



ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

December 10, 2023

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE
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Liturgist: Debra Snow

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WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

GTG #88

O come, o come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily
To us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go

Refrain

O come, o come, thou Lord of might
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain

O come, thou Root of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of hell thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

Wake up, my friends, and hear the words of the messenger:

“Do not be afraid. A baby will be born, and you will call him Jesus.”

Come and hear the words spoken long ago:

“Jesus will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

Will there be an end to his kingdom, his mission of love on earth?

“Of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Then have no fear, for the kingdom of heaven is eternal.

We are not afraid. Come, let us worship!

OPENING PRAYER

As we join together today in worship, we hear your message and your messengers, speaking to us in word, song, prayer, and presence. You call us on a journey of faithfulness through light and darkness. And no matter where we find ourselves, may we discover the peace of Christ among us today. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Debra Snow and Barbara Memory

Person A: In our most desperate times, by day or by night, the hope of Christ may be found. We watch and we wait to witness the hope of heaven making a place here on earth.

Person B: We light the candle of hope, because hope has come to us.

Person A lights the first candle.

Person B: When we are overwhelmed with conflict without or within, the peace of Christ may be found. We welcome the peace of Christ, present among us and available to all.

Person A: Today we light the candle of peace, because peace has come to us.

Person B lights the second candle.

All: Welcome, peace of Christ. We breathe in your presence, which sustains us and makes us whole. Where will we find you today?

SCRIPTURE READING #1

Isaiah 64:1 – 9

ANTHEM

“I Hear the Prophet Callin’”

SJU Chancel Choir

(Pepper Choplin)

From the Cantata "I Hear the Prophet Callin' "

I hear the prophet callin', "Prepare the way of the Lord"

Come and make straight the way in the desert

A highway for our God

I hear Isaiah callin, "Fear not, your God will come"

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened

The ears of the deaf will hear

And then the mute will shout for joy

And the desert will be joyful and blossom as a rose

We shall rejoice with joy and singing and see the glory of God

SCRIPTURE READING #2

Isaiah 40:1 – 11

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

MESSAGE

**“IN LIGHT AND DARKNESS ...
OUR SPIRIT WAITS FOR JUST PEACE”**

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

OFFERTORY SONG
OF REFLECTION

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

GTG #82

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free
From our sins and fears release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art.
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king.
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone.
By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

CALL TO GENEROSITY

Our Most High God, you are not so high you cannot see our dreams. You are not so high you do not know our needs. Receive these gifts of generosity today. Show us how we might use our resources to proclaim and bring peace to a violent world and comfort to an anxious community. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF PEACE

Siblings in Christ, let us proclaim the peace of our faith:

While we were ashamed of our sin,
our Creator dressed us in righteousness.
While we were at war with our neighbor,
the Righteous Judge called us to lay down our weapons.

When we were in despair,
the Holy Spirit granted us rest and recovery.
While we held prejudice dividing us from others,
Jesus showed us the way of welcome.

When we held riches, privilege, and inheritance,
our Great Provider led us to share in the bright light of community.
When we were stressed by the demands of this life,
the Loving Parent brought peace of mind.

When our trauma made us anxious and we could not calm down,
the Mother Hen kept us close in the darkness of her nest.
When we could not find common ground and there was no hope for peace,
Jesus held the space between us, nursing our pain.

We have seen God's faithfulness in the past.
And because of our past, we have hope for the future.

CLOSING SONG

“Angels, From the Realms of Glory”

GTG #143

Refrain:

Angels, from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o'er all the earth
You, who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth

Refrain

*Come and worship, come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn king!*

Shepherds, in the fields abiding
Watching o'er your flock by night
God with us is now residing
Yonder shines the infant light

Refrain

Sages, leave your contemplations
Brighter visions beam afar
Seek the great desire of nations
You have seen his natal star

Refrain

All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One

Refrain

BENEDICTION

Siblings in Christ, do not be afraid of the light or darkness. Go into the world and bring light to the lost and darkness to the weary.

Receive this blessing:

May you find hope in the sunrise and comfort in the sunset.

May you be beacons of light and shelters of warmth for the travelers surrounding you.

May you remember the peace of Christ lives in you.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
accompanist

Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible; CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message; NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible

Isaiah 40:1 – 11

40:1 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

40:2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

40:3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

40:4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

40:5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

40:6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

40:7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

40:9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

40:10 See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

40:11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1 – 8

1:1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1:2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

1:3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

1:4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

1:5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

1:6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

1:7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

1:8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

