



Welcome to Advent at Epworth! This is the beginning of the Christian year and the first of the 4 Sundays that mark the time until Christmas. Our Advent Sermon series is entitled: “Heaven and Nature Sing” which celebrates the 300th anniversary of the beloved hymn “Joy to the World.” Each week we will look at a different type of joy represented in the hymn. This week as we prepare Him room, we will look at hopeful joy. Join us for the next four Sundays leading into Christmas as we explore the meaning in this beloved hymn. 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 ☞

Expansion of our Hearts “Prepare Him Room: Hopeful Joy” Advent I

We gather together to worship the One Who is Joy and as we come together, our hearts are expanded. We remember that the heavens declare God’s praise as the sun rises and light multiplies. And we witness that all of nature (including us) yearns to reach and expand toward the Light so that all might know joy.

Praise Gathering KING OF KINGS

In the darkness, we were waiting without hope, without light,
‘til from heaven You came running; there was mercy in Your eyes.
To fulfill the law and prophets, to a virgin came the word,
From a throne of endless glory to a cradle in the dirt.

*Praise the Father, praise the Son, praise the Spirit, Three in One.
God of glory, majesty, praise forever to the King of kings.*

To reveal the kingdom coming and to reconcile the lost,
To redeem the whole creation, You did not despise the cross.

For even in Your suffering, You saw to the other side.
Knowing this was our salvation, Jesus, for our sake You died. {Chorus}

And the morning that you rose, all of heaven held its breath,
'til that stone was moved for good, for the Lamb had conquered death.
And the dead rose from their tombs and the angels stood in awe,
For the souls of all who'd come to the Father are restored.

And the church of Christ was born, then the Spirit lit the flame.
Now this gospel truth of old shall not kneel, shall not faint.
By His blood and in His name, in His freedom I am free,
For the love of Jesus Christ, who has resurrected me. Oh... {Chorus}

TAG: Praise forever to the King of kings. ¹

Welcome, Announcements (No Passing of the Peace here!)

Vicky

Focusing on Hopeful Joy

Vicky

“Joy to the World,” a beloved Christmas classic, turns 300 this year. Composer Isaac Watt’s interpretation of Psalm 98 invites us to sing a “new song” – and it is a powerful cosmic performance of all creation being renewed and freed. Let us join our voices with heaven and earth, proclaiming along with the Psalmist:

[Advent Candle Readers come to the wreath]

Song

Heaven and Nature Sing ... Chuck Bell

PT leads / Congregation echoes

Sing a new song to the Lord. Lift your hearts with gratitude
Sing a new song to the Lord. Lift your hearts with gratitude
And Joy, Hopeful Joy

Your steadfast love and faithfulness is ever present in our lives.
Your steadfast love and faithfulness is ever present in our lives.
With Joy, Hopeful Joy

Advent Reader

Autumn Reynolds & Tony Levato

O sing to the Beloved a new song, for Love has done marvelous things! By the strength of your indwelling Presence, we, too, are called to do great things: We are set free through Love’s forgiveness and truth. Yes, your steadfast Love and faithfulness are ever-present gifts in our lives. All the ends of the earth have seen the glory of Love’s Eternal Flame.

We light the first candle on the Advent Wreath symbolizing Hope. Let us pray:

Holy God, you are our joy. You are the joy that runs deep and wide underneath all of life. This is our hope, that You are ever-present and constantly shifting our fear to compassion, and grinding our swords into plows.

P: Let us prepare him room in our hearts this day.
Let us prepare him room in our church this day.
Let us prepare him room in the world this day... for Hope. Amen.

Song

We sing. We sing. Joy to the World. Heaven and nature sing
Joy to the World. Heaven and nature sing. With Joy. Hopeful Joy

*Passing the Peace of Christ:

You are invited to pass the peace by saying, "May you have hopeful joy" to the people around you.

*Opening Song

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)²*

✠ RECEPTION OF GOD'S WORD ✠

Children's Celebration

Mickie McManamon

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 2:1-5 (Common English Bible)

Murray Archibald

This is what Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
In the days to come the mountain of the LORD's house will be the highest of the mountains.
It will be lifted above the hills; peoples will stream to it.
Many nations will go and say, "Come, let's go up to the LORD's mountain, to the house of
Jacob's God so that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in God's paths."
Instruction will come from Zion; the LORD's word from Jerusalem.
God will judge between the nations, and settle disputes of mighty nations.
Then they will beat their swords into iron plows and their spears into pruning tools.
Nation will not take up sword against nation; they will no longer learn how to make war.
Come, house of Jacob, let's walk by the LORD's light.

Epistle Lesson

Romans 13:11-14 (Common English Bible)

As you do all this, you know what time it is. The hour has already come for you to wake up from your sleep. Now our salvation is nearer than when we first had faith. The night is almost over, and the day is near. So let's get rid of the actions that belong to the darkness and put on the weapons of light. Let's behave appropriately as people who live in the day, not in partying and getting drunk, not in sleeping around and obscene behavior, not in fighting and obsession. Instead, dress yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't plan to indulge your selfish desires.

Brothers and Sisters

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

§ Thanks be to God

Sermon

Prepare Him Room: Hopeful Joy

Rev. Todd Shultz

✠ TRANSFORMATION OF OUR LIVES ✠

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Vicky

Prayer of Confession

Come into our emptiness, gracious God. We feel empty because we have shut you out of our lives. Break through our pretensions, Holy One. We pretend to be powerful because we have not claimed the peace that is available deep within when you dwell with us. Quiet our grumbling and complaining. We are impatient because we have focused on things, not on you. Enter our lives with the forgiveness you have promised to all who are truly sorry for their unfaithfulness. Release us from our self-created prisons. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God speaks to our fearful hearts. Be strong. Do not fear. I will come to save you. Sorrow and sighing flee away. Joy and gladness are yours. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." Praise God!

Invitation to Offering

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

Todd

Offerings are given through cash and check, on-line giving, Texting at 302-488-0038 and by using our Giving Kiosk in the main lobby. There are Giving Cards in the pews to place in the plate, if you wish Bless your heart for supporting our ministries!

Offertory:

HELP FROM HEAVEN

There is a moment ev'ry heart needs a rescue.
There is a season ev'ry soul needs a breakthrough.
Help from heaven; we all need help from heaven.

There is a whisper, a voice of hope inside you.
There is an answer, a name above to guide you.
Help from heaven; we all need help from heaven.
Help from heaven.

When the world is on our shoulders and we need a hand to hold us,
when no miracle is found, still believe;
When the sea of night surrounds us and all questions try to drown us,
just believe, just believe in help from heaven, help from heaven.

There is a reason these tears will not be wasted.
There is a future for all these broken pieces.
Look to heaven; all we need is help from heaven, help from heaven.

When the road ahead is hidden and we need a new beginning.
When the battle's closing in, still believe,
One more step into the promise and the hands of grace that hold us,
Just believe, just believe in help from heaven.

Taking heart and holding on, hope is closer than we know.
Heaven will not let us go, help from heaven! (*Repeat section*)³

***The Great Thanksgiving Prayer**

with sung responses as in FWS 2257b, c, d

The Lord be with you.

Vicky

§ **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

§ **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

§ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

In the beginning, when darkness covered the face of the earth
and nothing existed but chaos,
your Spirit swept across the waters.

You spoke but a word, and light was separated from darkness.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and
join their unending hymn:

§ **Holy, holy, holy Lord; God of power and might.**

FWS 2257b

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

Blest is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

(Please be seated)

Todd

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,

to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time

had come when you would save your people.

In the midst of healing, feeding and teaching, he brought a spark of something so special that people would tell his story over and over until it got to us. He promised that this spark, this light, this joy, would be with us always. Jesus reached for the bread and cup on the table of his last meal, and reminded his disciples – and not us – that we must cry out for justice and joy for all living things.

Vicky

He gave thanks to you, Holy God, broke the bread, and told them,
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

And so, with joy we offer ourselves in service, in union with Christ’s offering
For us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

§ Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. *FWS 2257c*
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, O God, and on these gifts
of bread and wine.

Todd

Make them be for us the coming of newly born hope so that we may be for
the world these things, strengthened by your presence within us.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory
as we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is your, almighty God, now and forever.

§ Amen. Amen. Amen. *FWS 2257d*
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

The Lord’s Prayer

UMH 895

§ 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sharing the Cup

Music during Communion

NOEL

Love incarnate, love divine. Star and angels gave the sign.
Bow to Babe on bended knee, the Savior of humanity.
Unto us a Child is born. He shall reign forevermore.

Noel, noel. Come and see what God has done.
Noel, noel. The story of amazing love,
the light of the world given for us, Noel.

Son of God and Son of man, there before the world began.
Born to suffer, born to save, born to raise us from the grave.
Christ, the everlasting Lord, He shall reign forevermore. {Repeat Refrain}

Instrumental – Repeat Refrain – TAG: Noel. ⁴

☞ COMPASSION FOR THE WORLD ☞

Benediction: And so, my friends, may you be blessed with a Hopeful Joy that rings deep in your soul so that whatever life brings, you will have prepared room in your heart for the birth of new ways of looking at the world, being in the world, bringing hope to the world. And you may sing along with all heaven and earth!

Benediction Song

Joy! Hope! Peace! Love!
We're gonna bring joy to the world, hope to the world.
Peace to the world, and love for everyone!
God's Joy in our hearts! God's Hope in our hearts!
God's Peace in our hearts! God's love... God's Son in our hearts!

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 / 1st ½ of Refrain} ⁵

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

Bulletins for the month of December are sponsored in honor of Denny's birthday, 12/14, and granddaughter, Sarah's, 12/16, by Laurel St. Germain.

Chancel Flowers are given to the glory of God and:

- in loving memory of their daughter, Pamela Nicole D'Aloisio, by Linda & Andy D'Aloisio;
- in memory of Bob Palko by Bill Richardson.

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 2019 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 Josh Megee, Sharon Wert, Arne Jerfsten, Karen Kaufman, Sofia Tamburello
Ushers Head Usher: Jim Blakeslee
Usher Coordinator – Worship Pathway:
9:30: Reber Whitner, Stephanie Manos, Tom Curry, Ken Backer, Coles Marsh, David Pioli

Worship Resources

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¹ *King of Kings*: Brooke Ligertwood, Scott Ligertwood and Jason Ingram ©2019 Hillsong Music Publishing

² *Emmanuel*: Raymond Badham ©2000 Hillsong Publishing

³ *Help From Heaven*: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin ©2016 sixsteps music

⁴ *Noel*: Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman & Ed Cash ©2015 THANKYOU MUSIC

⁵ *King of Heaven*: Jason Ingram, Paul Baloche ©2010 Integrity Worship Music

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

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

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

Manager of Facilities & Technologies: Kenneth Mahan ... *Office Manager:* Darlene Ford ... *ASL Interpreter:* Sandy Davis

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...*Lead Interpreter:* Sandy Davis



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American Sign Language
at 9:15 Service



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www.RMNetwork.org

worship@epworth
7:45 & 11:15 - Traditional 9:15 - Contemporary