

Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayers of the People/The Lord's Prayer

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.

SENDING FORTH

The people of God are sent forth to serve others and witness to their faith.

Closing Hymn 230**—*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Benediction & Congregational Response (Hymn 202, v. 3)**—*People Look East*

Postlude—*Ding Dong Merrily on High*—Mary McDonald

Music—One License A-731491

The flowers on the altar this morning are dedicated to the glory of God.

**Please stand as you are able.

Clergy & Staff

Jon Priebe, Lead Minister

Howard Pippin, Associate Minister

Marvin Brown, Senior Minister Emeritus

Dean Wagner, Director of Music/Organist

Tim Zuschin, Assistant Chancel Choir Director

Donna Curfman, Director of Children's Ministries

Jennifer Brooks, Director of *Weekday Christian Preschool*

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Third Sunday in Advent

10:45 am

December 15, 2024

GATHERING

The people of God come together in the Lord's name.

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude—Gesu Bambino—Pietro Yon

Call to Worship

Lift up your heads, O gates and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

That the King of glory may come in.

Tell the timid to take heart.

The Lord, our God, will come!

*Opening Hymn 240** —Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Invocation

O God, you so loved the world as to give your only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Grant to us the precious gift of faith, that we may know that the Son of God is come, and may have power to overcome the world and gain a blessed immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PROCLAMATION

The Word of God is read and proclaimed for all ages.

Scripture Reading—Psalm 51:1, 8-12

Gloria Patri—Glory Be to the Father (Hymnal p. 70)

Candle Lighting Hymn 204—Emmanuel, Emmanuel (sing before and after liturgy)

Candle Lighting Liturgy

Benson Family

Reader: No matter what troubles overwhelm us today, Isaiah reminds us that in all of our preparation and passionate pursuit of God's coming kingdom, we must not forget that God's salvation has come and is coming. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). With joy you will remember that God's salvation is already present among us.

Congregation: Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world, we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another. We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world, and we will not stop rejoicing in God, whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God's love might flow through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.

Reader: We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God's salvation together.

Children's Anthem—The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy—West Indian Trad. Children's Choir

God's Word for Young Disciples

Scripture Reading—Matthew 1:18-25

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Anthem—Angels We Have Heard on High- Thompson Epworth Choir & Children's Bells

Sermon—"The Angel's Guidance" Pastor Jon Priebe

RESPONSE

The People of God respond to the Word.

Hymn of Response 250—Once In Royal David's City

Discipleship Moment

Offertory—O Little Town of Bethlehem—Sir David Willcocks

OPENING HYMN

Hymn #240, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE RESPONSE

Hymn #204, Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
his name is called Emmanuel.

HYMN OF RESPONSE

Hymn #250, Once In Royal David's City

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed;
Mary, loving mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.
2. He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall.
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.
3. Jesus is our childhood's pattern;
day by day, like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

CLOSING HYMN

Hymn #230, O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,
proclaim the holy birth,

BENEDICTION

Hymn #202, v.3 People Look East

3. 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.

CHURCH NOTES 12-15-24

The Procession of the Nativity: Today! @6:00pm in the Sanctuary. The beloved worship service/concert of music with processions of the prophet Isaiah, Gabriel, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi, returns with an almost new program of music, accompanied by orchestra, piano and organ.

Advent Remembrance Service: Wednesday, December 18 @7:00p in the Chapel. This event is a way we can remember those who have lost loved ones, or experienced other loss in the past year. If you plan to attend, please bring an ornament to hang on the Christmas tree in memory of your lost loved one(s). You may take the ornament home after the service ends. If you know someone who is grieving a relationship, a loss, or the death of a loved one, please invite them to attend.

Open M Holiday Collection: Open M continues their Christmas campaign “For the Love of Children.” If you would like to donate towards the purchase of gifts for children in need, please mark “Open M Christmas” on your giving envelope. Any amount is appreciated.

Holiday Nut Sale: Purchase your nuts on Sundays, and in the office from 9-3pm/M-F. All proceeds from the sale benefit 2025 Work Camp.

Winter Gear Collection: We really need gloves! Any scarfs, hats, and gloves, donated for the clothesline outside can be placed in the collection area near the Library. Thank you!

Christmas Eve Offering: This year our Christmas Eve offering will go to ZOE Empowers, where it will be used to support a group of vulnerable orphans in Zimbabwe. ZOE uses an empowerment model rather than a traditional charity model. For more information, visit their website at www.zoeempowers.org.

Christmas Eve Services: Tuesday, December 24

Family-friendly worship @6:00p—featuring our Kids’ choirs

Candlelight service @8:00p—featuring our Adult choirs*

*all Epworth alumni are invited to sing. Please meet for rehearsal @7:30pm

Mark your calendars: Sunday, December 29 there will only be one service @10:45am. There will be no Sunday School or Children’s Worship that week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Scott Adie	Marge Magee
Bob Ahonen	Bonnie Michaud
Joanne Ames	Delores Marefka
Debbie Amundsen	Lee Miller
Mary Ellen Atwood	Lee Minier
Dorothy Bates	Becky & Jerry Pecko
Mark & Cindy Blaser	Becky Petty
Suzanne Callahan	Sandi Robinson
Jim Evans	Kathi Sawyer
Mary Griest	Todd Schneider
Jim Henes	John Toomey
Jeff Iula	Kathy Walker
Dwight Konic	Rose Ann Youngkin
Kristopher Lewis	

Deepest Sympathy & Prayers: the family of members Patricia Grant who passed away on 11/28 and Jack Archer who passed away on 11/22.

In our greater world: We pray for the unsheltered. We pray for Firestone Park UMC and Grandview UMC.

The Angel's Guidance

vs. 19 – Joseph's original plan was to shield Mary from public disgrace

vs. 20 – With Gabriel's guidance, he instead takes her shame upon himself

Jesus Saves

vs. 21 – Mary and Joseph were instructed to name the baby Jesus

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew, *Joshua*, meaning "God saves"

The Four Chapter Gospel

Creation – "... and God said it was ***very good.***"

The Fall – Because of ***sin***, things are not as they are supposed to be

Redemption – Out of God's great love and mercy, ***Jesus saves***

Restoration – We are redeemed not ***out of***, but as ***part of*** a restored creation

Questions for Reflection: Who in your life has helped shield you from public disgrace? How was God's hand involved in it? How might you pass that on to others?

Questions for Discussion: When have you experienced the joy of being forgiven or offering forgiveness?

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 4:8 - "Love covers a multitude of sins."

Readings for this Week: Luke 2, John 21

