



Welcome to Advent at Epworth! We continue this week with our Advent Sermon series entitled: "There Will Be Signs!" This week we will focus on the signs of preparation. After centuries of prophets foretelling the coming of a Messiah, there are signs that the time is drawing near. Angels appear to Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph announcing the plan that will play out at Bethlehem. Join us as we explore what must have been an exciting time for God's faithful people. All are welcome at Epworth, whether a life-long church attendee or someone searching for meaning through a church home. At Epworth, all means all, so plan to celebrate Advent with us and help us to help you prepare the way for Christmas.

EPWORTH: a United Methodist Church
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VISION: Exploring Faith, Embracing Community
MISSION: Inviting All, Finding Your Place, Connecting to God, Demonstrating Care

☞ WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY ☞

☞ GATHER ☞

Praise Gathering

OPEN UP THE HEAVENS

We waited for this day, we're gathered in Your name, calling out to you.
Your glory like a fire, awakening desire, will burn our hearts with truth.

You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing.

Open up the heavens; we wanna see You.

Open up the floodgates, a mighty river flowing from Your heart, filling ev'ry part of our praise.

Your presence in this place, Your glory on our face, we're looking to the sky.
Descending like a cloud, You're standing with us now. Lord, unveil our eyes.

You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing. *(Chorus 2X)*

Show us, show us Your glory. Show us, show us Your power.

Show us, show us Your glory, Lord. *(repeat)*

Into CHORUS: We wanna see You, we wanna see You! *(Chorus 2X)*

TAG: We sing, sing!¹

Welcome, Announcements **(Passing of the Peace at end of this liturgy)**

Vicky

I invite you to take a deep breath. Imagine that what is above you is a star-lit night...

Todd

[pause for a moment as wind chimes ring]

...and in this moment, all is calm, all is bright.

Calm & Bright

It was the night when Joy was born (Silent Night)
And just as now the world was torn (Holy Night)
But all was calm and all was bright (Silent Night)
The star above gave out its light (Holy Night)

Dear people all around the world
Let us unite and we will show
How Joy can change us,
How Joy can help us grow.

Todd: As we continue our commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the debut of “Silent Night, Holy Night,” let’s speak the second verse together:

P: Silent night, holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing “Alleluia”!
Christ, the Savior is born,
Christ, the Savior is born.

Todd: The shepherds got quite a wake-up call that night when the sky lit up with angels singing Alleluia. Awe at the transformative glory of what God can do in our lives is the focus this week. Glories are streaming every day if we only have eyes to see. How would our lives be renewed if we saw the world and our lives through the lens of wonder?

Calm & Bright (cont.)

So let your Joy shine in the night (Silent Night)
And let your life burn warm and bright (Holy Night)
This Joy we give the world is balm (Silent Night)
And in this truth we find our calm (Holy Night!)²

Advent Family Prayer:

Reader 1:

James & Suzanne Blair

We continue this season of waiting by lighting the second candle, anticipating the light of the star that shone over Bethlehem for all to see.

Reader 2:

Wondrous God, we open ourselves to hear your call today to become those who not only see the joy all around us, but can also be joy, and bring joy, to all around us – in our lives, our families, our communities, and our world.

P: Fill us with your peace and light, make the world so calm and bright.

***Passing the Peace**

Todd

*As the children come forward, you are invited to greet those around you with a sign of God's peace, saying,
"The peace of Christ be with you."*

✠ PROCLAIM ✠

Children's Celebration

Mickie McManamon

Advent Introit

Prepare Ye ... Stephen Schwartz

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord! *{Repeat 3X}*

Old Testament Lesson

Micah 5:2-5

Loretta Smith

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until that time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

***Gospel Lesson**

Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Brothers and Sisters

This is the Word of God for the People of God.

§ Thanks be to God

Prepare Ye

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord! {Repeat}

Sermon

Signs of Preparation

Rev. Todd Shultz

RESPOND

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The world waits for a miracle, the heart longs for a little bit of hope,
O come, O come, Emmanuel.

A child prays for peace on earth, and she's callin' out from a sea of hurt,
O come, O come, Emmanuel. And can you hear the angels singing...

Glo-o-ry to the light of the world, Glo-o-ry the light of the world is here.

The drought breaks with the tears of a mother, a baby's cry is the sound of love,
come down, come down, Emmanuel.

He is the song for the suffering, He is Messiah, the prince of peace has come,
He has come, Emmanuel.

Glo-o-ry to the light of the world. (4X)

For all who wait, for all who hunger, for all who've prayed, for all who wonder.
Behold your King, behold Messiah, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

*Glo-o-ry to the light of the world. Glo-o-ry to the light of the world. Glo-o-ry to the light of the world.
Behold your king, behold Messiah, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.*

The world waits for a miracle, the heart longs for a little bit of hope,
O come, O come, Emmanuel. ³

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Vicky

Morning Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

(sung responsively)

Invitation to Offering

Please sign the blue Connections Pad and pass it down the row.

Vicky

Offerings are given through cash and check, electronic giving and by using our Giving Kiosk in the main lobby.

There are Giving Cards in the pews to place in the plate, if you give electronically or through the Kiosk.

Bless your heart for supporting our ministries!

Offertory:

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play.

And mild and sweet their songs repeat of peace on earth, good will to men.

*And the bells are ringing, "Peace on earth!"
Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
In my heart I hear them, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

And in despair I bowed my head. "There is no peace on earth," I said.
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

*But the bells are ringing, "Peace on earth!"
Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
Does anybody hear them? "Peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

Then rang the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep."
[Peace on earth, peace on earth.]
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Then ringing, singing on its way, the world revolved from night to day.
A voice, a chime, a chance sublime of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

*And the bells, they're ringing, "Peace on earth!"
Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
And with our hearts we'll hear them, "Peace, peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

*Do you hear the bells, they're ringing, "Peace on earth!"
Like the angels singing! "Peace on earth!"
Open up your hearts and hear them, "Peace, peace on earth, goodwill to men.
Peace on earth, peace on earth.
Peace on earth, goodwill to men." ⁴*

✠ WE ARE SENT INTO THE WORLD ✠

Benediction

Todd

Benediction Response

WE NEED A SILENT NIGHT IN HERE

We need a silent night in here. We need your presence to be near.
Give us the hope we need and the peace we seek.
We need a silent night in here.

Give us the hope we need and the peace we seek.
We need a silent night, we need a silent night,
we need a silent night in here. ⁵

**Please stand as you are able; § congregational response.*

Bulletins for the month of December are sponsored in honor of her husband, Dennis' birthday, December 14, by Laurel St. Germain.

Chancel Flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of their Parents by Andy Brangenberg & David Hagelin.

Stephen Ministers wearing blue name badges will be at each service if anyone in the Epworth family wants to talk about any life challenges.

Our Advent liturgy and special music comes from the **Marcia McFee 2018 Advent Series**.

The special **Peace Candle on the Chancel** shines to remind us of God's desire for peace throughout our world and our call to be God's peacemakers.

DVD and Broadcast Ministries: All Church Service at Epworth are presented using multimedia technology. The screens above the Chancel area are used for text, videos, photographs and live cameras. Each service is digitally recorded for archive purposes as well as for distribution to our homebound members on DVD. These recordings may also be broadcast or archived on our web page. Therefore; you may, at any time, be seen and recorded on camera - anywhere throughout the Sanctuary.

Assisting with today's Service

Praise Team Praise Team
Acolyte Autumn Reynolds
Sight & Sound Ken Mahan, Sharon Wert, Josh Megee, Arne Jerfsten, Karen Kaufman
Ushers Head Usher: Jim Blakeslee
Usher Coordinator – Worship Pathway:
9:30: Rose Barcellona, Loretta Mahan, Cathy McCallister, Karen Hugues, Carol Pophan, Jean Waters

Worship Resources

Song lyrics by permission of CCLI license no. 1019082.

¹ *Open Up the Heavens:* Jason Ingram, Stuart Garrard, Andi Rozier, James MacDonald & Meredith Andrews ©2012 Song/ATV Music Publishing LLC

² *Calm & Bright:* Marcia McFee & Chuck Bell ©2018 Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell

³ *Light of the World:* Lauren Daigle, Paul Mabury & Paul Duncan ©2013 Song / ATV Publishing.

⁴ *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day:* Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; Mark Hall & Dale Oliver ©2008 My Refuge Music

⁵ *We Need a Silent Night in Here:* Marsha Jean Moors-Charles & Chuck Bell ©2018 Chuck Bell (ASCAP)

Ministers: The Church Family... *Lay Leader:* Gwen Osborne

Senior Pastor: Rev. Vicky Starnes ... *Associate Pastor:* Rev. Todd Shultz

Director of Music Ministries: Doug Yetter ... *Accompanist:* Linda Jo Hess ... *Coordinator of Caring Ministries:* Mickie McManamon

Communications & Technologies Manager: Kenneth Mahan ... *Office Manager:* Darlene Ford

Special Projects: Debbie Hunt ... *Administrative Assistant:* Diana Young ... *Sound Tech:* Josh Megee

Preschool Director: Betsy Plowman ... *Nursery:* Cathy Crawford ... *Interim Cemetery Superintendent:* Jay Stevenson

Custodian: Wanda Hudson...*Maintenance:* Mike Harrigan



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