



FIRST UNITED CHURCH
Swift Current, SK
Sunday, December 31, 2023
1st after Christmas
Leading Worship: Norma Hain
Reader: Karen Bender



GATHERING

Moment for Reflection

*"The Holy Spirit is the call to awaken and be glad."
A Course in Miracles, from M. Williamson A Return to Love*

Land Acknowledgement & Announcements

Celebrate the Light/Lighting of the Christ Candle

Gathering Hymn: VU #87 *I Am the Light of the World*
(please remain seated)

Call to Worship

ONE: The light of the new year is calling.

ALL: We exit this year with hope.

ONE: The short days of winter are here.

ALL: We anticipate tomorrow with joy.

ONE: This Sunday of rest and renewal has come.

ALL: We enter this day with Love.

ONE: The hour of sacred worship is now.

ALL: We participate in today with peace and celebration.

Opening Hymn: VU #59 *Joy to the World*
(please stand as you are able)

Opening Prayer

Radiant Holy Mystery, you are the source of being. As the sun gives us light by day and the moon gives us light by night, help us be aware of our own glowing talents. Help us shine in our own special ways and acknowledge the light of others. Help us celebrate together, offering thanksgiving for your grace, freely given.

Amen (N.J. Hain)

WORD

Community Learning Time: *The Sankofa*

Hymn: VU #71 *"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime*

Scripture Readings: Genesis 17: 9-13

Luke 2: 21-25

ONE: We read these texts so that in them we may find wisdom for life.

ALL: May we be open to the Wisdom we understand and hear.

Message: *Looking Forward, Looking Back*

Hymn: VU #38 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

RESPONSE

Minute for Mission: *2023 in the Rear View*

Invitation to the Offering: Let us celebrate our life as part of the family of God with our offering.
Our offering will now be received.

Offertory Prayer: (in unison)

Light of the World we offer our gifts this morning. May they support the works of this church and our greater community. We celebrate your creation and all the blessings that we have received and continue to receive. Amen (Norma J. Hain)

Prayers of the People

Holy One I believe that we should look back and recognize and acknowledge the times we struggled and the times we burst ahead in joy and I believe that we should look forward in hope and faith.

I believe Source of Being, that you show your face in every little flower and its sheer joy in sharing beauty for a single day, gloriously unconcerned for tomorrow.

I believe God that you show your hands as you set every little bird to flight, teaching each to trust its wings, trusting you to provide.

Creator I believe that your voice is revealed in each little breeze that says, “Fear not, I am with you.”

I believe the Divine shows universality in the vagabond clouds which momentarily obscure the sun, shielding us from your light, only to reveal it with greater brightness as the clouds move along.

Ground of Existence, I believe that you show your caring with every drop of rain, using raindrops like teardrops, to lift up the fallen spirits after a storm.

I believe the Spirit of Life shows us our need for rest in the purple hush of twilight. “Have faith,” you whisper, as the sun dips down below the earth’s horizon.

I believe Great Mystery, that you show eternal life with each dazzling sunrise! Each day is a resurrection. I stand still and marvel; words are inadequate tools; I reaffirm my faith in life.
(adapted from *Quiet Moments for Women*, June Masters Bacher)

Holy one listen to each of us as we pray:
For those caught in war and natural disasters.....
For our world leaders.....
For those who are no longer with us.....
For those of us who are in need or not well.....
For all those we hold dear..... (*Silent prayer*)

Holy one hear us now and
Accept the prayers of your people and strengthen us to do your will.

Our Father/Mother 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, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Closing Hymn: VU #43 *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

Blessing: Let us read this together:

May the blessing of the One be upon you.
May God's love light all your way.
May the grace of Christ enfold you, as you journey on the way.
May the Wisdom of the past be with you.
May you look forward and celebrate each day.

Choral Closing: Listen or Sing to: At the Door of the Year

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Postlude

Prayer Cycles

Ministerial

St. Stephen's Anglican Church

Living Skies Regional Council

Regional Council Executive

Pastoral Relations Commission & Property Commissions

Committees & Task Groups

Lectionary Readings for January 7, 2024

Isaiah 60:1-6

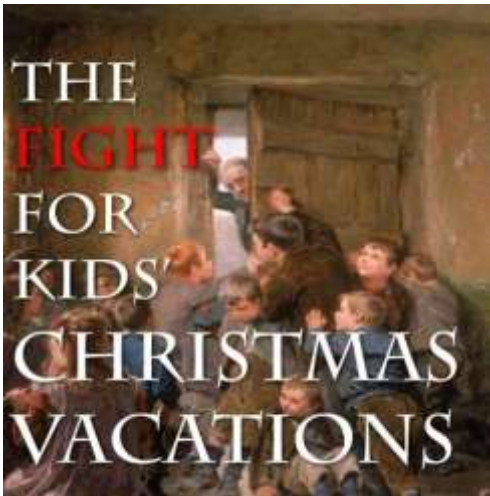
Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14 (VU p. 790 Parts One & Two)

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Worship Schedule

Jan 7	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i>	- Rev. Annette Taylor
Jan 14	<i>God Calls</i>	- Rev. Annette Taylor
Jan 21	<i>Jonah</i>	- Sunday School
Jan 28	<i>Wisdom</i>	- Rev. Annette Taylor



Today we take it for granted that a few days before Christmas, school children will be dismissed from class, and not return until after New Year's. However, we owe these vacations to the bravery of students in centuries past.

In many Protestant countries, Christmas Day was barely observed, and school masters expected children to go to school each day during this period. But kids—being kids—wanted time off. To get it, they engaged in a practice known as “barring-out the schoolmaster”. Students would plan a sit-in. It often began on St Nicholas Day, December 6th, so on the 5th, they would gather enough supplies to last for three days. Food, drink, blankets, even pistols (no

joke)—everything they would need to occupy their classroom and keep their teacher locked out. This was a custom in Britain, the U.S., and some parts of Canada (an article in The Toronto Globe in December 1894 describes the practice at a school near Georgian Bay).

[Read More](#)

—Rev. Stephen Milton came to Lawrence Park Community Church in Toronto in 2019, after decades of work as a documentary filmmaker. His passion is creating new ways to explore spirituality, appealing to people who aren't interested in regular Sunday morning church services.