

# Corner Brook United Church

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Ministers: **Rev John van Vliet**  
**Rev Jocelyn Cook**

Ministers Emeritus: **Rev Clayton Parsons**  
**Rev Harry Whitehorne**

Music Director: **Jennifer Billard**

Office Staff: **Cathy Quigley**

## Office Hours:

**Monday – Thursday 10 am – 2 pm**

We're able to receive bulletin info until **Wed. at 1 pm**

**Rev van Vliet's email is [firstministercb@gmail.com](mailto:firstministercb@gmail.com)**

His phone is **632-7129**.

**Rev Cook's email is [13scoutie@gmail.com](mailto:13scoutie@gmail.com)**

Her phone is **689-6795**.

## Washrooms

**Upstairs:** through the door to the right of the stage

**Downstairs:** the exit between the two coat racks

We strive to be a **scent free** facility.

# Corner Brook United Church

**December 24, 2025**



## Christmas Eve

## Gathering in the Presence of God

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – *Christmas Eve*

Minister: Rev. Jocelyn Cook

## Gathering / Welcome / Announcements

### Greeting

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

**And also with you.**

### Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we gather. The island of Newfoundland is the ancestral homeland of the Mi'Kmaq and Beothuk. We also recognize the Innu and the Inuit as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful partnerships with all the peoples of the province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation.

**Introit**      “Joy to the World” VU # 59

### Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

We gather together in this place:

**prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,**

we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

**we who dare to dream God's dream.**

We ponder with Mary;

**we marvel at Christ's birth.**

God comes to us, a vulnerable child—

**heaven and earth, meeting in a manger.**

The angels sing, the shepherds dance.

We treasure these things in our hearts.

Come and worship, all you who dream and imagine.

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### We have come to wonder and praise.

Let us pray together –

Holy God, when your Spirit moves, the dust of everyday life becomes alive with promise.

In Bethlehem, you transformed a humble space into the magnificent birthplace of a king. You empowered a young mother named Mary to bring the Prince of Peace into the world. You charged Joseph, an everyday carpenter, to protect his new family, shielding them and caring for them as they grew.

You take the ordinary stuff of life and transform it into good news for the whole world. So, we surrender the everyday dust in our own lives to your liberating power. May our humble stories reflect the glory of Christmas today and every day. God of the vulnerable, you come to us in ways that defy expectation: as a fragile baby, not a trampling warrior; birthed in a stable, not a palace; born in the quiet stillness of night. Teach us to look for you in the tender things. Make our hearts soft and our spirits generous, living the way of Christ, born to us this night. Amen.

**Opening Carol**      “O Little Town of Bethlehem” VU # 64

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*If possible, Person A reads from the front, while other readers are positioned throughout the congregation.*

**Person A:** The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

**Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes**

**how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it.**

**Person A:** Close your eyes for a moment and imagine new parents who are excited to meet their son. Herod is terrified he might lose power and influence. The shepherds are in awe of all they have seen and heard. Whose perspective you consider changes the experience. Is this a story about an innocent child coming into the world or a story about one coming to upset the empire?

*(wait a full ten seconds before speaking resumes)*

**Person B:** Now you may open your eyes. We hope, when we believe something good is on the horizon! We hope, when we recognize all is not yet as it should be. Before we can hope, we must be honest with what is wrong, including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, Christian nationalism, and more. Our world is not what it should be, but with Jesus, we have hope that one day it will be.

**We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.**

*Light the first candle.*

**Person C:** Hope allows us to set down, even temporarily, anxiety and worry for much-needed peace. Peace allows for a respite, bringing much-needed restoration. And restoration is needed to act without becoming numb or burned out.

**We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.**

*Light the second candle.*

**Person D:** When we are at peace, we can see joy in the most unexpected of places. Mary and Joseph found joy in a warm

and dry manger. We can find joy in small acts of kindness and beauty in a harsh world.

**We light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.**

**Person E:** From joy we move to love! Love for God, love for family, for our neighbors, and for this world. Love motivates us to protect others and this world for generations to come. Love is far more than an emotion; it is the foundation of the gospel that is good for all!

**We light the candle of love because love makes the impossible possible.**

*Light the fourth candle.*

**Person A:** Tonight, we light the Christ candle. May we acknowledge the new light it provides, breaking through the darkness, disrupting what is, lighting the path for our dreams to come.

**Give us the will to dream, O God. May all be true in your name.**

*Light the Christ candle*

**Sing** “The Will to Dream”

How long will the poor be hungry

How long will the babies cry

How long will the people weep

For the trees are gone and the wells run dry

The wells run dry

There's work in the waiting

**Give us the will to dream, the will to dream**

**Give us the will to dream**

**Give us the will to dream, the will to dream  
Give us the will to dream as we prepare the way**

2. How long have we held a promise  
Held a promise to be kept  
To bring down the proud and mighty  
And make sure every belly's fed  
Make sure every belly's fed

(bridge)  
There's work in the waiting  
Longin' for the things of love  
Livin' from our longing  
Preparing for the One

3. Holy one, you never left us  
Never turned your face away  
We turn to you to help us dream  
Of kin(g)dom come to us today

Give us the will to dream, the will to dream  
Give us the will to dream  
Give us the will to dream, the will to dream  
Give us the will to dream as we prepare the way  
Give us the will to dream as we prepare the way

Words & Music by Nathan Evans Fox, Andrea Hamilton, and Amanda Meisenheimer

## We Hear the Word

## Call & Prayer of Confession

God-with-us, Immanuel: the angels sing of peace on earth,

but conflict and unrest prevail in our world and in our hearts. We confess that we defend our interests and judge our neighbors, instead of living with grace and mercy. We fear difference instead of celebrating diversity. We close doors instead of opening them to neighbors in need. Abide in our hearts and renew us to lead with compassion in all that we say and do. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen

**Assurance of Pardon**

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of newborn cries and shouts of justice, you proclaim the good news of God-with-us from all corners of creation. As we turn to our scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where hope, peace, joy, and love thrive among us. Amen.

## **Gospel Reading**      Luke 2: 1-20 (Christmas Story)

## CHARACTER NARRATIVE

## **Liturgist:**

Mary:

## **Carol**      “Away in A Manger” VU # 69

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

O God, sometimes ... and amplify the good news.

**Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world.**

And sometimes ... open doors, open hearts, open minds.

**Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world.**

And sometimes ... rhythm with your kin(g)dom coming.

**Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world.**

We pray together ..Our Father ..... Amen.

### Special Music/Anthem

#### Invitation for Offering

**Offering / Offertory** “In the Bleak Midwinter” VU # 55 v 4

What can I give Him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring Him a lamb

If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part

Yet what I can I give Him, give my heart

Yet what I can I give Him, give my heart, my heart.

#### Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kin(g)dom of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. Amen

**Carol**      “Go, Tell it on the Mountain” VU # 43

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe the birth and incarnation of Jesus changes everything. In a world that pushes out the vulnerable, erases the poor, and forgets the weary, we worship a God who is birthed in humility, cares for the overlooked, and shelters with peace.

We believe that in a world that prizes wealth, domination, and force, we choose to kneel before a God who chose poverty and embraces with welcome.

We believe peace, justice, and care can start small—just like the manger. We claim we don’t need worldly power to be part of God’s story. Real power looks like care, not control.

We believe with Mary as our model of courageous care and loving embodiment, we, too, can commit ourselves to be wombs for Christ this Christmas. We give ourselves as spaces where love grows and grace breathes.

We believe peace will come when we let the sides of our own souls stretch so we might become large with God’s promise. We believe in allowing the Spirit to push us to the furthest rims of who we are, so the imagination of a new kin(g)dom expands with life.

We fully give ourselves to the Christmas miracle that Jesus may be born in us, to us, and through us.

#### CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

**Closing Carol**      “Silent Night, Holy Night” VU # 67

#### CHARGE: A CALL TO ADVOCACY

What a gift to be present at the beginning of new life.

God, incarnate, stepped out of heaven to come as an infant, reminding us all that new life is possible in the most difficult of times.

As we go forth from this place, may we see present possibilities, not just distant dreams.

May we lift up our gratitude that on that quiet night beneath the noise of the empire, Christ was born, not in power but in vulnerability.

## BENEDICTION

### Let's All Sing

We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a happy New Year.

### Resources Used

1. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2025. Written by **Hans Holznagel**. Copyright © 2024. P 295 & 297. Used with permission. Adapted.
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WORSHIP LITURGY • THE WILL TO DREAM  
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CHRISTMAS EVE • EMBODIED PROMISE • LUKE 2: 1-20

## From the desk and the heart of Rev. Jocelyn Cook

Friends, I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Everyone is well into preparations for Christmas – the birth of that beautiful, humble child – the Christ of our lives, this divine source of hope for us all. What do you hope for? What do you long for?

Many of us hope and long for a peaceful year ahead with no sorrow or sadness. We know that life changed in a big way for some people in 2025 – with the loss of an important person in their lives. In the darkness of the night, when there are no words and only tears, when the beautiful stars are in evidence but unable to be seen, there have been those who have cried out – why me, God? Why is this happening? Friends, deep tears and anger are very important human responses. God reminds us of God's presence in those long stretches of struggle. God is there to wipe our tears and to hold and comfort us until we are able to stand once again. God speaks to us in tender, loving ways - never doubt that!

As we venture into a new year in so many different ways, let us realize that God still speaks to us no matter what is going on in our lives. God encourages us and gives us a will to dream new dreams, to see what is happening around us in a different way. Are we listening to what God is saying? Do we notice the signs God sends?

As we celebrate the Christmas Season this year, let us make a resolution to seek justice in a more resolute way. Let us always be humble. Most of all, let us always be kind. As we tiptoe to the manger to gaze on this Child and Christ of our lives, may we receive new inspiration to be Christ in the world.

On behalf of my husband Graham and our family, I take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with hope, peace, joy and love.

With love, in Christ,  
(Rev.) Jocelyn