

# Wesley United Methodist Church

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

---

*At Wesley we foster a sanctuary culture by creating a safe environment where all feel welcomed, loved, accepted, valued, and affirmed for who they are, through intentional practices such as empathy, compassion, generosity, hospitality, and inclusion.*

---

***Please let an usher know if you have questions, need assistance, or have a concern about health or safety.***

---

Prelude "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Fred Bock  
plainsong

Greeting

\*Advent Candle Lighting

One: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

One: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

**Many: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.**

One: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Light three candles of the Advent wreath.

\*Hymn "People, Look East" UMH 202

People, look east. The time is near of the crowing of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.  
People, look east: Love, the Rose, is on the way.

\*Please stand in body or in spirit.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east. Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

#### \*Praise Songs

"Halle, Halle, Halleluja"

Halle Halle Halle-lu-jah...

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

"I Have Joy"

I have joy in my heart, deep, deep down in my heart...

Jesus gave to me, and no one can destroy it.

I have joy in my heart; deep, deep down in my heart...

#### Common Prayer (unison)

**Eternal God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of your Son. Grant us the wisdom to see your purpose and openness to hear your will, that we too may prepare the way for Christ who is coming in power and glory to establish his kingdom of peace and justice; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.**

#### Children's Time

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord. (wave right arm)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord. (wave both arms)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord.

(wave both arms and shake right leg)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord.

(wave both arms and shake both legs)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord.

(wave both arms, shake both legs, and nod head)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham.

I am one of them, so are you. So let's just praise the Lord.

(wave your arms, shake your legs, nod your head, turn around, sit down! Phew!)

#### Announcements

Prayers of the People, & the Lord's Prayer

"Spirit of the Living God"

UMH 393

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

The Offering

Offertory

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Mark A. Miller cf. 20th century

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

Born to save, born to heal, come, O Savior come.  
While we wait, while we pray, come, Savior, come.  
Hope of all heaven and earth, come, Jesus, come.  
O Jesus come.

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.

Born to save, born to heal, come, O Savior come.  
While we wait, while we pray, come, Savior, come.  
Hope of all heaven and earth, come, Jesus, come.  
O Jesus come.

\*Doxology

VENI EMMANUEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

\*Prayer of Dedication

\*Passing of Peace

"Shalom"

Mensah Essilfie

God's peace be unto you,  
We wish you Shalom!  
The peace of God which transcends all  
understanding be with you forevermore.

\*Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Message

\*Hymn

“Heralds of Christ”

UMH 567

Heralds of Christ, who bear the King’s commands,  
immortal tidings in your mortal hands,  
pass on and carry swift the news you bring;  
make straight, make straight the highway of the King.

Through desert ways, dark fen, and deep morass,  
through jungles, sluggish seas, and mountain pass,  
build now the road, and falter not, nor stay;  
prepare across the earth the King’s highway.

Lord, give us faith and strength the road to build,  
to see the promise of the day fulfilled,  
when war shall be no more, and strife shall cease  
upon the highway of the Prince of Peace.

\*Benediction

Postlude

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"  
for John Franklin Kane

Charles Callahan  
Cornet Voluntary

Worship Leaders: Rhianna Burke, David Dagle, Ronna Davis, Chris Flagg, Earl Flagg, Chris Kerns, Byungmoo Lee, Debbie O’Driscoll, David Potts, Jennifer Quansah, Chancel Choir, Worship Tech Team

Advent Candle Lighting – The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries, by Lisa Hancock.  
Common Prayer – Book of Common Worship, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 175.  
OneLicense Reprint + Livestream and Podcast/Recording License A-726657  
CCLI Copyright License # 20653706 CCLI Streaming License #20653696