

**First United Methodist Church of Freehold
Bulletin**

**Sunday, November 28, 2021
The First Sunday of Advent**

Announcements: Sharon Shutzer

Prelude

Welcome: Pastor, Wil Wilson

***Call to Worship:**

Leader: Children of God: Let us praise our God.

People: We gather in the grace and the peace of God.

Leader: When we pray, God is always listening.

People: We pray not only for change, but to be changed.

Leader: We are confident that when we pray, God is with us.

People: When God is with us, everything changes.

***Opening Prayer: (In Unison)**

Eternal God, you have assured us that you are with us. You will strengthen us and help us. God, you are present, living, and active in our lives – not only present, but you are rejoicing in us and calming us with your love. When the future is uncertain, trusting the power of your love is sustaining. We commit our desires to you. We will wait on you to move. Thank you for keeping us in perfect peace. We praise you for your presence and put our trust in you! In Jesus' name, amen.

***Opening Hymn:** "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" UMH #127

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Hymn: "Emmanuel, Emmanuel" UMH #204

***Hymn:** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" UMH #211

Baptism of

Cara Michelle Hennessey & Madison Jane Groh

UMH pages 39-43

***Hymn:** "Jesus Loves Me"
(Verse 1) UMH #191

Prayer Hymn: "God Almighty, We Are Waiting" Worley & Prichard
[For our viewers at home, please submit prayer requests in the online attendance sheet, or email Pastor Wil.]

Intercessory Prayer: Pastor, Wil Wilson

The Lord's Prayer UMH #895

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 Gilbert Heaton

Sermon: "God with Zechariah, the Skeptic" Pastor, Wil Wilson

Offering Talk: *Our Special Offering will benefit the **Pastor's Emergency Fund.*** Pastor, Wil Wilson

Offertory

*Doxology: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

UMH #95

*Offertory Prayer

God of Hope, we, too often, doubt that things can change. We believe we are alone. Help us to trust you more and give, knowing you can use even our doubt-filled gifts to bring waves of grace to those in need of love. Take these gifts, and show us the amazing power of your love and grace. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

*Closing Hymn: "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning"

Victor C. Johnson

*Benediction:

Pastor, Wil Wilson

*Postlude

Scripture Passage for Sunday, November 28, 2021

Liturgist: Gilbert Heulton

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

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 a descendant 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 and his section was on duty, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and 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. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." ¹⁹ The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

²¹ Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. ²² When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. ²³ When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴ After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ²⁵ “This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.”

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.” ⁶¹ They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.” ⁶² Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them pondered them and said, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zechariah’s Prophecy

⁶⁷ Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior^[a] for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon^[b] us,

⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

⁸⁰ The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

Opening Hymn:
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more; (*want no more*)
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield;
(*strength and shield*)
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee; (*give to thee*)
I will ever give to Thee.

Hymn:
"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

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

Hymn:
"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 appear.

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

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go.

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

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

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

O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of Thy people be;
Before Thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on Thy mercy call.

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

O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free,
And conquer death's deep misery

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

O come, thou Dayspring come and cheer
Our spirits by Thy justice 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
All peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust Thou brought us forth to life;
Deliver us from earthly strife.

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

Hymn:
“Jesus Loves Me”

Jesus loves me!
This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Prayer Hymn:
“God Almighty, We Are Waiting”

God Almighty, we are waiting
For a savior to appear.
Meet us in our desert journey;
Give a sign that you are near:
Burning bushes, parted waters,
Food aplenty in the wild.
As we look for signs and wonders,
Help us see you in a child.

God Incarnate, we are waiting
For the feast day of your birth.
Looking back and looking forward
To the Christ’s return to earth.
Help us to proclaim the gospel,
’Til the world is reconciled.
Let us set your holy table
For each woman, man, and child.

God the Spirit, we are waiting
For your presence here and now.
Humbled by our sinful weakness,
At Your mercy we will bow.
Search our hearts and make us ready,
Speak in language strong and mild,
Help each one of us, your people,
To receive you like a child.