

Bold Text is read or sung by the congregation
WELCOME & LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION
CHIMING THE HOUR/TIME OF CENTERING

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:**

The prophet proclaims, "Surely God is our salvation; we will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is our strength and might... Give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name; make known God's deeds among the nations; proclaim that God's name is exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord, for God has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel.

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.

Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.

The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;

there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn

We light this third candle and name it joy for the Lord is near. The prophet affirms that we shall go out in joy and be led back in peace as the mountains and hills burst into song, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring, let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near and the world is about to turn.

***PRAYER FOR THE DAY**

Avelina Fenstermacher

**Stir up your power, O God, and come to set us free
by becoming our brother, our friend, our salvation. Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN**

People, Look East | No. 105

**People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.**

Make your house fair as you are able;

Trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.

**Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.**

Give up your strength the seed to nourish,

That in course the flower may flourish.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Rose, is on the way.

**Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.**

Even the hour when wings are frozen

God for fledging time has chosen.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim

**one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,**

Bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth

Christ who brings new life to earth.

Set every peak and valley humming

With the word, the Lord is coming.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Lord, is on the way.

People, Look East

TEXT: Eleanor Farjeon, 1928

MUSIC: French folk melody; harm. Martin Shaw, 1928

ONE License No. A-740435

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God our Savior, we ask for mercy. Though we have heard the songs of Zechariah, Mary, and the angels, we still seek security in power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the cost of following you and pass by the least of these. Forgive us. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of your love. Amen. *(A time for silent confession)*

POURING OF THE WATER

Because of the grace we receive in baptism, we have nothing to fear.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, God is for us and not against us. Indeed, God became Emmanuel - God-with-us - that the world might be saved through him. Believe the good news of the Gospel:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE

(based on) *He Came Down* | No. 137

He came down that we may have light, he came down that we may have light, he came down that we may have light, hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.

THE BALLAD OF BETHLEHEM by Pepper Choplin

from Isaiah 62

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Hear the voice in the wilderness say, "Prepare the way of the Lord."

Rise up in the desert, make a great highway. Build the valley up, make the mountains low.

Make the crooked straight where the Lord will go.

The voice said, "Cry" What shall I cry? Lift your voice on a mountain high.

Hear the prophet now prophesy: "Prepare the way of the Lord."

O Come, O come, Emmanuel - hear the voice in the wilderness say, and ransom captive Israel. - "Rise up, make a straight highway."

We mourn in lonely exile here - Build the valley, make the mountain low.

until the Son of God appear. Come and Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

The voice said, "Say." What shall i say? Grass will wither and the flowers fade.

All our glory will pass away, but the Word of God goes on and on.

Prepare the way of the Lord.

from 2 Samuel 7

THE BALLAD OF BETHLEHEM

O sing a ballad of Bethlehem. I want to hear it once more.

I love that story so often told to generations before.

Remind me God still loves the world, that hope and peace will come.

Oh, sing me a ballad of Bethlehem where God would send his Son.

O sing me a ballad of Bethlehem, of two thousand years ago;

when people struggled to live in peace and hearts were sinking low.

The prophets preached and the people prayed their Savior soon would be here, and Micah foretold that in Bethlehem the Child of God would appear.

from Micah 5

BETHLEHEM PROPHECY

*O tiny Bethlehem, though you are small, from you comes the ruler of Israel.
He shepherds his flock in the strength of the Lord.*

His greatness and majesty lives through all the earth.

*O tiny Bethlehem, though you are small, from you comes the promised Messiah.
Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, he is the Prince of Peace.*

*Jesus born in humble Bethlehem, come to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

Come now to Bethlehem, humble and small. Come to the place where the child is born.

Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Eternal Father, he is the Prince of Peace.

O tiny Bethlehem, though you are small, from you shall come Christ, the Savior and Lord.

from Luke 1 & 2

THE BALLAD OF BETHLEHEM—THE BIRTH

Now in a corner of Bethlehem, a baby has just been born.

There's rest for Mary, the child's asleep. She holds him safe and warm.

STILL GENTLE MARY

Still, still, still, the night is peaceful and still.

The newborn baby, Mary is holding, wrapped in heaven's love enfolding.

Still, still, still, the night is peaceful and still.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger.

There he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger:

Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story.

Praise his name in all the earth. Christ the King of glory.

Joy, joy, joy, your arrival brings us joy.

We overflow with warm celebration, bringing you praise and adoration.

You are the King of glory.

from Luke 2

THE BALLAD OF BETHLEHEM—THE SHEPHERDS

O sing me a ballad of Bethlehem, of shepherds out in the field.

While keeping watch o'er their flocks by night, what wondrous news was revealed.

When angels came to appear to them, the glory of God was displayed.

The angels would startle them and they were so afraid.

from Isaiah 61

I HEAR THE ANGELS SHOUTING GLORY!

Fear not, I come to you, sharing this thing with you. Today a holy child is born in Bethlehem.

You'll find him as you go, wrapped up in swaddling clothes.

He is a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

I heard the angels shouting, "Glory to God.

Glory to God up in the highest heavens," the angels shouted from on high.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to God, glory to God, gloria."

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace - Glory to God, glory to God, glory.

Hark, the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

And let there be peace on earth.

The angels of heaven came down to earth to proclaim his birth to us.

from the Psalms & Isaiah 60

THE BALLAD OF BETHLEHEM—THE WISE MEN

*We sing of trav'lers to Bethlehem, these men so patient and wise,
who looked beyond all the things of earth to search the heavenly skies.
They saw the star of the newborn King that led to Bethlehem.
If we were wise, we will follow them to bow and worship him.*

from Matthew 2

ONLY THE WISE

*Only the wise would look at the skies to see the star and the message it would bring.
Only the wise would open their eyes and follow the star to find the newborn King.
They saw the star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.
Only the wise would worship the Child they found in the little town of Bethlehem.
Kneeling down, they humbly bowed to offer gifts and worship the Lord.
Child of wonder, Child of light, Child of royal beauty bright,
as we're bowing lead us now and guide us to thy perfect light.
Now we open our eyes, we open our eyes.
We open our hearts to seek the holy presence of the Lord.
Lord, we come to you now, we humbly bow to offer gifts of worship unto you.
We bring you gifts of worship, gifts of praise, words of gratitude we raise.
Lord of wonder, Lord of light, Lord of royal beauty bright,
as we're bowing, lead us now and guide us to thy perfect light.
Now we open our eyes, and open our hearts,
as we offer gifts of worship to the Lord.*

from Isaiah 11

A THRILL OF HOPE

*The weary world rejoices. We have new hope for our lives.
Those in despair will be lifted, and will thrive.
All who are wand'ring through the darkness, a light has come to guide your way.
Through a holy birth, God comes to earth. So we come to say,
"There's a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."
Fall on your knees. O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born.
All who are quietly grieving, with faces resting in your hands,
lift up your heads and see the sunrise again.
The burdened souls will be lifted and wounded hearts will be restored.
New hope is found when we bow down and worship Christ the Lord.
Fall on your knees and find new hope, the thrill of hope and joy.*

from the from Jeremiah 31

SHOUT WITH THE SHEPHERDS

*I want to shout with the shepherds and sing with the angels
and hurry to the town of Bethlehem.
I want to walk with the wisemen to where the child was born.
I want to worship Christ the Lord.*

*There in the same country, the shepherds watched their sheep.
They settled down their flocks and they were almost falling asleep.
But there appeared an angel who said, "Be not afraid.
For Christ the Lord today is born. Now go and find the babe."
I want to follow the wisemen who traveled very far,
and lift my eyes into the skies and see the beautiful star.
I want to bow in worship and lay my offerings down.
And when I go, I'm sure to know that glory's all around.
Glory be to God up in the highest. And glory be to God on earth below.
Gloria, gloria to God. Glory to God in the highest.
**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
Glory to the newborn King!***

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

**In life and in death we belong to God.
We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah
chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.**

JOYS & CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Glory to God | PG. 35

**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.**

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERING & OFFERTORY

*Doxology *In the Bleak Midwinter* (verse 4) | No. 144

***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.
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.***

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We thank you, O God, for all that draws us close together, astounding us with lives transformed by gratitude. Accept our gifts as signs of our gratefulness for all you give us that we may honor your presence in the world. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear | No. 123

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:**

**“Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven’s all-gracious King”:
the world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o’er all the weary world:**

**Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;**

**And we at war on earth hear not
the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife
to hear the angels sing!**

**And you, beneath life’s crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,**

**Look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.**

**For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,**

**When peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
TEXT: Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849
MUSIC: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850
ONE License No. A-740435

*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

**Remember you are a child of God:
And God loves God's children.**

DEC 15 - 22

Event & Celebrations

SUN | 15

ADVENT 3 - JOY
Cantata Sunday Worship,
10:00AM
Angel Tree Luncheon
& Fellowship, 11:30AM
NA of EP, 3:00PM

MON | 16

TUE | 17

GraceB4Work,
7:00AM
Book Club, 6:00PM

WED | 18

BLUE CHRISTMAS
Fellowship, 6:30PM
Blue Christmas Worship, 7:00PM

THU | 19

CHRISTMAS CAROLING
Meet at Grace for pizza, 5:00PM
BIRTHDAY
Pete McMillan

FRI | 20

Desert Bloom
Montessori
Christmas Pageant

SAT | 21

Quilters, 8:30AM
BIRTHDAY
Nancy Collins

SUN | 22

ADVENT 4 - LOVE
Jazz Worship &
Children's Nativity, 10:00AM
Fellowship, 11:30AM
NA of EP, 3:00PM

Prayers & Concerns

Bob Hedicke

Mildred Helm

Russell Wiggs

Barbara Frey

Pete McMillan

Billy Beard

Offerings can be made online with no fee using Zelle®
Find us using our phone number (915) 755-8206 or email address
office@epgrace.com. For all offerings given in any form, thank you!

TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor — Rev. Janie McElwee-Smith
Music Director — Brittney Williams
Additional Accompaniment — Bill Rose

Liturgist — Avelina Fenstermacher
Accompanist/Pianist — Patricia Provencio
Technology — Bob Jones & Jim Collins

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