



Service of Worship    December 14, 2025    9:30am

Third Sunday of Advent

### Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.  
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives  
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

PRELUDE	“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” Op. 80, No. 4	Camil Van Hulse Linda Dover, organist
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WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	Rev. Karen Wright
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CHORAL INTROIT	“Christmas Calls Us” Chancel Choir Katie Hearn, flute ~Cheryl Johnson, Chris & Angela Krug, handbells	David Lantz III Herb Frombach
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*Christmas calls us once again to the town of Bethlehem.  
In a lowly manger stall, God reveals His hope for all.*

*Raise your voices, sing with joy; glorify this baby boy!  
Tiny infant, humble King; raise your voices, praise and sing!*

*Christmas calls us to His birth; may He bring us peace on earth.  
Mary holds God’s precious Son, bringing hope for everyone.*

*Christmas calls us to the light, candles glowing in the night.  
Shepherds hear an angel say, “Christ the Lord is born this day!”*

**"While we are waiting, come.  
While we are waiting, come.  
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel,  
While we are waiting, come."**

*(After the candle is lit.)*

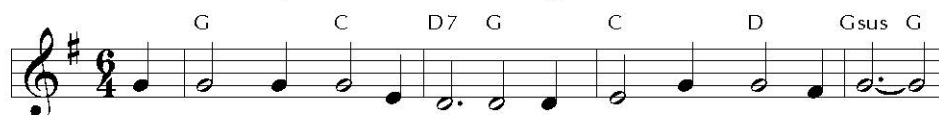
**All: Come, Lord Jesus. Fill us with your joy, that our waiting may witness  
to your love.**

\*HYMN 106

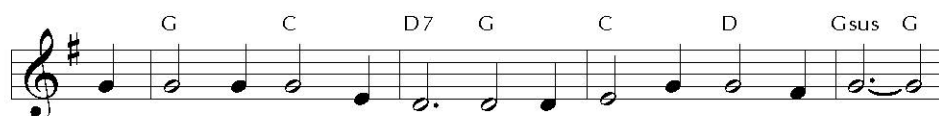
"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

BEREDEN VAG FOR HERRAN

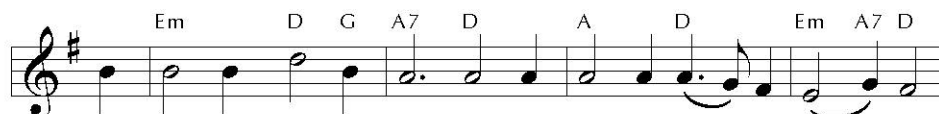
## Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!  
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.  
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.  
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.  
and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.  
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.  
All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3-5 and Psalm 24:7-10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958;  
adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.

MUSIC: *Then Svenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930  
Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN  
7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

## CALL TO CONFESSION

In this season of waiting, we hear Isaiah's promise: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom." Yet our waiting often feels dry and unsure. Like John the Baptist, we ask, "Are you the one?" We carry doubts, impatience, and longing. Still, God meets us there—in the wilderness, in the questions, in the waiting. Trusting in God's renewal, let us come before the Holy One in confession.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of hope and healing, we confess that we do not wait well. We grow impatient in the wilderness and discouraged when answers don't come quickly. We doubt your presence when life feels barren and forget your promises when the way is unclear. You call us to strengthen weak hands, steady trembling knees, and trust that you are making all things new. Instead, we cling to fear and miss the signs of grace blooming around us.**

**Forgive us, Lord. Open our eyes to the quiet miracles of renewal. Give us courage to wait with faith, to listen for your voice, and to follow where you lead. In your mercy, make our deserts rejoice again. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news: The God who comes to save does not wait for us to have perfect faith. God meets us in our doubts, lifts us from weariness, and steadies our hearts. Isaiah declares, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God." And Jesus proclaims that the blind see, the lame walk, and good news is brought to the poor. In Christ, we are forgiven, renewed, and restored.

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

## A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Teacher Appreciation

*(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)*

## SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

**ONE:** May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL:** And also with you and all others!

## SUNG RESPONSE 110

"Love Has Come"  
(verse 3)

**Love has come and never will leave us.  
Love is life everlasting and free.**

**Love is Jesus with in and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.  
Love! Love! Praise to you God on high!**

## Equipping

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 35:1–10

Gay Lee Ludwig-Bonney

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.  
Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.”  
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God’s people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return

and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## ANTHEM

### “With Open Hearts, We Are Waiting”

Pepper Choplin

Chancel Choir

Anthem Donated by Music Team in Remembrance of Tom Hevener

*With open hearts, we are waiting. With open hearts, now we pray.  
In our quietness, we are calling, “Lord, come to us.”  
Emmanuel, O come, Emmanuel, and quench our thirsty souls.  
Emmanuel, O come, Emmanuel, and make our spirits whole.  
Our prayer is the same as the meaning of Your name: “God be with us.”  
Lord, come and touch our open hearts, ‘til our open hearts are full.*

*To the wounded hearts, come and heal them.  
Let the grieving hearts be consoled.*

*Emmanuel, O come, Emmanuel, and make our spirits whole.  
Our prayer is the same as the meaning of Your name: “God be with us.”  
Lord, come and touch our open hearts, ‘til our open hearts are full.  
With open hearts, we wait for you.*

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

### Matthew 11:2–11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

## SERMON

### “I’ll Wait”

Rev. Karen Wright

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

## 138 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

1 Who would think that what was need-ed to trans-  
 2 Shep-herds watch and wise men won-der; mon-archs  
 3 Cen-tu-ries of skill and sci-ence span the

form and save the earth might not be a  
 scorn and an-gels sing; such a place as  
 past from which we move, yet ex-pe-rience

plan or ar-my, proud in pur-pose, proved in  
 none would reck-on hosts a ho-ly help-less  
 ques-tions wheth-er, with such prog-ress, we im-

worth? Who would think, de-spite de-ri-sion, that a  
 thing. Sta-ble beasts and by-passed strang-ers watch a  
 prove. While the hu-man lot we pon-der, lest our

Hindsight is nearly always clearer than foresight, and with gentle good humor this Christmas hymn points out how great was the gap between human expectation and God's actual way of providing a means of salvation for us. God's ways continually exceed our claims to comprehend them.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

MUSIC: John L. Bell, 2005

Text and Music © 1987, 2005 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WHITE ROSETTES

8.7.8.7.D

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

child should lead the way?  
ba - by laid in hay; God sur - pris - es earth with  
hopes and hu - mor fray,  
heav - en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (unison)

*from A Brief Statement of Faith*

**In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God; preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

Dan Forrest

“The Work of Christmas”

Words by Howard Thurman

Allen York, baritone & Linda Dover, piano

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,  
To heal the broken  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations  
To bring peace among peoples,  
To make music from the heart.*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins!*

Sending

\*HYMN 100

“Canticle of the Turning”

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN



# 100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

## Canticle of the Turning

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the  
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you  
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a  
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the  
 work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the  
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your  
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.  
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my  
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to  
 The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the  
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery  
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46-55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.

JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

*Refrain*

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the  
 fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the  
 dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

"Sing Noel! Ring the Christmas Bell!"

Patrick M. Liebergen

Chancel Choir

Katie Hearn, flute ~ Cheryl Johnson, Chris & Angela Krug, handbells

Sing! Sing we all Noel! He shall come, Emmanuel!  
 Ring! Ring the Christmas Bell! He shall come on earth to dwell.

Prepare the way, the Lord shall come; we raise a joyful cheer.  
 Prepare the way, the Lord shall come; now sing from far and near.

Rise up to join the festive song; rejoice for all to hear.  
 O sing! Sing we all a glad Noel, sing Noel! The child shall come, Emmanuel!

Prepare the way, the Lord shall come the child, Emmanuel.  
 Prepare the way, the Lord shall come to Bethlehem to dwell!

O sing! Sing we all a glad Noel, sing Noel! The child shall come, Emmanuel!

*\*Stand in body or spirit*

## GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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