



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 Jesus as the messiah that was foretold from Old Testament times. Zachariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks his prophecy at the birth of his son, John the Baptist. There are signs that the time is here for God to remember the holy covenant made with Abraham. Join us as we see the final pieces of the puzzle being put in place for the coming of our mighty savior. 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.

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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

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

O come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appears.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind.  
Bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come! (3X)  
He has come! He has come!

O come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appears.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

He's coming toward us now. (3X) He always will. <sup>1</sup>

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 for wind chimes]*

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

*Calm & Bright*

It was the night when Hope 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 Hope can change us,  
How Hope can help us grow.

Todd: On this final Sunday of Advent, we continue our commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Silent Night, Holy Night,” and speak the fourth verse together:

**P: Silent night, holy night  
Wondrous star, lend thy light;  
With the angels let us sing,  
“Alleluia” to our King:  
“Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born.”**

Todd: The last verse of the hymn invites us to lift our voices in alleluias to the one who is “King.” This descriptor was more radical for the people of Jesus’ time as it resisted the powers of empire that threatened “the least of these” that Jesus came to serve. We are reminded by this seemingly benign and sweet song that whenever there is injustice in this world, we are to look to the one whose power is love. How might this increase our hope for the future?

*Calm & Bright (cont.)*

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

## Advent Family Prayer:

David & Cheryl Pioli

Reader 1:

The season of waiting is almost over. We light the fourth candle, anticipating the coming light of the star that shone over Bethlehem for all to see.

Reader 2:

God of our future, we open ourselves to hear your call today – the call to keep hope alive no matter the troubles we face. Help us to never lose hope and to offer hope to 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

Mickie McManamon & Lynn Kohler

### Advent Introit

*Prepare Ye*

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord! *{Repeat 3X}* <sup>3</sup>

### Old Testament Lesson

*Malachi 3:1-4*

Holly Reynolds

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

### \*Gospel Lesson

*Luke 1:68-79*

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and

righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

**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 3X}

**Sermon**

*The Sign is Jesus*

Rev. Todd Shultz

**☞ RESPOND ☛**

*IMMANUEL*

A sign shall be given: a virgin will conceive a human baby bearing undiminished Deity. The glory of the nations, a light for all to see, and hope for all who will embrace His warm reality.

*Immanuel, our God is with us.*

*And if God is with us, who could stand against us?*

*Our God is with us, Immanuel.*

All those who live in the shadows of death, a glorious light has dawned. For all those who stumble in the darkness, behold: a light has come. {Refrain}

So what shall be your answer? Oh, will you hear the call of Him who did not spare His Son, but gave Him for us all? On earth there is no power, there is no depth or height could ever separate us from the love of God in Christ. {Refrain} <sup>4</sup>

**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.*

**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:

### LIGHT A CANDLE

Light a candle for the old man who sits staring out a frosty windowpane.  
Light a candle for the woman who is lonely and ev'ry Christmas it's the same,  
for the children who need more than presents can bring.

*Light a candle. Light the dark.*

*Light the world. Light a heart or two.*

*Light a candle for me; I'll light a candle for you.*

Light a candle for the homeless and the hungry: a little shelter from the cold.  
Light a candle for the broken and forgotten. May the season warm the soul.  
Can we open our hearts to shine through the dark. {Chorus}

And in this special time of year may peace on earth surround us here  
and teach us there's a better way to live.

And with every flame that burns we must somehow learn  
that love's the greatest gift that we could ever give. {Chorus 2X}

TAG: Light a candle for me; I'll light a candle for you. (2X)<sup>5</sup>



## 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. <sup>6</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

*Praise Team* Praise Team

*Acolyte* Alexis Brown

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

*Ushers* Head Usher: Jim Blakeslee

Usher Coordinator - Worship Pathway:

9:30: Charles Mitchell, Ruth Ann Barnes, Holly Ostendorf, Woody Woelker, Michael Fehrenbach, Sam Sonnett

#### Worship Resources

Song lyrics by permission of CCLI license no. 1019082.

<sup>1</sup> O Come, O Come Emmanuel: Arr. David Crowder, Mark Waldrop, Mike Hogan, Jack Parker, Mike Dodson & Jeremy Bush; ©2011 WorshipTogether.com Songs

<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> Immanuel: Michael Card ©1986 Birdwing Music

<sup>5</sup> Light a Candle: Joel Lindsay & Wayne Haun; ©1999 Paragon Music Copr.

<sup>6</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 ... *ASL Interpreter:* Lynn Kohler

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

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

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