



**First Sunday of Advent**  
**November 30, 2025 – 10am**

*Covenant is an accepting, welcoming community sharing the glory of God's love with all.*

**PRELUDE**

"Listen for His Coming" arr. Hayes  
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" arr. Larson

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

A: In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

B: I see hope when I look to the next generation. I feel hopeful when we gather together. I know hope, deep in my bones, when we dream of a better world.

A: You are right. Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.

B: Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

Light candle.

A: Thanks be to God! Amen.

**INTROIT #92**

"While We are Waiting, Come" (1)

While we are waiting, come;  
while we are waiting, come.  
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,  
while we are waiting, come.

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**—Liturgist

Please stand as you are able, and join me in the call to worship.

Leader: On Sundays and Mondays,

**People: on good days and bad days,**

Leader: early in the morning and very late at night,

**People: here in this room, and out in the world,  
God, we long for you to break in.**

Leader: Meet us in this space.

**People: Surprise us with your presence.**

Leader: Fill this room with your good news.

**People: With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray. Amen!**

**\*HYMN #88**

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (1-4)

Ribbon

*These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.*

1 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.

2 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]

3 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]

4 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 CONFESSION** –Liturgist

Please be seated.

Friends, if you long to feel closer to God, then the Prayer of Confession is a step in the right direction. For in the Prayer of Confession, we lay our hearts before God. We pour out the truth of our lives. We do not hide anything from our Creator, and in that simple act, God somehow always feels closer.

So join me in this prayer. Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here.

#### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION** –Liturgist

Cross

**Ever-present God,  
we long to feel you close.  
We long to feel your presence in our lives.**

**We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world.  
However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst.  
Forgive our rushing and distractions.  
Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space.  
Remind us that even in the time of Herod,  
even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.**

(Silence for personal confession)

#### **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS** – Liturgist

Family of faith,  
even when we doubt God's presence,  
even when we fail to notice God's fingerprints in this world,  
God is always moving closer to us.  
Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:  
Nothing can keep God's love away.  
We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.

#### **HYMN #654**

"In the Lord, I'll Be Ever Thankful"

Ribbon

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful;  
in the Lord I will rejoice!  
Look to God; do not be afraid.  
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.  
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.

#### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord, be with you all. **And also with you.**

#### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** –Liturgist

Before we hear the scriptures read, let us pray that God's Spirit might illuminate our hearts to hear what she is saying.

With-us God,  
in the time of Moses,  
you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke.  
In the time of the judges,  
you spoke through the prophets.  
In the time of Herod,  
you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles.  
In every time you have been speaking.  
So today, in our time,  
we ask that you would speak again.  
Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds  
and speak to us once more.  
With hope we pray,  
amen.

**THE FIRST READING** Liturgist Lamentations 3:55-57 (NRSVUE) Notepad

55 I called on your name, O Lord,  
from the depths of the pit;  
56 you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear  
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"  
57 You came near when I called on you;  
you said, "Do not fear!"

This is the promise of God to our ancestors and to us. **Thanks be to God.**

**THE GOSPEL READING** Luke 1:5-13 (NRSVUE) Notepad

5 In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. 7 But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

8 Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. 10 Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. 11 Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

"What Do You Fear?"

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Cross

**Our Father who art in heaven...** (Hymnal p. 35. We say "debts & debtors.")

## INVITATION TO THE OFFERING –Liturgist

In this new season, we make way for the fresh inbreaking of God - scandalous and surprising. Ordinary and touchable. Born anew among us. Let us prepare the way by bringing what we have together.

You can give in person or online using the QR code printed in the bulletin or on the screen.

## OFFERTORY

### \*DOXOLOGY #606

Ribbon

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures here below;  
praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*Prayer of Dedication—Liturgist

Cross

Emmanuel! God with us! Even as we long to encounter you anew, we remember you are already with us. Taking on flesh in the lives around us, in the resources we share, in the struggles we face. May these resources be blessed to welcoming Christ in this place, in this time, among this community. May we seize every opportunity to embody your love alongside all our neighbors, strangers, and kin. Amen.

**\*HYMN #88**

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (5-7)

Ribbon

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery. [Refrain]

Refrain:

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

6 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. [Refrain]

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace. [Refrain]

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

Reprise of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

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**Assisting in Worship Today:**

Morgan, Jenny, Miles, and River James – Advent Wreath Lighters

Asher Esala – Liturgist

Matthew Phillips – Vocalist

Katie Wynkoop – Organist/Pianist & Assistant Director of Music

Cherie Brooks – Director of Music & Technology

Brian Biller – Media Production Specialist

Erin Wise – Director of Children's & Youth Ministries

Rev. Joel A. Esala – Pastor



"Zechariah and the Angel"

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Luke 1:5-13