

~Gathering the Family of God~

The Peal of Our Church Bell**Prelude****Welcome****Call to Worship**

One: We come to share together to celebrate the God who is present amongst us.

All: The Lord our God is our strength and song, and is even now our salvation.

One: We come to share together to celebrate with all the world that the Lord is God.

All: With joy we gather around the table of grace to be refreshed and renewed.

One: We come to share together to celebrate with songs of praise and joy, for the Lord our God is present with us, calls us to unite together with all peoples in Joyful praise.

All: We sing with joy: Thanks be to the Lord, our God Emmanuel! Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

One: This morning as we count down the four Sundays until Christmas we again light the candles of hope and peace and for the first time light the third candle, the pink one, which represents joy.

All: As the time grows closer to the birth of the Christ child, our excitement grows and our joy increases. O come Emmanuel

Call to Confession

It is easy for us to lose sight of what the birth of Jesus means to this dark and sinful world. Let us be reminded that Christ came to free us from our sin and reunite us with our Creator as we confess our sins before God and one another.

***Prayer of Confession**

God of love, all year long we pursue power and money, yet you came in weakness, as a child. All season long we want more stuff, but you alone offer what is lasting. Through the work of our Lord Jesus, who comes among us full of grace and truth, forgive us, heal us, and correct us. Then open our lips, that we may sing your praise with the angels.

When we allow darkness to overcome the light, forgive us, Lord. When we reduce Christmas to plastic and tinsel, have mercy on us, Father. When hardness of heart keeps us from seeing and believing in your song, let your grace fill us, O God.

Forgive our doubt and renew our hopes in Christ alone, that we may watch and wait and once more hear the glad story of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord. In His name we ask, Amen.

Silent Confession**Words of Assurance**

One: Hear the good news. Even the darkness is not dark to God, and the night is as bright as the day. The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us has come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up the broken hearted, heals all our infirmities, and relieves our burden of sin.

All: So arise, shine; our light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

***Gloria Patri**

581

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen, Amen.

Tune: Gloria Patri, Henry W. Greatorex, 1851, Public Domain.

Service Recognition of Kathy Woodfin

All: Lord God, thank you for the extraordinary love, commitment and creativity Kathy has given this church and its children over the many years of her service here. Thank you for the way she has served us and given so much of herself to the children we care for. We pray that she will find new treasures each day, and that the blessing of Christ will be upon all that she does, forever. Amen.

~Hearing God's Word~

Choral Cantata

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The Chancel Choir

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

The Chancel Choir

Prayer for Illumination (unison)

All: O Lord, as we celebrate the arrival of your messenger of peace – the One who brings the good news and is the good news – open our hearts and minds, eyes and ears, to hear your announcement of salvation. Amen.

Old Testament

Isaiah 35:1-10

page 663

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 146:5-10

page 581

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

***Hymn**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

#127

Epistle

Matthew 11:2-11

page 11

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

New Testament

James 5:7-10

page 231

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Meditation

Waiting on the Lord

Rev. Terry Epling

Silent Night

The Chancel Choir

~Responding to God's Word~

***Affirmation of Faith**

All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. [The Apostles Creed]

Invitation to Become a Joyful Giver

Giving of our Tithes and Offerings & Friendship Pad

Please take a moment to sign your name and contact information in the pew pad. You may also share any joys or concerns on the cards in the pews. Place them in the offering plate for inclusion in the prayers of the people.

Offertory

***Doxology** *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* # 606
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication of Gifts (unison)**

All: What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man I would do my part. What I can I give. I give Him my heart. Amen.

Prayers of the People and Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

*** Closing Hymn** *Joy to the World!* #134

***Life in Our Church Community**

***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 who now huddle 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**

**Please stand, if you are able.*