



First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

Draw near to God.

God is waiting for you.



* indicates where the congregation is to stand if able
italic type is spoken by the liturgist – bold is spoken by the congregation

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

With what shall we come to God's house? Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hang wreaths and garlands.

Make the church fragrant with the smell of living things and our holy play. In acts of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets and seers let us make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Good Lord, by your mercy guide our outward actions in such ways that our inward being is formed in faith, hope, and love. May the decorations we offer engage our senses during the days of Advent and enliven our praise and worship, in the name of the child of Bethlehem, our risen and coming savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

***HYMN #82** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

THE ADVENT WREATH

The Holton Family

Congregational Part

JOEL RANEY



Voi - ces cry out from a world in grief:
prayers of those who seek re - lief.
End their dark - ness, hear their call for
peace on earth, good will for all.

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RESPONSIVE LITANY

Advent is a time of reflection and renewal.

God of light, shine in our hearts and renew our hope.

Advent is a time of self-examination.

God of light, shine in our hearts and strengthen our resolve.

Advent is a time of joyful expectation.

God of light, shine in our hearts and renew our faith.

Advent is a time of service and searching.

God of light, shine in our hearts and ignite our compassion.

LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE

UNISON PRAYER

God of light, we pray today that you will fill us with hopeful expectation and that you will cause us to become your children of light. Help us to spread your light into the world around us. Help us to recognize our opportunities to brighten the lives of others. Help us to live each day as beacons of love filled with joy, peace, and hope. Amen.

SANCTUARY GREENERY Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Carol Eckmeder

****HYMN #119*** verses 1 and 2 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate deity, pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

THE POINSETTIA Numbers 24:17

Beth Conti

THE CANDLES Isaiah 60:1-3

Emilie Cullerton

HYMN #88 verses 1 and 6 O Come, O Come Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE Micah 5:2, 4

Merrily Henley

MEDLEY OF CAROLS 1. Angels We Have Heard on High, 2. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, 3. O Little Town of Bethlehem, 4. Go, Tell It on the Mountain, 5. What Child is This?, 6. The First Nowell,

1. Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

3. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

4. Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born! While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

5. What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

6. The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep. Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

THE NATIVITY Luke 2:1-7

Sharon Ruth

HYMN #115 Away In a Manger

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord, Jesus; look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is high.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

RECOGNITION OF THE OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him, all creatures here below. Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Creator and Giver of all things, we thank you that we can come here this day and offer our gifts. Use them to spread the news that Christ comes so that all may dwell in peace. Help us to break down whatever hostility divides us and hear us as we dedicate ourselves anew to becoming your agents of reconciliation. Amen.

SHARING JOYS, CONCERNS AND FRIENDSHIP

THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS AND INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS (*please hold the bread and then the cup until we all commune together showing our unity in Christ.*)

UNISON PRAYER

Jesus, you truly are Emmanuel “God with us.” In this season of hope, may the meal we’ve shared together nourish us to be your body in the world, your kingdom come, your will done on earth as it is in heaven. With the angels in heaven we join in singing your praises, Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia! Amen.

***HYMN #100** My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

2. Thou I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy shall last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

4. Thou the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
Go’s mercy must deliver us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE



Church Staff
Susan Fall, Pastor
Leanne Yerkes, Director of Music
Susan Flanagan, Office Administrator
Frank Orzechoski, Financial Manager



ANNOUNCEMENTS, DECEMBER 3 2023

This week's carillon is in memory Charles and Jennie Kirk. Charles and Jennie lived in Forest Grove and were faithful members of the church and parents of DeNard Kirk.

GIFTS FOR DISABLED ADULTS: Thank you to all that have taken a gift tag off of our Giving Tree in Fellowship Hall. We have a few more gift tags available. Please sign out the gift. Gifts are to be wrapped including a gift tag with the name of the recipient. Please do not put the gift description on the tag. Gifts are to be brought to the church no later than December 10.

NEW BIBLE STUDY HAS BEGUN ON THURSDAY EVENINGS: Join us this week as we continue to make our way through the season of Advent by exploring Scripture. Together we will study the meaning of the birth of Jesus through the sights and sounds of Advent. Each week we will consider one of our senses and its unique encounters during Advent. We will discover how these senses become signs for us pointing to the incarnation when God took human form to experience the world as we do. Please join us on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/127591875>

YOUTH GROUP: Tonight we will meet at 6:30pm at church.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON: will be held on Wednesday December 6th. Please call the Church office for your free ticket. Bring a friend!! All are welcome.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS: **This week we are asking for the following items:** Cleaning products. Donations are to be placed in the wagon located in the vestibule.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday December 17th for our Christmas Musical "**Star Search**". The entire **musical** takes place amongst the **stars** in the sky. It is the story of the Savior's birth told from an inspiring perspective! Come share the experience and support our Singers and Actors.

<u>Calendar:</u>	December 3	8:30 am	Handbell Choir Rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship Service, followed by Fellowship
	December 4	7:00 pm	Boy Scout Troop Meeting
	December 6	12:00 pm	<i>All Parish Christmas luncheon and party</i>
	December 7	7:00 pm	Bible Study on Zoom
	December 9	9:00 am	Star Search Skit Rehearsal

Elder of the month: Courtney Woolslayer **Deacon of the month:** Merrily Henley
Ushers: Gerry and Louise Stemplewicz **Fellowship Hour Host:** Courtney Woolslayer
Communion servers: Courtney Woolslayer, Bill Wark, and Merrily Henley

In our thoughts and prayers:

The Conner/Lang Family, Aleena Lang, Raymond Tinari, Jim Turner, Violet Sanders,
Mary Lou Humlhanz, David Posnett, Pat Pizza, Kara Holton