



December 24, 2023 — Advent, Week 4

At Home Bulletin

## WELCOME and ADVENT READING

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

**For He has visited and redeemed his people.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;

**with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.**

For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;

**in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."**

You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

'I will establish your offspring forever,

and build your throne for all generations."

**Let the heavens praise your wonders,**

**O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!**

**For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?**

Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD,

a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones,

and awesome above all who are around him?

**O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are,**

**O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?**

*Psalm 89:1-8*

## INVOCATION

## SONGS OF PRAISE

### *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,

remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day,

to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray;

Refrain:

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,

O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father, a blessed angel came;

and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:

how that in Bethlehem was born the son of God by name. *(refrain)*

"Fear not, then," said the angel, "let nothing you affright;

this day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,

to free all those who trust in him from Satan's pow'r and might." *(refrain)*

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,

and left their flocks a-feeding, in tempest, storm, and wind:

and went to Bethlehem straightway, the Son of God to find. *(refrain)*

Public Domain

### *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

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.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear;

come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!

O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth:

"Go to him, your praises bringin; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;

by his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.

Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;

this the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

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.

Stanzas 1 and 4, Charles Wesley, 1744, Public Domain;

stanzas 2-3, Mark E. Hunt, © 1978, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

CCLI License # 1843136

## GOD'S LAW AND OUR CONFESSION

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land  
that the LORD your God is giving you. *Exodus 20:12*

Incarnate God, you came to rid us of our slavery to sin  
and grant us an eternal inheritance.

**We confess that we often live as misers  
instead of heirs of the King.**

**Often we ignore the needy, show indifference to the lonely,  
and reject those who seem different from us.**

Hear our prayer and grant us mercy, O Lord.

**Forgive us for having eyes only for our present circumstances,  
instead of living with confidence in our sure hope.**

**Help uncurl our fingers,  
which grasp so tightly to our time and treasure.**

**Teach us to use all we have for your glory and service.**

**Make us into vehicles of blessing.**

## SILENT CONFESSION

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*Hebrews 4:14-16*

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens,  
Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a  
high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who  
in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then  
with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive  
mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

### PROFESSION OF FAITH

Who is Jesus Christ?

**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

**By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and  
invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.**

What has Christ done?

**All things were created through him and for him.**

**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

**He is the head of the body, the Church.**

**He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,  
that in everything he might be preeminent.**

**In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,**

**whether on earth or in heaven,**

**making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Why should we follow Christ?

**He is the radiance of the glory of God  
and the exact imprint of his nature,  
and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.**

**After making purification for sins,  
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,  
having become as much superior to angels  
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.**

*-Adapted from Colossians 1:15-20 & Hebrews 1:1-4*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

### RECEPTION OF OFFERINGS

#### PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### HYMN OF PREPARATION

*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.

*Refrain:*

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

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
in ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe. *(refrain)*

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *(refrain)*

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing night,  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight. *(refrain)*

O come, thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. *(refrain)*

John Mason Neale | Thomas Helmore © Public Domain

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:57-80

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

“Prepared to Give Witness”

Pastor Ian Hard

## HYMN OF RESPONSE\*

### *Gloria Patri*

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen. Amen.

Public Domain

## CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

*If you are following along at home, please refrain from taking  
Communion as it is a form of worship meant to be celebrated  
in the physical presence of the body of Christ.*

## HYMN OF SENDING

### *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel

Words: Phillips Brooks; Music: Lewis H. Redner

## BENEDICTION

**Sermon NOTES:** Prepared to Give Witness

God's Faithfulness Transforms

Our Faith

Our Hope for Salvation

Our Witness