmth.

Evergreen –the trees, boughs and wreaths are a sign of everlasting life in the midst of the death of winter. Live evergreens were often brought into homes during the harsh winters as a reminder to inhabitants that soon their crops would grow again.

Mistletoe was considered a sacred plant and the custom of kissing under the mistletoe began as a fertility ritual. The early church banned the use of mistletoe in Christmas celebrations because of its pagan origins. Holly berries were thought to be a food of the gods.

Poinsettias are native to Mexico. They were named after America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett. The Mexicans in the eighteenth century thought the plants were symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem.