



*Advent and Christmas at Immanuel*

December 24, 2023

## Who We Seek to Be

*In our love for Christ and guided by God's Word we seek to be a community of*

**Joyful Worship**, thoughtfully centered in the wonder and wisdom of the living God and celebrating the diversity of the body of Christ.

**Loving Fellowship**, encouraging and serving one another in the unifying love of the Holy Spirit.

**Life-changing Learning**, biblically-based preaching and teaching to equip children, youth, and adults to grow in their relationship with God.

**Enthusiastic Service**, reflecting the servant heart of Jesus as we proclaim the gospel near and far in word and deed.

## WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE: *Once in Royal David's City*  
*What Sweet Music*

arr. by Phemister  
Rutter

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

ANNETTE LAPLACA

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: Mary and Joseph—The Word Made Flesh

MATHUES FAMILY

### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Our souls magnify the Lord!

**People: Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!**

Pastor: The mighty One has done great things for us!

**People: Holy is God's name!**

Pastor: Let us worship God.

**All: For God is our Maker and our Redeemer;  
from generation to generation God gives mercy.**

based on Luke 1:46-50; *The Worship Sourcebook*

### \* INVOCATION

\* OPENING HYMN: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

HYMN 194

## WE ARE RENEWED IN GOD'S GRACE

CALL TO CONFESSION

SARAH HOLMAN

Leader: If we look at our own lives,

**All: We must confess the mixture of giving and selfishness, our waiting on the Lord turned to an endless rush, our missing the mark of Advent.**

Leader: We need forgiveness for our frantic ways and misplaced efforts. But we are grateful that we can trust in God,

**All: Who still brings salvation, who still supplies us strength, who hears our songs of gratitude, who accepts our joyful praise.**

Leader: Let us draw water from the wells of salvation. Let us proclaim his greatness with all our being.

**All: His saving deeds support our lives. His greatness still astounds us. The Holy One of Israel is among us.**

Based on Isaiah 12

SONG OF CONFESSION: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Howard Whitaker

Come, Thou long ex - pec - ted Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free.

From our fears and sins re-lease us, let us find our rest in Thee.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The good news of this Advent season is forgiveness of sin and new life. Let us commit our lives to Christ's way of hope and peace. Thanks be to the Advent God, who comes among us, setting us free to love and serve.

from *The Worship Sourcebook*

\* ACCLAMATION

**All: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.  
Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth.  
Amen.**

\* PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

*(Please share God's peace with those around you.)*

**WE BRING OUR PRAISES, PRAYERS AND GIFTS**

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY: *Nativity Carol*

JOHN RUTTER

Born in a stable so bare  
Born so long ago  
Born 'neath light of star  
He who loved us so

Wise men from distant far land  
Shepherds from starry hills  
Worship this babe so rare  
Hearts with his warmth he fills

Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day

Love in that stable was born  
Into our hearts to flow  
Innocent dreaming babe  
Make me thy love to know

Cradled by mother so fair  
Tender her lullaby  
Over her son so dear  
Angel hosts fill the sky

\* DOXOLOGY

Howard Whitaker

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Him all crea - tures here be -  
low. Praise Him a - bove, ye Heav'n - ly host; praise Fath - er,  
Son, and Hol - ly Ghost! A - men.

\* CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

LAUREN MATHUES

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

*Children ages 3 & 4 will continue their worship downstairs.*

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

KATHERINE ANDERSON

\* HYMN: *Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor*

HYMN 230

## WE HEAR GOD SPEAK

*(Please remain standing for the reading of God's Word.)*

READERS: AMBER AND HANNAH JOHNSON

\* OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 85:8-12*

<sup>8</sup> I will listen to what God the Lord says;  
he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—  
but let them not turn to folly.

<sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.

<sup>10</sup> Love and faithfulness meet together;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

<sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,  
and righteousness looks down from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> The Lord will indeed give what is good,  
and our land will yield its harvest.

\* NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: *Luke 2:1-7, John 1:1-14*

<sup>1</sup> In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

*(continued)*

<sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. NIV

\* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON: *Eternity in the Nativity*

**WE ARE DISMISSED TO LOVE AND SERVE**

\* CLOSING HYMN: *Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*

HYMN 195

\* BENEDICTION

\* POSTLUDE

**Today**

**Come back tonight for our special Candlelight Christmas Eve Service**, which begins at 6:00 p.m. Come for fellowship, music, and hot cider in the narthex at 5:30.

Thanks to our musicians: Mary Hopper, Alethea Funck, Immanuel Choir

**Year End Giving:** With two Sundays left in 2023, we are about \$14,000 away from meeting our budget for the year (\$872,100). Donations must be received (or be dated and postmarked) by Sunday, December 31 to count toward the 2023 budget and appear on your annual giving report. If you use Bill Pay, allow extra time for mailing by your bank.

*If offerings exceed expenses, the surplus will help make up for use of reserve funds for the parking lot project, which cost just over \$122,000.*

**If you would like someone to pray with you after the service**, elder **Ron Netzel** will be available near the platform.

Tuesday                      No Food Pantry today  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.      **Food Pantry open**

*ELDERS*

*Katherine Anderson (Clerk of Session), Dan Balzer, Bill France, Sarah Holman,  
Sheroll Ritchie, Leon Sinclair, Steve Westfall, Ken Wolgemuth*

*DEACONS*

*Phebe Balzer, Tim Curley, Seth Ehom (Chair), Debby France, Ron Haydon, Dee Netzel,  
Tom Nguyen, Katie Pickard, Joel Rose, Amy Treier, Rebecca Williams*

*STAFF*

*George A. Garrison, Senior Pastor; Annette LaPlaca, Minister of Congregational Life;  
Mary Hopper, Minister of Music; Annika Durbin, Children's Minister;  
Anna and Scott Scheidt, Ministers to Youth;  
Barbara Lawrence, Church Secretary; Frank Lawrence, Church Sexton*

*STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS*

*Bev Burch, Leon Sinclair, Angela Wisdom, Annette LaPlaca*