



# Celebration of Worship

December 22, 2024  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

## Prelude

*The Prelude is a time to begin transitioning from fellowshiping with our neighbors to preparing our hearts to worship God.*

*Please adjust all electronic devices so as not to interrupt the service.*

## Christmas Reflection

“Maker of the sun, he is made under the sun. In the Father he remains, from his mother he goes forth. Creator of heaven and earth, he was born on earth under heaven. Unspeakably wise, he is wisely speechless. Filling the world, he lies in a manger. Ruler of the stars, he nurses at his mother’s bosom. He is both great in the nature of God, and small in the form of a servant.” - Augustine

## Welcome and Announcements

*Welcome to all our visitors. Please fill out the guest registration to let us know of your visit.*

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## GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

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## Call to Worship

Minister: I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.

**ALL:** *He is Christ the Lord!*

Minister: We praise the God of grace saying:

**ALL:** *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.*

Minister: Let us all worship Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength proclaiming:

**ALL:** *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! The incarnate Christ, Immanuel has come among us!*

## \*Invocation and Adoration

*The invocation should acknowledge that our worship is in vain if it is not Spirit-inspired. Often, the invocation will also employ the language of adoration and praise, which is very fitting in light of the vertical, God-focused dimension of this prayer.*

## \*Worship in Song

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*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

## Lighting of the Advent Candle

### Reader:

The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of endless love and faithfulness. Out of darkness light shines, pointing us in hope to the One who came to overcome the darkness of this world and to be our light in the world to come.

Three weeks ago we lit the **Prophecy** candle and remembered those who first spoke the promise of the coming Christ child.



Two weeks ago we lit the **Bethlehem** candle, a symbol of the preparations being made to receive and cradle the Christ child.



Last week we lit the **Shepherds'** candle, remembering the first in a long line of people who joyfully shared the good news of the Savior's birth.



The fourth candle on the Advent wreath is called the **Angels'** candle. It reminds us of the hope fulfilled in the first coming of our Savior and of our continuing hope as we anticipate his coming again.



**From the Old Testament:** Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup> And he

said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?"<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

## **Worship in Song with Carols of Christmas 193**

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

### **PETITIONING GOD'S PROVIDENCE**

#### **Corporate Confession of Sin**

ALL: Almighty God, rich in mercy to all who call upon you; hear us as we come to You humbly confessing our sins; and imploring Your mercy and forgiveness. We have broken Your holy laws by our deeds and by our works; and by the sinful affections of our hearts. We confess before You our disobedience and ingratitude, our pride and our willfulness; and all our failures and shortcomings toward You and our neighbor. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, and out of Your great goodness grant that we may hereafter serve and praise You in newness of life through the finished work of our Lord and Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

#### **Silent Prayer of Confession**

#### **Comfort and Assurance of the Gospel**

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness....He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103.8, 10-12)*

#### **Prayers of God's People**

*(The pastor will lead us in prayer, reading submitted praises and requests)*

## ADORING GOD'S GLORY

### **Corporate Confession of Faith- Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.\* The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\*\* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

\*Some versions of the Creed omit this phrase; it was inserted to affirm the reality of Christ's physical death;

\*\*or universal; this phrase simply refers to the fact that the Church is made up of believers of all times in all nations

### **The Giving of First Fruits**

*Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;<sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. ~Proverbs 3:9-10*

#### **\*A Christmas Doxology (Tune: Veni Emmanuel)**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise Him all creatures here below;  
praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
Amen! Amen!

Emmanuel Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

#### **\*Prayer of Thanks and Dedication**

#### **\*Worship in Song**

*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly – 216*

**Verse 1**

[5]

Infant holy infant lowly  
For His bed a cattle stall  
Oxen lowing little knowing  
Christ the babe is Lord of all  
Swift are winging angels singing  
Noels ringing tidings bringing  
Christ the babe is Lord of all

### **Verse 2**

Flocks were sleeping  
Shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory heard the story  
Tidings of a gospel true  
Thus rejoicing free from sorrow  
Praises voicing greet the morrow  
Christ the babe was born for you

### ***Joy Has Dawned***

#### Verse 1

Joy has dawned upon the world  
Promised from creation  
God's salvation now unfurled  
Hope for ev'ry nation  
Not with fanfares from above  
Not with scenes of glory  
But a humble gift of love  
Jesus born of Mary

#### Verse 2

Sounds of wonder fill the sky  
With the songs of angels  
As the mighty Prince of Life  
Shelters in a stable

Hands that set each star in place  
Shaped the earth in darkness  
Cling now to a mother's breast  
Vulnerable and helpless

Verse 3

Shepherds bow before the Lamb  
Gazing at the glory  
Gifts of men from distant lands  
Prophecy the story  
Gold a King is born today  
Incense God is with us  
Myrrh His death will make a way  
By His blood He'll win us

Verse 4

Son of Adam Son of heav'n  
Given as a ransom  
Reconciling God and man  
Christ our mighty Champion  
What a Savior what a Friend  
What a glorious mystery  
Once a babe in Bethlehem  
Now the Lord of history

Glo – ri – a in excelsis Deo  
Glo – ri – a in excelsis De - o!

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**PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD**

# Scripture Reading & Prayer of Illumination

**Sermon Text:**

**Matthew 2:13-23**

## Preaching of the Word

*The Slaughter of the Innocents*

**\* Closing Hymn**

**229**

*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

## **\*Benediction**

Just as God has the first word in worship, he also has the last word. For those who are in Christ Jesus, these are always words of blessing. We look up and extend our hands out in a posture of receiving the blessing of God.

## **Postlude**

\* Indicates please stand if able.

Memory Verse:

**Luke 2:10-11** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.

<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.