

## Scriptural Meditation

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6*

## ~Gathering the Family of God~

## The Peal of Our Church Bell

## Welcome and Greeting One Another with the Peace of Christ

## Prelude

*Nativity Suite: O Come, Emanuel*

by Wilbur Held

## Call to Worship

One: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice!

**All: Our joy is in the Lord who blesses us.**

One: Shout for joy, for the Lord is near!

**All: Our praises ascend to God for the mighty things God has done.**

One: Let your praise dance and swirl in tribute to God!

**All: Surely God blesses and saves us. Hallelujah! Praise be to God. Amen.**

## Prayer of Invocation

## \* Gathering Song

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

# 88

## \*Prayer of Reconciliation

*Let us remain standing and express ourselves to God*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly into our lives and into our hearts. Renew us with your love. Help us bear fruit worthy of repentance. Where there is hatred, heal us with your love. Where there is discord, calm us with your peace. Where there is sin, cover us with your grace. Where there is despair, strengthen us with your hope. Baptize us with the fire of your Holy Spirit, that we may be refined and cleansed of our sins. Gather us into your midst, that we may be your faithful people. Amen.**

## \*A Time for Contemplation (a private time for you and God)

## \*Assurance of Forgiveness

One: The messenger has been sent to you, proclaiming that there is One who is Coming who will heal and lead you. Know that this is a great gift from God, who has always and will always love you. Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel.

**All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

\*Gloria (Adapted from # 113 *Angels We Have Heard on High*)

**All: Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o!**

**Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o!**

Text: French Carol, trans. By James Chadwick, Music: French Carol, arr. by Edward Shippen Barnes  
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## Lighting of our Advent Wreath (children are welcome to come forward)

The circle of the wreath reminds us of God, his eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning and no end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that Christians have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. The first week we lit the candle of hope. Then last week we lit the candle of peace. Today we light the third candle, the Candle of Joy.

## Advent Wreath Song

*He Came Down*

(adapted from # 137)

**All: v. 1) He came down that we may have hope;**

**He came down that we may have hope;**

**He came down that we may have hope,**

**Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.**

v. 2) **He came down that we may have peace;**

**He came down that we may have peace;**

**He came down that we may have peace,**

**Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.**

v. 3) **He came down that we may have joy;**

**He came down that we may have joy;**

**He came down that we may have joy,**

**Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.**

Text: Traditional Cameroon, Music: Traditional Cameroon; trans. and arr. by John Bell  
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## Children's Choir

*Children, Go Where I Send Thee*

*& Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

#119, v.1

*Children, Go Where I Send Thee*

1) Children go where I send thee

How shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee one by one

One for the itty, bitty baby

born, born, born in Bethlehem

2) Children go where I send thee

How shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee two by two

Two for Paul and Silas

3) Children go where I send thee

How shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee three by three

Three for the Hebrew children

4) Children go where I send thee

How shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee, four by four

Four for the four that stood at the door

5) Children go where I send thee

How shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee, five by five

Five for the five gospel preachers

## ~Hearing God's Word in Scripture and Song~

## A Christmas Festival of English Carols

*On This Day, Rejoice!* Arr. by Jonathan Willcocks

Narrator: The prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Christ and the coming of his kingdom: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."  
*(Isaiah 9:6)*

We gather together to celebrate in words and in music the wonder of Christ's birth, that he shall come and save us. Let us, in his glory, rejoice and be merry.

**Choir**                    *Rejoice and Be Merry*                    (Traditional English Carol, Tune: *Gallery Carol*)  
1) Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth! O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth! For this is the birthday of Jesus our King. Who brought us salvation, his praises we'll sing!  
2) A heavenly vision appeared in the sky; Vast numbers of angels the shepherds did spy, Proclaiming the birthday of Jesus our King. Who brought us salvation, his praises we'll sing!  
3) Likewise a bright star in the sky did appear, Which led the wise men from the east to draw near, They found sweet Jesus our King. Who brought us salvation, his praises we'll sing.  
4) And when they were come, they their treasures unfold, And unto him offered myrrh, incense, and gold. So blessed forever be Jesus our King, Who brought us salvation, his praises we'll sing!

Narrator: It was to Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph came. And while they were there, resting in a humble stable, Mary was delivered of a son—the son of God. And as she cradled the baby Jesus, she was filled with wonder at the words that the angel Gabriel had said to her:

“Do not be afraid, Mary for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”  
*(Luke 1:30-33)*

Three kings were led to Bethlehem by a star in the sky.

“The star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”  
*(Matthew 2:9-10)*

Let us all rejoice at the birth of Jesus who came to earth to save us.

**Choir**                    *On This Day*    (*Piae Cantiones*, 1582)                    Hymn # 141  
1) On this day earth shall ring with the song children sing to the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to save us, him the Father gave us. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*  
2) His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came down to earth Bethlehem saw his birth; ox and ass beside him from the cold would hide him. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*  
3) God's bright star o'er his head, wise men three to him led; kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts before him, praise him and adore him. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*  
4) On this day angels sing; with their song earth shall ring, praising Christ, heaven's King, born on earth to save us; peace and love he gave us. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*

Narrator: There were shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their sheep. And an angel came to them to tell of the birth of Jesus.

“Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”  
*(Luke 2:10-11, 16)*

**Choir**                    *What Child is This?*                    Hymn # 145  
(Text: William Chatterton Dix 1837-1898, Music/Tune: English Ballad/*Greensleeves*)

1) 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!  
2) Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!  
3) So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high, the Virgin sings her lullaby; Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Narrator: The Gospel of Luke tells us of the angels who filled the sky, celebrating the birth of the Baby Jesus:

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.’”  
*(Luke 2:13-14)*

In memory of that night, all Christians celebrate to hear once again the message of the angels, news of great joy at the birth of our Savior.

**Congregational Carol**                    *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing*                    # 112

Narrator: We are told by the prophets of the coming of the Lord:

“And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”  
*(Isaiah 11:2-3)*

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low: the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”  
*(Isaiah 40:1, 3-5)*

We thank God for sending his son to be on earth with us, and we sing his praises. “Hail, thou ever blessed morn! Hail, redemption's happy dawn! Sing through all Jerusalem: Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

**Choir**                    *See, Amid the Winter's Snow*

(Text: Edward Caswall, 1814-1878, Music/Tune: Sir John Goss, 1800-1880, *Humility*)

1) See amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below: See, the tender Lamb appears, promised from eternal years.

*Refrain:* Hail, thou ever blessed morn! Hail, redemption's happy dawn! Sing through all Jerusalem: “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

2) Say, ye holy shepherds, say what your joyful news today; Wherefore have ye left your sheep on the lonely mountains steep? (*Refrain*)

3) As we watched at dead of night, Lo, we saw a wondrous light; Angels singing “Peace on earth” told us of the Savior's birth. (*Refrain*)

4) Teach, O teach us, Holy Child, by thy face so meek and mild, Teach us to reassemble thee, in thy sweet humility. (*Refrain*)

Narrator: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and great darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice. *(Adapted from Isaiah 60:1-5)*

We celebrate at Christmas the coming of our Lord who came on earth to save us. We hear with glad hearts of the holy birth, and we rejoice together in thanks for our salvation.

God bless all you who join with us and raise your voices in song. We wish you a happy new year—for Christ is born.

**Choir** *Come All You Worthy People* (Traditional English Carol, Tune: *Somerset Carol*)

1) Come all you worthy people now that may be standing by, Christ our blessed Savior was born on Christmas Day. The blessed virgin Mary unto the Lord did say, "O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!"

2) Christ our blessed Savior now in the manger lay, He's lying in the manger while oxen feed on hay. The blessed virgin Mary unto the Lord did say, "O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!"

3) God bless all those who join with us and raise their voice in song! God bless each of us, old or young, within this joyful throng! God bless our generation, who live both far and near. And we wish them a happy New Year, for Christ is born!

**~Responding to God's Word~**

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

*Let us stand and affirm our faith.*

One: Jesus was born in a barn because there was no room available in the inn. The innkeeper and most of the people in Bethlehem that night thought he was nobody, but we say,

**All: He is the Christ!**

One: Jesus made friends with everyone. He ate dinner with Zaccheus, the cheating tax-collector. He healed foreigners. He touched lepers. Lots of people said he was a troublemaker, but we say,

**All: He is the Christ!**

One: Jesus was a teacher. Crowds of people gathered on hillsides to hear him speak about God's love. The teachers in the Temple said he was wrong about God's love, but we say,

**All: He is the Christ!**

One: Jesus said, "Love your enemies," "Give to those in need," and "Those who lose their life for my sake will save it." Most people thought he was crazy, but we say,

**All: He is the Christ!**

One: Jesus was arrested, tried, and sentenced to die on a cross. The political and religious leaders thought they were rid of him, but he rose, and he lives.

We know that . . .

**All: He is the Christ!**

One: When Jesus said, "If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me," most people went home.

But we stay, and we say,

**All: He is the Christ!**

**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.*

**Offertory**

*Nativity Suite: Shepherds*

by Wilbur Held

**\*Doxology**

*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* (# 675, verse 4)

**All: 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. A-men.**

Tune: Tallis' Canon, Whole Psalter 1561, Public Domain.

**Prayers of the People followed by The Lord's Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All: 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.**

**Sung Prayer Response**

*While We Are Waiting, Come*

(#92, v.1 & 3)

**All: 1) While we are waiting come; while we are waiting, come.  
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.  
3) Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.  
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.**

Text: Claire Cloninger, 1986, Music: Don Cason, 1986

**~Going Forth to Serve God~**

**Life in Our Church Community**

**\*Song of Going Forth**

*Joy to the World*

# 134

**\*Benediction**

**\*Postlude**

*Nativity Suite: Joy*

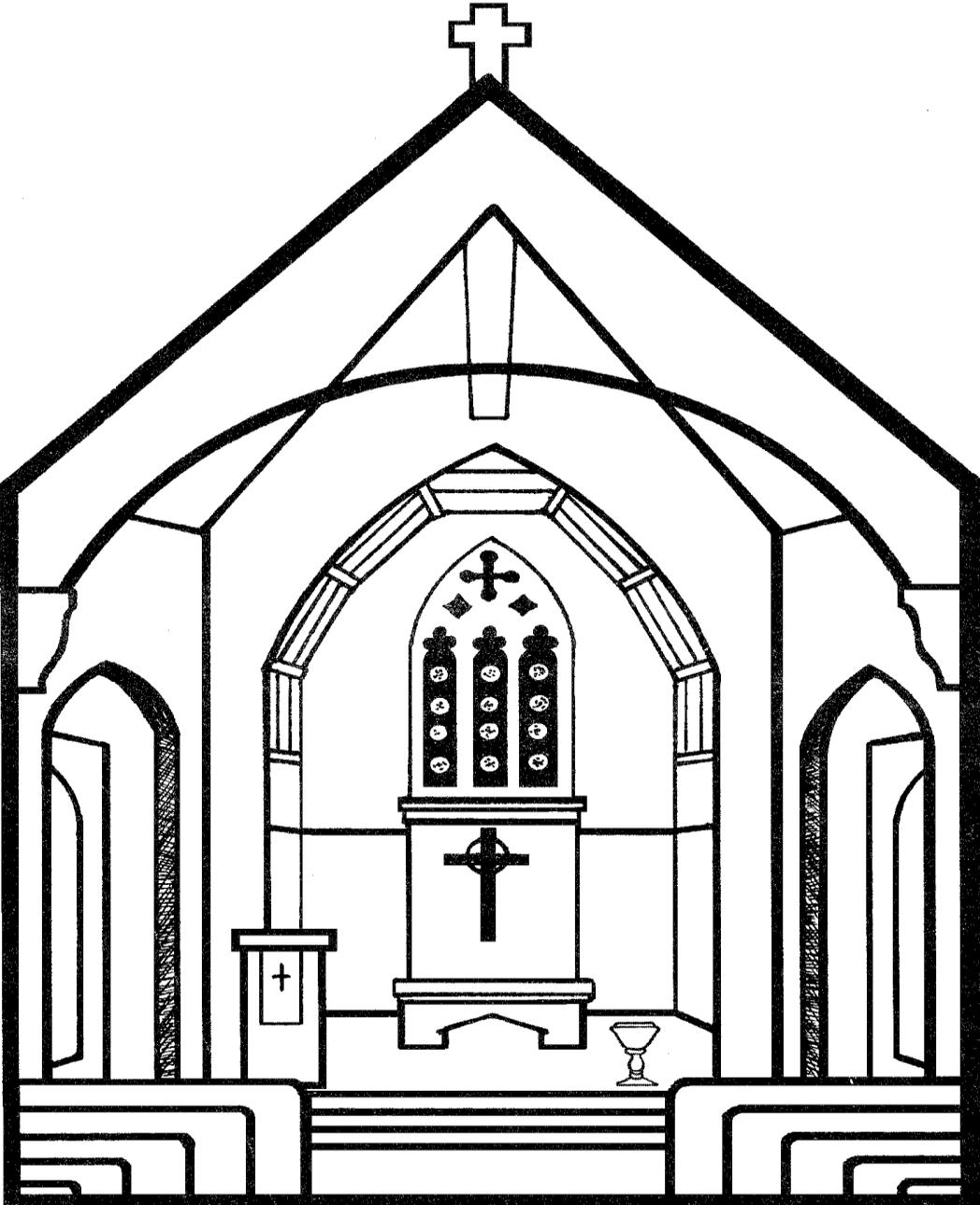
by Wilbur Held

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**\*Please stand, if you are able.**

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

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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