



Blessings on you as we mark the Third Sunday of Advent! We are halfway to Christmas. Today we light the pink candle in our Advent wreath and we run smack dab into John the Baptist! He is fired up and ready to tell us a thing or two that we may not expect to hear. In today's lesson, everyone responds to John's preaching by saying: "What should we do?" As we mark the days until Christmas, God beckons us to ask the same about our lives – what should we do to live faithful lives and be ready for Christ's coming? Today we will hear John's good news and welcome new members to Epworth! We also will baptize several children of God – reminding us all of the promises made in baptism and membership in Christ's holy church. We are glad you are here this day!

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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

EMMANUEL

Together in this place of worship Your greatness we proclaim.  
We stand as one in giving You all glory and acclaim.  
To you our hearts are open, to You our hands we raise.  
Come take the place of honor in our lives.

*Emmanuel, our God is with us. Prince of peace, Mighty One, the ever living God. (repeat)*

See the praises of our Savior rise to open skies.  
With the dawning of redemption, Your glory will arise.  
For You alone are worthy, here in Zion You are praised.  
Our Lord and King forever You will reign. *(Refrain 2x)*

To you our hearts are open, to You our hands we raise.  
Come take the place of honor in our lives.  
For You alone are worthy, here in Zion You are praised.  
Our Lord and King forever You will reign. *(Refrain 2x)<sup>1</sup>*

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

**Todd**

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

Vicky

*[pause for a moment for wind chimes]*

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

### Song

*Calm & Bright*

It was the night when Love 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 Love can change us, how Love can help us grow.

L: On this third Sunday of our commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Silent Night, Holy Night,” let’s speak the third verse together.

P: **Silent night, holy night. Son of God, love’s pure light,  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth**

L: The presence of God in human form is the “dawn” of redeeming grace, says the hymn’s third verse. God so desired to be “up close and personal” that God came to live, breathe, feel, teach, touch, and love. Made in the image of God, we are called to nurture relationships that birth, multiply and radiate grace in the world. What would the world be like if “love’s pure light” was at the center?

*Calm & Bright (cont.)*

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

### Advent Family Prayer:

Cindy & Wilma Holt

Reader 1:

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

Reader 2:

Uplifting God, we open ourselves to hear your call today to recognize your love all around us, and also see the potential to add to the love all around us – making our lives, our families, our communities, and our world a brighter place.

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

### \*Passing the Peace

*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

Terre Walton and Lynn Kohler

Advent Introit

*Prepare Ye*

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

Epistle Lesson

*Philippians 4:4-7*

Youth

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

\*Gospel Lesson

*Luke 3:7-18*

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers!

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bear fruits worthy of repentance.

Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?"

He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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}

✠ RESPOND ✠

GLORY (LET THERE BE PEACE)

One star burns in the darkness, shines with the promise: Emmanuel.  
One child born in the stillness, living within us: Emmanuel.

*We're singing glory, glory; let there be peace, let there be peace.*

*Singing glory, glory; let there be peace, let it start in me.*

One voice speaks for the voiceless, hope for the hopeless: Emmanuel.

One love bring us together, now and forever: Emmanuel. {Chorus}

Do not be afraid, His love is strong enough to save us.

Nothing stands in the way, His love is strong enough to lead us. {Repeat} {Chorus twice}

TAG: *Let there be peace, let it start in me.* <sup>4</sup>

✠ BAPTISMAL COVENANT & RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS ✠

Introduction

Vicky

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

Through the Sacrament of baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church.

We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation through water and the Spirit.

All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Through the reaffirmation of our faith we renew the covenant declared at Baptism  
acknowledge what God is doing for us,  
and affirm our commitment to Christ's holy Church.

Lay Leader: I present these persons today for baptism: (at the baptismal font)

Gwen

*For Baptism:*

Jiyanna Holt (child)

Donna Walton (adult)

Kayden Holt (child)

New Members:

For Membership at the 9:15 service (at the first step)

James Baxter Cynthia & Wilma Holt

Donna Walton Christina Caligiure

Kim Farrell Marcia Vietrogoski

To the new members and parents:

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask:

Todd

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness

reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?

§ I do.

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice,  
and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

§ I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,  
put your whole trust in His grace,  
and promise to serve Him as our Lord,  
in union with the Church which Christ has opened  
to people of all ages, nations, and races?

§ I do.

**(FOR CHILDREN) to parents**

**Vicky**

Will you nurture these children in Christ's holy Church,  
that by teaching and example they may be guided to  
accept God's grace for themselves,  
to profess their faith openly and to lead a Christian life?

§ I will.

**(FOR ADULTS)**

According to the grace given to you,  
Will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy church  
And serve as Christ's representatives in the world?

§ I will.

**To the congregation**

Do you, as Christ's body, the Church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin  
and your commitment to Christ?

§ We do.

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons  
now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of  
Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness that  
they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others.  
We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads  
to life.

Let us join together in professing the Christian faith by reciting the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth;

and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

the third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven,

and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick 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.

**Thanksgiving over the Water**

The Lord be with you.

**Todd**

§ And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father: when nothing existed but chaos,  
You swept across the dark waters and brought forth light.  
In the days of Noah You saved those on the ark through water.  
After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow.

When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt, You led them to freedom through the sea.  
Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised.

§ Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Tell of God's mercy each day.

In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb.  
He was baptized by John and anointed by your spirit.  
He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection  
and to make disciples of all nations.

§ Declare his works to the nations, His glory among all the people.

Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this gift of water

Vicky

and Jiyanna, Kayden and Donna

who will receive it, to wash away their sin

and clothe them in righteousness throughout their life, that,

dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in His final victory,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

\*Baptism with Laying on of Hands – Jiyanna, Kayden, Donna

I baptize you in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Holy Spirit works within you,  
that being born through water and the Spirit,  
you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Pastors use water symbolically to anoint other new members)

To the new members

Gwen

As a member of Christ's universal church, will you be loyal  
to the United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?

§ I will.

As a member of Epworth, will you faithfully participate in its ministries  
by your prayers, your presence, your witness, your gifts, and your service? I will.

\*Commendation and Welcome to the congregation

Gwen, Todd, Vicky

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care.  
Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

§ We give thanks for all that God has already given you and welcome you in  
Christian love. As members with you in the body of Christ and in Epworth, we

renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our witness, our gifts, and our service, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

### Lighting of the Candle and Covenant of Prayer by the Congregation

*(Vicky will take Jiyanna and Kayden into the congregation as Gwen helps their parents light a candle, have a member give them a blanket that has been knitted for them, and bring them back as we all sing and welcome new members.)*

#### \*A Song of Welcome *Welcome (Let's Walk Together) (vs 1)*

Let's walk together for a while and ask where we begin  
to build a world where love can grow and hope can enter in,  
to be the hands of healing and to plant the seeds of peace.

*Singing welcome, welcome to this place. You're invited to come and know God's grace.*

*All are welcome, the love of God to share, 'cause all of us are welcome here; all are welcome to this place. <sup>5</sup>*

### Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Todd

### Morning Prayer

#### The Lord's Prayer

*(spoken)*

#### Invitation to Offering

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

Todd

*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:

KING OF HEAVEN

Jesus, let Your kingdom come here; let Your will be done here in us;

Jesus, there is no one greater; You alone are Savior; show the world Your love.

*King of heaven, come down; King of heaven, come now;*

*Let Your glory reign, shining like the day, King of heaven come.*

*King of heaven, rise up, who can stand against us?*

*You are strong to save, in Your mighty name, King of heaven come.*

We are children of Your mercy, rescued for Your glory;

We cry Jesus, set our hearts towards You, that ev'ry eye would see You lifted high.

{Refrain} *(Instrumental)*

King of heaven, come; King of heaven, come;

King of heaven, come; King of heaven, come. {Refrain / Bridge / 1<sup>st</sup> ½ of Refrain} <sup>6</sup>

✠ GO ✠

### Benediction

Vicky

## 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. <sup>7</sup>

*\*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.

**Thank you** for donating poinsettias and funds toward the "Youth Rally." Lists of donation remembrances can be found in the narthex for those who have not received a copy. This is our effort to be good stewards of our environment and cost. Thanks for your understanding.

**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**

*Acolyte* Chase Reynolds

*Sight & Sound* Ken Mahan, Sharon Wert, Josh Megee, Arne Jerfsten, Karen Kaufman

*Ushers* Head Usher: Jim Blakeslee

Usher Coordinator – Worship Pathway:

9:30: Tom & Irene Safrit, Barbara Brittingham, Ginny Refsnider, Larry Zeigler, Lori Watson

### **Worship Resources**

**Song lyrics by permission of CCLI license no. 1019082.**

<sup>1</sup> *Emmanuel*: Raymond Badham ©2000 Hillsong Publishing

<sup>2</sup> *Calm & Bright*: Marcia McFee & Chuck Bell ©2018 Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell

<sup>3</sup> *Prepare Ye*: Stephen Schwartz ©1972 Valando Publishing

<sup>4</sup> *Glory (Let There Be Peace)*: Chris Stevens, Matt Maher & Rachel Taylor Popadic ©2016 Meaux Mercy

<sup>5</sup> *Let's Walk Together*: Laurie Zelman & Mark Miller; ©2007 Abingdon Press

<sup>6</sup> *King of Heaven*: Jason Ingram, Paul Baloche ©2010 Integrity Worship Music

<sup>7</sup> *We Need a Silent Night in Here*: Marsha Jean Moors-Charles & Chuck Bell ©2018 Chuck Bell (ASCAP)

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**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

*Lead Interpreter:* Lynn Kohler...*Custodian:* Wanda Hudson ... *Maintenance:* Mike Harrigan

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