



**December 3, 2023
First Sunday of Advent**

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Welcome

Prelude

In the Bleak Midwinter

Rasley

The prelude signals the beginning of our sacred time together. During the prelude, you are invited to prepare your heart for worship by focusing your attention upon God.

***Call to Worship**

Damon Moore

L: Christ is coming!

All: We will keep awake!

L: Christ is coming!

All: We will be ready!

L: Christ is coming! He will gather his people from the ends of the earth.

All: Praise be to God! We will worship and prepare.

Opening prayer

Awaken us, O Lord God, with your grace for the future. As you graciously forgive our sins, protect and strengthen us from all danger of future sins, so that we may serve you with a

clear conscience, and joyfully receive our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes again in glory; he lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Lighting of the First Advent Candle: Hope

Greg and Tina Wilmoth

Reader 1: In the days of exile and uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah cried out:
O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.
(Isaiah 64:1-3)

Reader 2: In the midst of our own encounters with uncertainty and upheaval and our longing for deliverance, Jesus calls to us, “Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come” (Mark 13:35).

Congregation: We wait as people surprised again and again by God who shakes us out of our complacency and wakes us up to the work of the kingdom all around us.

Reader 1: We light this candle as a sign of our shocking hope. May we stay awake to God’s activity in the world as we wait in expectation that even now God is with us, working to restore us to the fullness of life with God and one another. Amen.

***Hymn**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

UMH 196

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***Passing The Peace of Christ**

Damon Moore

Let us pass the peace of Christ with those around us.

Children’s Message

Pastor Larry

Ministry of Music

Come to Us, O God of Hope

Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Prayer for Illumination

All Praying

Damon Moore

Savior God, guide us by your Word and Spirit that we might hear your truth, heed your call and be prepared for Christ’s coming this Christmas. Amen

Scripture Readings*Matthew 1:18-25*

Damon Moore

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[d]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[e] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[f] because he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon*"Gifts that Won't Break: Hope"*

Pastor Larry

Affirmation of Faith*Romans 8*

Damon Moore

We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; for we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor Larry

Offertory Invitation

Damon Moore

The God of hope is with us each day offering so many blessings. May we bring our tithes, offerings and gifts in an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings*Offertory**An Advent Prayer*

Stairs

DoxologyPraise God From Whom All Blessings Flow****Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;******Praise God, all creatures here below:******Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!***

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Prayer of Dedication*

Damon Moore

Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them to the fulfillment of Christ's ministry. May these gifts help to free the captives, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, heal the wounded. As Christ's hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community. Amen

***Hymn**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel (Sing Twice)

UMH 204

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Invitation to Holy Communion

Pastor Larry

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
 who earnestly repent of their sin
 and seek to live in peace with one another.
 Silent Confession and Pardon

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

(Some of the responses will be sung. Words are on the monitors.
 Music is on page 17 in the UMH. Choir will lead.)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. *The pastor may lift hands and keep them raised.*

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.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
 always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
 Father Almighty (*almighty God*), creator of heaven and earth.
 You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
 When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
 You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
 and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day
 when justice shall roll down like waters
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,

when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.
And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The pastor may raise hands.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,
whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.
You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts
and have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.
You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree.
You fill the hungry with good things, and the rich you send empty away.
Your own Son came among us as a servant
to be Emmanuel, your presence with us.
He humbled himself in obedience to your will
and freely accepted death on a cross.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
 that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.
 By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
 one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
 until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
 Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
 all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Giving of the Bread and Cup

Communion Hymn

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

UMH 203

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Prayer at the Close of Communion

Pastor Larry

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
 in which you have given yourself to us.
 Grant that we may go into the world
 in the strength of your Spirit,
 to give ourselves for others,
 in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE

***Closing Hymn**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

UMH 230

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***Benediction**

Pastor Larry

***Choral Benediction**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**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;
 O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

***Postlude**

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

English Melody

COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

*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.*

EMMANUEL, EMMANUEL

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called Emmanuel.*

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called Emmanuel.*

HAIL TO THE LORD'S ANOINTED

*Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free;
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.*

*2. He comes with succor speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.*

*3. He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth.
Before him, on the mountains,
shall peace, the herald, go,
and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.*

*4. To him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand forever;
that name to us is love.*

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

*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 wondering love.
 O morning stars together,
 proclaim the holy birth,
 and praises sing to God the King,
 and peace to all on earth!*

*3. How silently, how silently,
 the wondrous gift is given;
 so God imparts to human hearts
 the blessings of his heaven.
 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;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 our Lord Emmanuel!*