

Introduction to the Day: Advent invites us to explore the ways in which Emmanuel, God-with-us, brings hope, peace, joy, and love to our lives. Today, as our children lead worship, listen for their wonder and enthusiasm as they share the Good News. Let their words remind us to rejoice in Jesus' birth because God is with us!

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the diverse people of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

(Pastor Carolyn)

The congregation invited to stand as they are able

OPENING HYMN

Canticle of the Turning

ELW 723

- 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 Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will 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 pow'r to the fortress tow'r, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*
- 4 Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God'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*

GREETING

(Pastor Carolyn)

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

And also with you.

Please be seated

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Jacob Chan)

Emmanuel, God With Us, free us from our sin and fill us with hope, joy, peace, and love so that we can serve you and your people.

Amen

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH (Pastor Carolyn & Children)

*As we light the Advent Candles, please join in singing verse 4 of *Light One Candle* (ELW 240)*

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.
He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining.

SONG *Joy to the World* v. 1 & 4 ELW 267

(Children will sing verse 1, congregation join in with verse 4)

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

“GOD IS WITH US”

Scripture, Reflections, Songs

INTRO: (Andrew Chan)

Today's Bible reading invites us into the heart of a familiar story. Mary's song brings together the longing of her people and weaves together words of expectant hope, prophetic peace, boundless joy, and transformative love. She calls for revolution knowing that God walks beside her – as God walks with us today. Her faithful imagination calls for a revolution in the way of the world. It's beautiful, challenging, and ushers in the way of Jesus, turning the world's way upside down.

Even when the world feels strange, not normal, or hopeless, Advent reminds us God is with us.

In chaos, God is with us.

In uncertainty, God is with us.

Emmanuel, God-with-us, brings hope, peace, joy, and love to us, especially during hard times. We rejoice in Jesus' birth because God is with us!

The congregation is invited to stand as they are able to welcome the gospel

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-55

(Jeri Wartena & Erin Blackburn)

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

The holy gospel according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SONG *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* ELW 270

(Children will sing verse 1, congregation join in with verse 2)

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

Refrain

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

Continued on next page

- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*
- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Please be seated

HOPE (Tessa Boswell & Wendy Gale)

Tessa: During Advent, we use the color blue – it means hope. We light candles to bring light into the darkness. We wait with hope for Jesus. He brings hope, healing, and justice to our world.

Wendy: We have hope because God is with us.

Tessa: No one is left out of God's love and that fills us with hope.

PEACE (Gwen Boswell)

We have peace because God is with us.

Have you ever had a big change of plans? Did you feel at peace? Did you feel nervous? Like Mary, sometimes our plans change, and unexpected things happen, but God is always with us.

Do you remember what Emmanuel means? It means God with us! No matter where we are, what we do, or how we feel, God is always with us—just like our breath!

Breathe in. Breathe out. God is with me.

SONG: O Little Town of Bethlehem ELW 279

(Children will sing verse 1, congregation join in with verse 2)

- 1 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.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

JOY (Jacob Chan)

Joy is a gift that comes from being connected to God and others. When you are connected to people that love you, you can feel joy in your body like a warm hug, even if you might be having a bad day. When we are with people we love, God is there, too!

We have joy because God is with us.

Mary's joy comes from knowing that she is a part how God keeps a promise to be with God's people. Her baby will be Emmanuel!

LOVE (Hadley Gale)

We have love because God is with us.

Noticing God's love in the world is like noticing purple shoes or orange cars. At first, they don't seem common, but once you start to pay attention, they seem to be everywhere you look – just like God's love!

God's love for us is gentle, like a grown-up holding a baby. God's love for us is kind, like a kid hugging their favorite blanket. How can we love ourselves and others in the same way God love us at Advent, at Christmas, and all the days of the year?

SONG *Away in a Manger* ELW 277

(Children will sing verse 1, congregation join in with verse 2)

- 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 baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

CONCLUSION (Andrew Chan)

We rejoice in Jesus' birth because God is with us!

We can have all these things- hope, peace, joy, love- because God is with us.

Look around you this morning. Can you see the Spirit of God around you? The Holy Spirit is invisible. God is with us, but we cannot see God. Or can we?

We can't really take a picture of the electricity we feel when we love God and love our neighbors. We cannot draw a picture of hope, peace, or joy either.

Even though we cannot see God with us, and even though we cannot see hope, peace, joy, or love, we can look around and see people and things that represent hope, peace, joy, and love to us. We can even see hope, peace, joy, and love when we look at ourselves.

If the meaning of Christmas is that God is with us, then every good thing, every lovely moment, and every beautiful feeling we have is a little bit of Christmas.

It does not end on the holiday of December 25. God, Emmanuel, never leaves us. God's love is here for us always.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Andrew Chan)

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

Gracious God, you've blessed us with so many gifts. Today we are especially thankful for the gift of creativity which allows us to express ourselves and to worship you in ways that speak to people of all ages and experiences. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Caring God, you show your love to us in many ways, through our parents' love, our teachers' patience, and our friends' laughter. Today we thank you especially for the coming of your son, our Emmanuel. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Nurturing God, in this crazy world as we find our way out of a pandemic, we thank you that we can again go to school. We thank you too that we can gather once again here at Bethel. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, we ask you to help those in need. We lift up those with the corona virus; those affected by wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and drought; and those who are hungry, hurt, poor, or homeless. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Merciful God, help us learn to help others. Give us servants hearts to care for others by helping with their groceries or picking up litter. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, grant peace to this world you gave us. Be with animals who are losing their space. Look after cheetahs. Be with doggies and all of our pets, including Bo, Stanley, Diamond, and Lucy, no matter how long or short of time we have with them. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

Loving God, be with our friends, especially Gia and Nora. Be with our mommies, our daddies, our cousins, our grandparents and all those we love as our families and who love us. Hear us O God,

Your mercy is great.

God With Us, receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE (Gwen Boswell)

The peace of the Christ Child be with you

And also with you!

OFFERING (Tessa Boswell & Wendy Gale)

*We acknowledge that all we have is a gift from God and in gratefulness we return to God a portion of the time, finances, and gifts that God has given us.
Thank you so much for your continued support.*

OFFERING PRAYER *(Gwen Boswell)*

God Emmanuel,
we offer with joy the gifts of our hearts and our lives.
May they be used to bring hope, love, and joy to all your people.
Amen.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Most merciful God,
We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE *(Pastor Carolyn)*

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER *(Hadley Gale)*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us using the words of the language of your heart.

Our Father, 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, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

*All are welcome to join in our communion celebration.
Please follow the directions of pastor Carolyn and the ushers.*

COMMUNION

The congregation invited to stand as they are able

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (Hadley Gale)

God, you are with us at this table.
May we leave filled with hope, ready to live lives of love, joy and peace.
Amen.

BLESSING (Jacob Chan)

May the God of love fill us with joy and peace, so that we may abound in hope.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN *Go Tell It on the Mountain* ELW 290

(Children will sing opening refrain, congregation join in with verse 1)

Refrain

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

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
- 3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

DISMISSAL (Pastor Carolyn & Children)

Emmanuel is with us. Go in peace.
Thanks be to God and we will.