

Gathering Hymn

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” H212

Welcome and Announcements:

Prelude:

“Personal Preparation”

The sanctuary is a holy place for holy thoughts, holy words, and holy whispers.

Advent Reading and Lighting the Candle:

- One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
- **All: those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.**
- One: The lights that we have kindled each week light the way to the coming Christ.
- **All: The candles of Hope, Preparation, and Joy glow brilliantly. Today, we light the candle of Love.**
- One: The coming Lord is forever faithful. The never-ending affection and tenderness the Christ has for us is a gift that unequalled.
- **All: Praising the God who cares so deeply for all creation, we light this candle. Together, we will demonstrate and share the love of Christ.**

Light the candles of HOPE, PREPARATION, JOY, and LOVE

Prayer:

God of birth, God of light, in this time of song and prayer and silence,
reawaken in us the awe of Christmas.

As we hear again the story of a young woman and a surprising visitor,
remind us that we are called to respond to you in unexpected ways.

And when we leave this place, **may we be willing to sing praises
for a young woman who said YES and the birth that we prepare to
celebrate. AMEN**

Hymn: *“O come, O come, Immanuel”*

H 172

Giving Our Gifts:

Offertory Thought:

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:6-8)

***Presentation Hymn:** *“Praise God from whom”*

H 119

***Offertory Prayer:**

“Heavenly Father, thank you that you can satisfy our every desire and need. Your word says that we should give honor to you with the first

fruits of our wealth. Accept these offerings as a gift of worship to you. Multiply what we give for the effective growth of your kingdom. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith so that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. May we be filled with all the fullness of God. AMEN

Congregational Sharing and Continued Prayer

In celebration of the coming of the Christ Child, we will be hearing his birth story and singing hymns of the season this morning.

Beginning with this Scripture from Isaiah:

Scripture: Isaiah 7:13-14

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and^[c] will call him Immanuel.

“It came upon a midnight clear”

H195 v 1, 2, 4, 5

Scripture: Luke 1:26-33

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said,

“Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“Come Thou long expected Jesus”

H178

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the

house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

“Away in a Manger”

H194

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

“Hark the Herald Angles Sing” Robin McMahon & Donna Henry
“O Christmas Tree/Dreidel” On dulcimer and flute

Scripture: Luke 2:15-18

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” H191

Scripture: Luke 2:19-20

¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

“Joy to the World” H318

***Benediction:**

A new day is dawning!

Despite what we see and hear in the world around us,
the sunrise is coming.

When it comes, it will break through the darkness of our world—
darkness caused by violence and death and hunger and despair.

And all those who now sit huddled in the shadows
will be able to rise and walk with confidence in the light.

So go from here with courage and hope,
to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

***Postlude:** *“A Time to Reflect”*