

Our Service of Worship for December 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Westwood First Presbyterian Church

Cincinnati, OH



Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: “*Pastoral Symphony*” (from “*Messiah*”)—G. F. Handel

During the Prelude, please take a moment to prepare for worship.

Ringling of the Tower Bell

** Call to Worship: Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Dennison Family

Reader 1: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Reader 1: Through the prophets, God promised a Messiah. In a dream, God promised Joseph that Mary “will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people.” God’s promises have been kept.

Reader 2: The birth of a child is a sign that life will carry on. It was through the birth of a weak and vulnerable human baby that God has most closely identified with each of us. The mighty God has become Emmanuel, “God with us.” This was astounding news, then, at that first Christmas. It is astounding news now. Christmas is about God, with us.

Reader 1: In the birth of Jesus, God’s promise of hope and healing is made in a new and wonderful way. We remember, though, that strength and determination are necessary in fulfilling any promise. Joseph and Mary showed great courage as they responded to God’s call.

Reader 2: We relight the Advent candles of waiting, dreaming, and healing. Their flames remind us that God is active in our lives and in the world around us.

Reader 1: God promised to love and care for all that God created. The rainbow is one sign of this promise; the birth of Jesus is another wonderful sign that God has not left us on our own. The flame of this fourth candle gives us courage for our daily living by reminding us of the promise of Emmanuel—God is with us.

ALL: Loving God, we thank you that you have fulfilled your promise. Emmanuel has come. We rejoice in your faithfulness. Give us courage to respond with love and compassion. In Christ we pray. Amen.

** Hymn No. 9: “*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*” (verses 1 and 3) *

Air: “*Ev’ry Valley Shall Be Exalted*”

Travis Pearce, tenor

Prayer of Invocation

Chorus: “*And the Glory, the Glory of the Lord*”

Chancel Choir

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading : *Isaiah 40:3-5, 9-11*

Air and Chorus: “*O Thou that Tellest Good Tidings to Zion*”
LeeAnne Galioto, alto, and Chancel Choir

Second Reading: *Isaiah 9:2-7*

Air: “*The People That Walked in Darkness*”
Tommy Wessendarp, bass

Gospel Reading: *Luke 1:26-38*

Sermon: “*A Father’s Love*”

Recit: “*There Were Shepherds Abiding in the Field*”
Kristi Reed, soprano

Chorus: “*Glory to God*”
Chancel Choir

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

[During the pause in the prayer, feel free to call out the name of someone for whom prayer is requested, or briefly, a joy or concern on your heart. The prayer concludes with the Lord’s Prayer, offered in unison.]

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.

Air: “*Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion*”
Kristi Reed, soprano

** Hymn No. 40: “*Joy to the World*” (verses 1-2, 4) *

Charge and Benediction

Postlude: “*Hallelujah*”

Please remain standing and join with the choir in singing this chorus!

Where indicated (**) please rise, and stand as you are able.

* The words to the hymns and the Scripture reading are included in the order of worship.

**REJOICE! REJOICE! EMMANUEL,
SHALL COME TO THEE O ISRAEL!**

Leading Worship This Morning:

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi, *Pastor*

Heather MacPhail, *Organist/Director of Music Ministries*

Marc Baverman, *Lay Worship Leader*



2021 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



Given to The Glory of God by:
Pastor Jeff and Jane Colarossi

Are Given by:

The Chancel and Bell Choirs
Jeri & John Rathkamp
Pastor Jeff Colarossi

In Honor of:

Heather MacPhail
Our Family
Jane Colarossi

Are Given by:

Mary Beth and Marc Baverman

Pastor Jeff and Jane Colarossi

Elizabeth Durrell

Jayne and Andy Patton

Larry and Jan Tepe

Barb and Dale Nieman

Diane Heilmann

Lynn Lanman and Elizabeth Durrell

Carol and John Moeller

Her Loving Family

Lyn Jensen and John Harting

Bill Seitz

In Memory of:

Bill and LaVerne Seitz, and Charles Baverman

Mr. and Mrs. Tony Colarossi

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ewing

Her husband James Durrell Jr.

Tom Patton, Laura Patton Mesch

Ann Patton, M.D.

Our parents

Robert and Mae Nieman

My parents, Marion and Louis Heilmann

Our parents, Jim and Ginny Newcomer,

and our friends, Bob and Dorothy Greiser

Our parents

Marion Pearson

Their mother, Lucile Kelly Harting Ryan,

Lyn's husband, Hans Kalakapua Jensen

My parents, Bill and LaVerne Seitz



On Christmas Eve, we continue the tradition of placing a rose on the Communion table in celebration of the birth of Baby Jesus.

Prayer Requests and Announcements

✚ December West-Fed Food Pantry: Crackers, cereal and canned corn

✚ Prayers are requested for:

- ♥ Connie Graham and her family after the death of her mother.
- ♥ Tom and Rita Davey, friends of Wendy Beckman.
- ♥ Anna and Dick Rechel, who have contracted COVID.
- ♥ Susie, a friend of the Kochheisers, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- ♥ Kathy Kiefer, who has been hospitalized with kidney issues.
- ♥ Wendy Beckman, recovering from shoulder replacement surgery
- ♥ Sharon Crowell, recuperating from knee replacement surgery.
- ♥ Pat Mueller, recovering from a successful double transplant.
- ♥ Linda Kugele who is dealing with breathing issues.
- ♥ Betsy Forte, Chancie Brown's sister, dealing with personal issues.
- ♥ Carol Hunt, Dave Hunt's mom, recovering from a series of falls.
- ♥ The discernment team: Steve Beckman, Mary Ellen Betz, Jane Colarossi, Kent Kochheiser, Ann Regan, Phil Zorn, Bruce Smith, Jan Tepe, Bode Olakanmi.

✚ **Ed Schaible would like to extend an invitation to his traditional Christmas Open House today, any time after 2:00 PM.** If you've never seen Ed's home decorated for Christmas (or even if you have), you're in for a treat!! Ed pulls out all the stops and if this doesn't get you in the holiday spirit, nothing will!

✚ **Monday School will conclude on Monday, Dec. 27 at 6:30pm** via Zoom, to allow more folks to take part. A new link will be sent. We will be discussing chapter 11



Hymns

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel—No. 9 (verses 1, 3)

1. 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 thee, O Israel.
2. O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's
peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Joy to the World!—No. 40 (verses 1-2, 4)

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns: Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy
3. 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.

Scripture Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 40:3-5, 9-11

³ A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings: lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” ¹⁰ See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Second Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

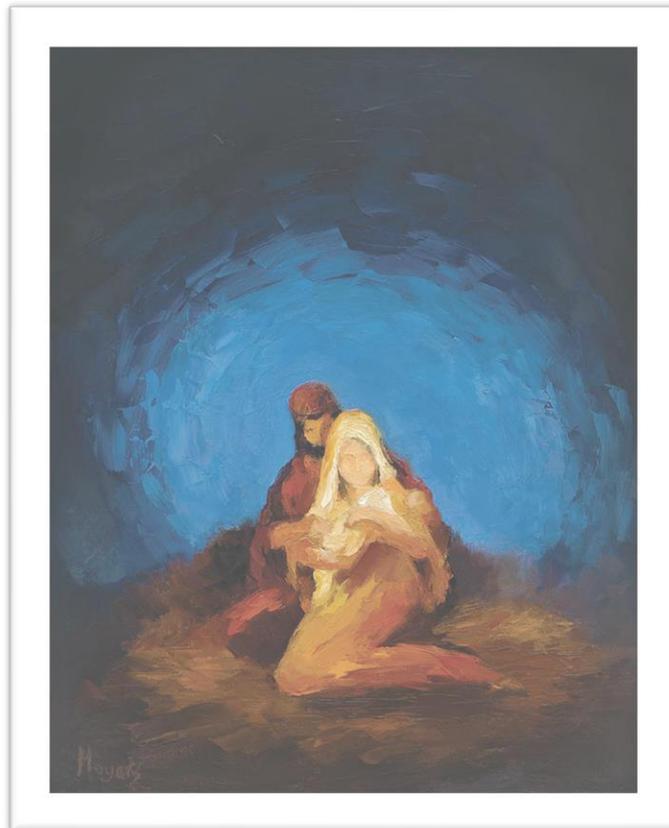
Moment for Mission—Fourth Sunday of Advent

Some birth announcements go out soon after the baby is born, and others a bit later, depending on the organizational ability (and sleep levels) of the parents. But every single birth announcement I've ever received was sent after the baby was born. This one is different. It's sent *before* the birth—seven hundred years before.

The prophet Isaiah delivered it to the people of Israel while they were facing a threat from the growing superpower of Assyria (which would eventually destroy the northern kingdom of Israel and lead many Jews into captivity). Isaiah addressed this situation by promising the coming of a future King. The seven-hundred-year delay was not because God was unable to fulfill his promise sooner, but because he wanted to give his people the hope of a future King to sustain them through dark times. The long period between promise and fulfillment was, in fact, a gift from God to his people.

Isaiah announces the birth of a baby with four names. One name wasn't sufficient to describe this special child. Moreover, these names tell us what the baby will do. This baby is different. Perhaps most shockingly (and spectacularly) is this: the names of this future King are names associated with God. Isaiah guarantees these things will happen, and this king will be born, on the basis of God's own passionate commitment to fulfilling his purposes for his people: "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." And Isaiah was right. God did deliver on this promise. Jesus was born seven hundred years later and fulfilled every promise announced. God came among us in the person of Jesus. He took on flesh in order to give us wisdom, protection, fatherly care, and peace as we enter into relationship with him.

~ Stephen Witmer, desiringgod.org



Nativity by Mike Moyers