

# ~ God With Us ~

## PRELUDE

Praise Band

## WELCOME & GREETINGS

Ray Cortese, Senior Pastor

## INTROIT

Dan Beilman, Worship Director

### “Deliver Us”

Andrew Peterson

*Our enemy, our captor, is no pharaoh on the Nile,  
Our toil is neither mud, nor brick, nor sand.  
Our ankles bear no calluses from chains, yet Lord, we're bound  
Imprisoned here, we dwell in our own land.*

*Deliver us, deliver us, oh Yahweh, hear our cry  
And gather us beneath Your wings tonight.*

*Our sins they are more numerous than all the lambs we slay,  
These shackles they were made with our own hands.  
Our toil is our atonement and our freedom Yours to give,  
So Yahweh, break Your silence, if You can.*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I have longed  
To gather You beneath my gentle wings.*

## THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The lighting of Advent candles dramatically depicts the growing expectation we have for the coming of Christ, the light of the world. The traditional Advent wreath has four purple candles (lit on the four Sundays of Advent) grouped around a white Christ candle (lit on Christmas Day). The main symbolism portrayed by the wreath is the growing intensity of light as the candle lighting includes an additional candle each worship day and as anticipation builds for the celebration of Christ's second coming. (*The Worship Sourcebook*)

### “Veni Emmanuel”

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” was first entitled “Veni, Veni, Emmanuel.” It was sung in Latin. It was an Antiphon (12<sup>th</sup> Century), translated by John Mason Neale, 1818-1866. This haunting carol is the epitome of an Advent hymn. The tune to this carol was probably written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The text of this hymn is filled with many biblical allusions and a firm understanding of Covenantal theology. Some of the more important concepts are here identified. The word “Emmanuel” means “God with us” and directly refers to Isaiah 7:14 as well as Matthew 1:23. The word “Israel” refers to all Christians, and the reference to the Babylonian exile is a metaphor for the fallen state of man who is banned from paradise.

*Veni, veni, Emanuel:  
Captivum solve Israel,  
Qui gemit in exilio,  
Privatus Dei Filio.*

*O come, O come Emmanuel!  
Redeem Thy captive Israel  
That into exile drear is gone,  
Far from the face of God's dear Son.*

*Gaude! Gaude! Emanuel  
Nascetur pro te, Israel.*

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

## CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*Leader: Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy.*

**People: When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.**

*Leader: Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.*

**People: The LORD will lay bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. (Isaiah 52:8-10)**

*Leader: Let us pray.*

**All: Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send Your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear Your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to Your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of Your Kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of Your presence. We are Your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To You we say, “Come Lord Jesus!” Amen. (Henri J.M. Nouwen)**

## CELEBRATING ADVENT IN SONG

Congregation

### “Arise The Kingdom Is At Hand”

Johann Rist, 1651/Music: Württemberg, Germany, 1784

Arise, the Kingdom is at hand, the King is drawing nigh;  
Arise with joy, thou faithful band, to meet the Lord most high!  
Look up, ye souls, weighed down with care, the Sovereign is not far;  
Look up, faint hearts, from your despair, behold the Morning Star!

Look up, ye drooping hearts, today, the King is very near;  
O cast your griefs and fears away, for, lo, your help is here!  
Hope on, ye broken hearts, at last the King comes in His might;  
He loved us in the ages past when we lay wrapped in night.

Look up, ye souls weighed down with care, the Sovereign is not far!  
Look up, faint hearts, from your despair, behold the Morning Star!  
The Lord is with us now, Who shall the sinking spirit feed  
With strength and comfort at its need to Whom e'en death shall bow.

Hope, O ye broken hearts, at last! The King comes on in might,  
He loved us in the ages past when we sat wrapped in night;  
Now are our sorrows o'er, and fear and wrath to joy give place,  
Since God hath made us in His grace His children evermore.

### ***"Days Of Elijah"***

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These are the days of Elijah, declaring the Word of the Lord;  
And these are the days of Your servant, Moses,  
Righteousness being restored; and though these are days of great trials,  
Of famine and darkness and sword;  
Still we are the voice in the desert crying,  
"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

CHORUS: Behold, He comes, riding on the clouds,  
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of Jubilee  
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes.

And these are the days of Ezekiel, the dry bones becoming as flesh;  
And these are the days of Your servant, David,  
Rebuilding a temple of praise; and these are the days of the harvest,  
The fields are as white in the world;  
And we are the laborers in Your vineyard,  
Declaring the Word of the Lord.

BRIDGE: There's no god like Jehovah.

## **MEDITATING ON THE INCARNATION TOGETHER**

*...The Belgic Confession, Article 18*

So then we confess that God fulfilled the promise which He had made to the early fathers by the mouth of His holy prophets when He sent His only and eternal Son into the world at the time set by Him. The Son took the "form of a servant" and was made in the "likeness of man," truly assuming a real human nature, with all its weaknesses, except for sin; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, without male participation.

And He not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned but also a real human soul, in order that He might be a real human being. For since the soul had been lost as well as the body He had to assume them both to save them both together.

Therefore we confess that He "shared the very flesh and blood of children;" that He is "fruit of the loins of David" according to the flesh; "born of the seed of David" according to the flesh; "fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary;" "born of a woman;" "the seed of David;" "a shoot from

the root of Jesse;" "the offspring of Judah," having descended from the Jews according to the flesh; "from the seed of Abraham"—for He "assumed Abraham's seed" and was "made like His brothers except for sin." In this way He is truly our Immanuel—that is: "God with us."

## **CELEBRATING THE INCARNATION IN SONG**

Congregation

### ***"Joy Has Dawned"***

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Joy has dawned upon the world, promised from creation,  
God's salvation now unfurled, hope for ev'ry nation,  
Not with fanfares from above, not with scenes of glory,  
But a humble gift of love: Jesus born of Mary.

Sounds of wonder fill the sky with the songs of angels,  
As the mighty Prince of Life shelters in a stable.  
Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in darkness,  
Cling now to a mother's breast, vulnerable and helpless.

Shepherds bow before the Lamb, gazing at the glory;  
Gifts of men from distant lands prophesy the story.  
Gold, a King is born today; incense, God is with us;  
Myrrh, His death will make a way; and by His blood He'll win us.

Son of Adam, Son of heaven, given as a ransom;  
Reconciling God and man, Christ our mighty Champion.  
What a Savior, what a Friend, what a glorious mystery:  
Once a babe in Bethlehem, now the Lord of history.

## **RESPONDING TO THE INCARNATION WITH OUR GIVING**

*Welcome Pads Passed*

## **OFFERTORY**

Choir

### ***"Babe Of Bethlehem"***

American Folk Melody, arranged by William Walker

*Ye nations all, on you I call, come hear this declaration,  
And don't refuse the glorious news of Jesus and salvation.  
To noble Jews came first the news of Christ the great Messiah,  
That was foretold by prophets old, Isaiah, Jeremiah.*

*His parents poor in earthly store, to entertain the stranger  
They found no bed to lay His head but in the ox's manger.  
No royal things as used by kings were seen by those that found Him,  
But in the hay the stranger lay with swaddling bands around Him.*

*On that same night, a glorious light to shepherds there appeared,  
Bright angels came in shining flame; they saw and greatly feared.  
The angels said, be not afraid, although we much alarm you,  
We do appear good news to bear as now we will inform you.*

*When this was said, straightway was made a glorious sound from heaven:  
Each flaming tongue an anthem sung, "To men a Savior's given."  
In Jesus' name, the glorious theme, we elevate our voices;  
At Jesus' birth be peace on earth, meanwhile all heav'n rejoices.*

**All: Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.**

## MESSAGE

Rev. Cortese

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD IN SONG

Congregation

### ***"Good Christian Men Rejoice"***

Words: Medieval Latin carol, tran. by John Mason Neale/Music: German melody, 14th cent.

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today.  
Ox and ass before Him bow, and He is in the manger now,  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He hath opened heaven's door, and man is blessed forevermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain His everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

### ***"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"***

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744/Music: Rowland Hugh Pritchard, 1855

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 art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

## CLOSING PRAYER

### *The Nunc Dimittis, A Canticle*

Simeon's song of praise is a famous canticle used by the church in worship throughout the centuries. A canticle is a song of praise from the scriptures found somewhere other than the book of Psalms. Other familiar canticles include Moses' song of praise for God's salvation of Israel from the Egyptians (*Exodus 15. 1b-3a, 6a, 13-18*), Hannah's song of praise for God's gift of a child (*1 Samuel 2:1-8*), and Mary's song of praise after the angel Gabriel visited her with the news of Christ's birth, called the Magnificat (*Luke 1:46-55*).

*Leader: Let us pray,*