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December 24, 2020

The Family of God Gathers

Greetings and Opening Words

Carol Verse 1

“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 you, O Israel!**

Advent Candle Lighting

Hannah Zehms, Deb Zehms

L1: It was the night when Christ was born. And just as now the world was torn. But all was calm and all was bright, the star above gave out its light, and there was joy to the world then as there can be joy to the world now.

All: We call to people all around the world: let us unite and we will show how Love can change us, and how Love can help us grow into faithful disciples of the one who is born this night.

L2: Our time of Advent is almost at an end. Christmas is just a few moments away. We have waited in hopeful longing of this moment for four weeks. Tonight, the eve of Christ’s birth, we invite Jesus to dwell in the inns of our hearts and minds.

L1: We relight the four Advent candles, praying that in the midst of the anxieties and noise of our lives, the light of what each candle represents may be born to us: Peace, Joy, Love and Hope. As we light the candles, let us pray together:

All: God-with-Us, Emmanuel, we open ourselves to you this night, to become those who help to shine that light of Christ wherever we are—in our lives, our families, our communities, and our world. Fill us with your peace and light, make the world so calm and bright.

Carol Verse 7

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Prayer of Confession †§

Manger-dwelling God, we hear the songs of the angels, yet we easily tune-out the cries of the needy; we feel the breath of our children on our faces, yet remain untouched by your Spirit of peace; we are surrounded by gifts as precious as those brought by the Wise Ones, yet have trouble sharing with those who are from other countries, other faiths, other neighborhoods. Forgive us, Grace swaddled in mystery. We believe in Christmas, help us to believe in you even more; we hunger for happiness, feed us on your peace; we long for community and acceptance, speak to us your grace that we might welcome the stranger into our lives, for by welcoming them we welcome you. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon ††§

L: Into the noise of life, Jesus comes, calm and bright; into the shadows, he brings light; into the brokenness of our lives, he brings peace. Already your world is a little bit calmer and brighter having offered to God the bits of chaos clouding your life. Trust the good news born this night: In Jesus' name, you are forgiven!

The Sign of Peace

Now please take a moment and share the peace with those in your household and/or offer a moment to send prayers of peace to those you love who are not with you.

Service of Lessons and Carols

Carol

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him Born the king of angels:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

**The highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

Lesson 1 Jeremiah 23:5–8

Deb Zehms

Solo “Still Still Still”

Hannah Zehms

Lesson 2 Luke 1:5–25

Craig Zehms, George Stecher, Keith Zehms, Mimi Pederson

Carol

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in your dark streets shines forth the everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you tonight.**

**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!
And praises sing, and voices ring with peace to all on earth.**

Lesson 3 Matthew 1:18–25

Barb Kleist, Keith Zehms

Carol

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wing unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

Lesson 4 Luke 1:26–38

George Stecher, Sam Zehms, Lil Savage

Solo “Some Children See Him”

Sam Zehms

Lesson 5 Luke 1:46–55

Hannah Zehms, Deb Zehms

L: And then Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

P: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

L: His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

P: He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

L: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

P: He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Carol

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Lesson 6 Luke 1:59–79

Keith Zehms, Mimi Pederson, Craig Zehms

Solo “O Holy Night”

Hannah Zehms

Lesson 7 Luke 2:1–7

George Stecher

Carol “Joy to the World!”

Plymouth Brass (John Stecher, Carter Jaenke, Morgan Jaenke)

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room
And heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

Lesson 8 Luke 2:8–20

Craig Zehms, Lil Savage

Carol

“The First Noel”

**The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.**

Refrain:

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. *Refrain***

Lesson 9 John 1:1–14

Sam Zehms

Carol

“What Child Is This?”

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

Christ Candle Lighting

Carol

“Silent Night”

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

Benediction †

L: No longer do we seek light from another source; now the light burns in our hearts and we become love's lamp. Go with God into this night, guided by the Holy Spirit, shining the light of Christ's love, and seeing God in all you meet. Amen.

Postlude "Angels We Have Heard on High"

John Stecher

† Worship Design Studio Used with permission.

‡ <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>

§ Written/modified by Rev. David Huber