

## ~Gathering the Family of God~

**The Peal of Our Church Bell****Welcome and the Peace**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.      **All: And also with you.**

**Prelude****Choral Call to Worship***We Gather Together*

# 336

**Call to Worship**

One: How shall we prepare this house for the birth of Jesus?

**All: With branches of cedar, the tree of excellence and strength.**

One: How shall we prepare this house for the eternal Christ?

**All: With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever green.**

One: How shall we prepare this house for the prophet of Galilee?

**All: With wreaths of holly and ivy, telling of his passion, death and resurrection.**

One: How shall we prepare our hearts for this revelation of God?

**All: By hearing again the words of the prophets and the promises of God.**

**For in the story of Jesus we see the transforming power of God we are reminded anew of God's vision of wholeness, justice, and peace for all of creation. Thanks be to God.**

**The Meaning of the Service**

**Response:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel [verse 1] #88

**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.**

**Significance of the Colors** [The Paraments]

**Response:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel [verse 2] #88

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ordered all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show;  
And teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**God's Word for Little Ears** [Poinsettia]**God Will Send a Light to the Nations** [Candles and the Advent wreath] Isaiah 60:2-3 p 690

**All: Loving God, as we enter this Advent season,  
We open all the dark places in our lives and memories  
to the healing light of Christ.  
Show us the creative power of hope.  
Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,  
That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

**Response:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel [verse 6] #88

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by thine Advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**The Prophet Declares a Child will be Born** (Evergreens) Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 page 638

**Response:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel [verse 7] #88

**O come, Desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Anthem** *Time for Turning* by Craig Courtney

Soloist-Brittany Moleski and Kendall Skaggs

**The Mystery of the Incarnation** (Christmas Tree) John 1:1-5, 9-14 page 91**Blessing of the Christmas Tree** (Unison)

**All: Loving God, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ,  
whose path of justice and love lights a path for all who follow him. May  
this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ,  
that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. In  
Jesus' name. Amen.**

**\*Hymn** My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout #100

**Nativity scene****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.***

## 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**                      *Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense*                      J.S. Bach  
**\*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 Thanksgiving (Unison)

**All:** We dedicate our lives and all that we have to the work of life, of love, of peace. Receive our gifts and lead us in wisdom and courage. Amen.

~Going Forth to Serve God~

### Life in Our Church Community

**\*Closing Hymn**                      *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*                      #93

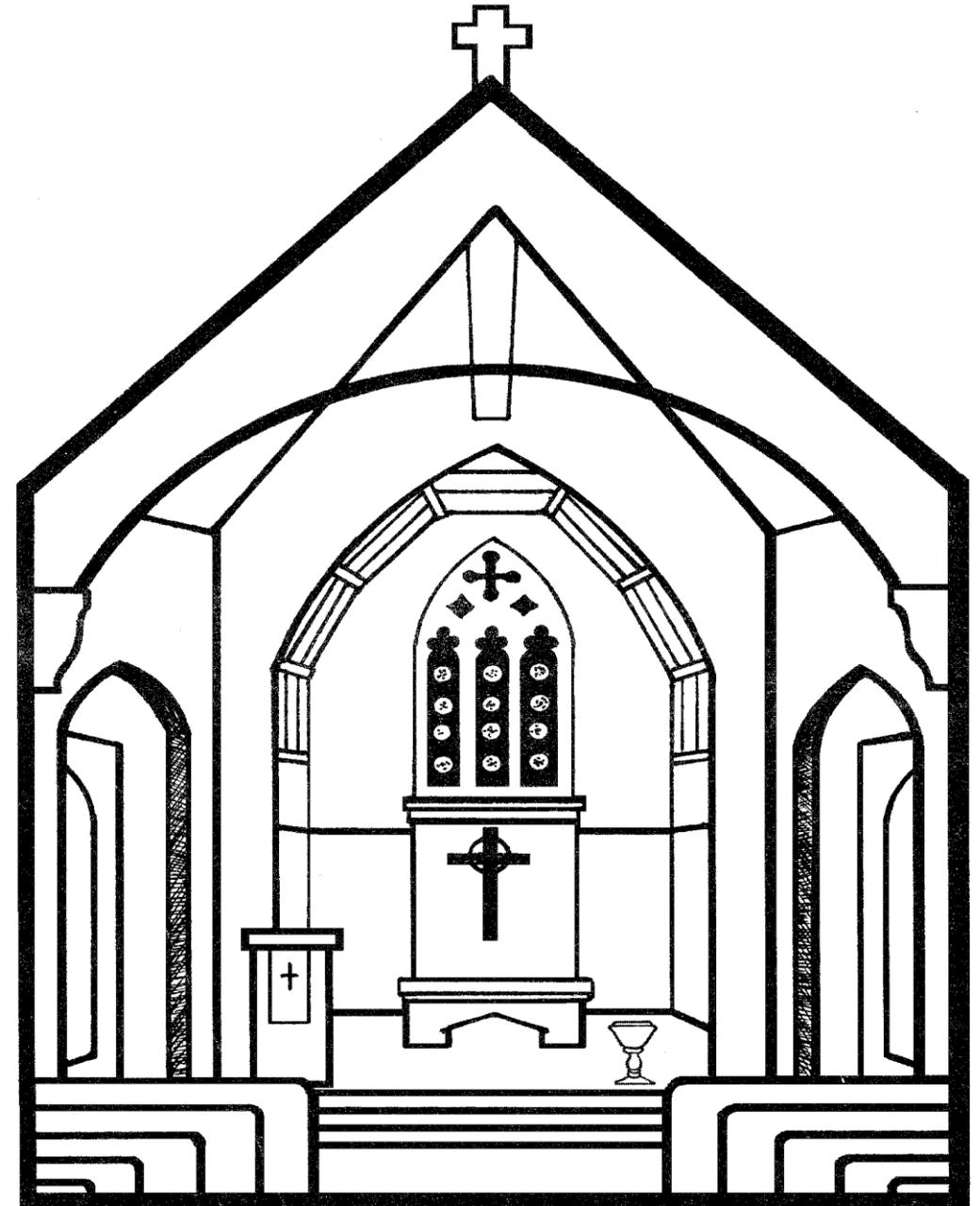
### Charge and Benediction

Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection—  
For the light of God's love is discernible everywhere.  
Let yourselves be surprised by wonder,  
And set aside time to offer quiet thanks.  
The good news of Advent is this:  
Christ is coming. Christ is always coming.  
We will welcome Christ into our hearts.  
We will let ourselves be guided by Christ's ministry.  
We will go forth from this place in hope.

**\*Choral Benediction**                      *Spirit, Now Live in Me*                      by Bryan Jeffery Leech

### \*Postlude

Electronic aid for the hearing impaired is available from the usher.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI