

Surprising Encounters



Immanuel Advent Sermon Series

December 5, 2021

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

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

ANNETTE LAPLACA

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

SCHEIDT FAMILY

Leader: Advent is a time to watch.

All: We watch in hope for the Lord; O come, Emmanuel.

Leader: During Advent we watch for hope in the midst of despair.

All: We watch in hope for the Lord; O come, Emmanuel.

Leader: During Advent we watch for forgiveness in the midst of rebellion.

All: We watch in hope for the Lord; O come, Emmanuel.

Leader: During Advent we watch for peace in the midst of conflict.

All: We watch in hope for the Lord; O come, Emmanuel.

Leader: During Advent we watch for the presence of God in the midst of a fallen world.

All: We watch in hope for the Lord; O come, Emmanuel.

* Taken from "We Wait in Hope: A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent," words and music by Joel Rainey

SONG: *We Wait in Hope* (Congregation is seated and sings second verse.)

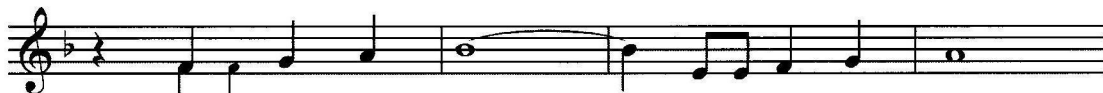
Joel Raney



(1st Sunday)	We	wait	in	}	hope _____ for the morn - ing	Light,
(2nd Sunday)	We	watch	in			
(3rd Sunday)	We	pre - pare	in			
(4th Sunday)	We	praise	with			
(Christmas Eve)	We	pro - claim	with			



for the love of Christ to il - lu - mi - nate _____ the night. _____



We	wait	with	}	joy _____ for the Sav - ior's	birth;
We	watch	with			
We	pre - pare	with			
We	praise	with			
We	pro - claim	with			



we	wait	in	}	hope for peace on earth.
we	watch	in		
we	pre - pare	in		
we	praise	with		
we	pro - claim	with		

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OPENING PAYER

* OPENING HYMN: *Tell Out My Soul*

Unison

1. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of the Lord: un - num - bered
 2. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his name: make known his
 3. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his might: pow'rs and do -
 4. Tell out, my soul, the glo - ries of his word: firm is his

bles - ings give my spir - it voice; ten - der to me the
 might, the deeds his arm has done; his mer - cy sure, from
 min - ions lay their glo - ry by; proud hearts and stub - born
 prom - ise, and his mer - cy sure. Tell out, my soul, the

prom - ise of his word; in God my Sav - ior shall my heart re - joi - ce.
 age to age the same; his ho - ly name, the Lord, the Might - y One.
 wills are put to flight, the hun - gry fed, the hum - ble lift - ed high.
 great - ness of the Lord to chil - dren's chil - dren and for - ev - er - more.

Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1965

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WOODLANDS 10.10.10.10.
 Walter Greatorex, 1919

WE ARE RENEWED IN GOD'S GRACE

CALL TO CONFESSION

KEN WOLGEMUTH

Leader: Lord, we humbly confess that at times we struggle:
We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns.

**All: We have not waited to find your will for us.
We have not noticed the needs of the people around us.**

Leader: We have not acknowledged the love that has been shown to us.
Forgive us for our lack of watchfulness.

**All: Help us to wait to know your will.
Help us to look out for the needs of others.
Help us to work and watch for your coming. Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Your sins are pardoned. The penalty is paid.
Thanks be to God.

SONG OF ACCLAMATION: *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord*

Franz Schubert

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might;
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

* APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead and buried;
He descended into hell,
the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven and is seated on the right hand of
God the Father Almighty;
from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic* Church;
The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*universal

* 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: *People Look East*

Eugene Butler
JOEL AND KARIN BUURSMAN

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

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 and sing today:
Love, the star, 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 and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

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

Jes-se Tree, Jes-se Tree, sign of God's fi - del - i - ty, — that

5 he will love e - ter - nal - ly ————— the prom - ise made to

9 Mo - ses and Da - vid who'd be king, and Sol - o - mon, his son, and

12 Jo - nah in the whale, who wait - ed for the com - ing of Em - man - u - el.

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(Children 3 years through 5th grade are dismissed to continue their worship downstairs.)

WE HEAR GOD SPEAK

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

Reader: RON HAYDON

* OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: *Malachi 3:1-4*

Leader: "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.

All: Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple;

Leader: the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

All: But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?

Leader: For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

All: Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: *Luke 1:26-38*

(Be seated for a dramatic reading.)

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. NIV

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

* HYMN: *Thou Who Wast Rich*

1. Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor, all for love's sake be -
 2. Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing, all for love's sake be -
 3. Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we

cam - est poor; thrones for a man - ger didst sur - ren - der,
 cam - est man; stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing,
 wor - ship thee. Em - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing,

sap - phire - paved courts for sta - ble floor. Thou who wast rich be -
 heav'n - ward by thine e - ter - nal plan. Thou who art God be -
 make us what thou wouldst have us be. Thou who art love be -

yond all splen - dor, all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.
 yond all prais - ing, all for love's sake be - cam - est man.
 yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

MEDITATION: *The Surprising Son*

WE RESPOND WITH THANKSGIVING

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

*Please **approach the tables from the center aisles**, and we ask that you **return to your seats on the outside aisles**.*

*If you would rather not go to the front, please feel free to remain seated.
Tell an usher if you would like the elements brought to you in your seat.*

*If you would like to be seated at the lower tables,
just take a seat in the front row while you wait for openings at those tables.*

Gluten-free wafers are available at the table in the balcony.

Please feel free to partake of the elements as you feel led.

(Times of singing and silence. See music on following pages.)

JESUS PAID IT ALL
(Sung during communion.)

1. I hear the Sav - ior say, "Your strength in - deed is small, child of
2. Lord, now in - deed I find your power, and yours a - lone, can
3. For noth - ing good have I where - by your grace to claim - I'll
4. And when, be - fore the throne, I stand in him com plete, "Je - sus

5

weak - ness, watch and pray, find in me your all in all."
change the lep - er's spots, and melt the heart of stone.
wash my gar - ments white in the blood of Cal - v'ry's Lamb.
died my soul to save," my lips shall still re - peat.

9

Je - sus paid it all, all to him I owe;

13

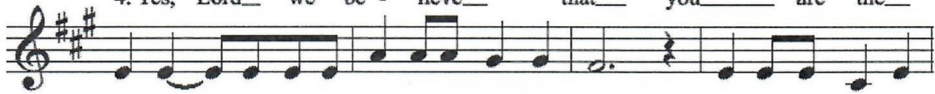
sin had left a crim - son stain, he washed it white as snow.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

(Sung during communion.)



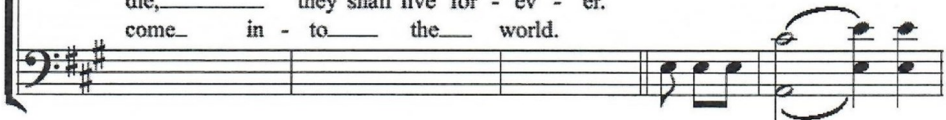
1. I am the bread of life; they who come to me shall not
2. The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the
3. I am the res - ur - rec - tion; I am the
4. Yes, Lord we be - lieve that you are the



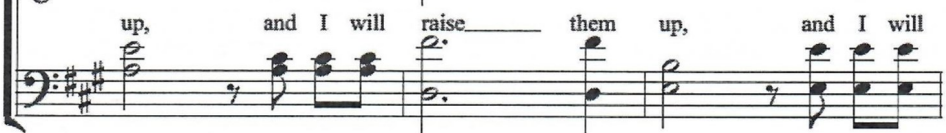
hun ger; they who be - live in me shall not thirst. No one can come to
world, and they who eat of this bread, they shall live for -
life. They who be - lieve in me, e - ven if they
Christ, the Son of God who has



me un - less the Fa - ther draws them. And I will raise them
ev - er, they shall live for - ev - er.
die, they shall live for - ev - er.
come in - to the world.



up, and I will raise them up, and I will



raise them up on the last day.



WE ARE DISMISSED TO LOVE AND SERVE

* CLOSING HYMN: *Amazing Grace*

(first and last verses)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

* BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE

SCOTS' FORM OF COMMUNION

The early Scottish Presbyterians felt strongly that their manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper should clearly symbolize the truth that the Risen Christ is host to his redeemed people at this covenant meal. Samuel Rutherford wrote that "they should sit, as banqueters, at one table with our King, and eat and drink." Abraham Kuyper expressed his opinion that the Lord's Supper should be eaten from a table, saying, "Jesus spreads a feast for his friends and as a King invites his people to his table."

We use this form largely for the same reasons expressed by our Presbyterian predecessors and also have discovered reasons in our own experience to value this observance of the Sacrament. The form demands a little more from us than the tradition of being served at our places in the congregation. As we overcome our nervousness about going forward we find that the very act impresses upon us the reality of our personal response to our Lord's invitation to receive his grace. Sitting with others at his table, singing and watching others go forward impresses upon us the reality of our fellowship and the joy of seeing others meet our Lord in his love.

NOTICE TO FAMILIES: In accord with our practice of the Lord's Supper, children who have not yet professed their faith in Christ to the elders are asked to refrain from partaking in communion. We desire that such children look forward gladly to the day when they take their first communion as a significant step in their spiritual growth. In the meantime, we want to provide ways they may grow to understand the meaning of the sacrament and also feel that though young, they are significant persons in the covenant family of God. So we invite those children to come forward to the Table and be seated with their parents. The elder who serves the elements to the parents will briefly offer prayer for the child. So that the elders may know which children to pray for in this way, we suggest that the children not taking communion *fold their hands on the Table*. We hope this custom will encourage parents as they help their children grow in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" and prepare for the time when they are ready to profess Christ and take communion.

PRAYERS DURING COMMUNION

Prayer to begin a new life in Christ

Dear God, I recognize Jesus came to earth to die on the cross for the sins of your people. I want to recognize now that he came to earth to die for *my* sins. I confess that I am a sinner in need of your grace and the saving blood of Christ. Please forgive me of my sins through the perfect sacrifice of your Son who died in my place. Jesus, come into my heart and change me from the inside out. Help me to truly repent from my previous way of living without you, and help me to surrender to your rule over my life as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for your Spirit that reveals to me the new life that I have in Christ and empowers me to walk in obedience to your truth and will for me. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Merciful God, I am thankful that as your child I am not defined by my sin. Help me to walk in obedience to you in all areas of my life. Forgive me for the particular area(s) where I still succumb to temptation and disobey you. Help me to remember that in every area where I am tempted, your word promises that you will provide a way out of those temptations. Fill me with your Spirit, which working in me can do what I cannot do on my own. Help me to walk in obedience to your commands and also delight in them and your guiding words of truth. Please give me the courage to reach out to others in the body of Christ for strength and support when I am especially vulnerable. Amen.

Prayer for those wrestling with doubts and fears

Gracious God, even as your child I wrestle with the fact that your will for me is perfect and that you will supply all of my needs. Help me to set my mind on the truths of your word, and guard my heart when the enemy clouds my mind and heart with fear and doubt. Help me to rest in the peace and security of being your child, and by your Spirit testify with my spirit that I am yours when feelings tell me otherwise. Remind me of your love and delight in me as your child. Amen.

Prayer for those seeking freedom from their past

Almighty God, you have the power to set us free from the sins and entanglements of our past. Release me from the shackles of my past that I carry that you have released me from. Forgive me for holding my past against me in the ways that you do not, and enable me to grasp what it is for you to see me in the perfect righteousness of your Son, both now and forever. May your Spirit, the Spirit of liberty, liberate me from any thought or feeling that belies the fact that I am completely forgiven, or free to live the new life in Christ I have as your new creation. Amen.

TODAY

If you have concerns or are **in need of prayer**, elder Ron Netzel is available at the front following the service.

Thanks to our readers and musicians: John Zimmerman, Joel and Karin Buursma, Grace Kenyon, Felicity Roche, Seth Ehorn, Joyce Economides, Thomas Smoak, Ellie Durbin

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m.
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Food Pantry
Iglesia Roca Eterna
College Fellowship @ Netzels' home,
1616 E. Hawthorne Blvd., Wheaton
Let them know you are coming at
630-260-8404
Youth Group (Game Night)
Adult Ed with Mark Noll (Zoom)

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Women's Bible Study
Food Pantry open

Saturday

10:00 - noon

Choir workshop

IN IMMANUEL AND BEYOND

Next Sunday, December 12

Lessons and Carols

ELDERS

*Katherine Anderson (Clerk of Session), Dan Balzer, Ron Netzel, Carl Pickard,
Sheroll Ritchie, Leon Sinclair, Gaby Sosa, Alva Steffler, Steve Westfall, Ken Wolgemuth*

DEACONS

*Phebe Balzer, Becky Eggimann, Seth Ehorn, Debby France, Dee Netzel, Tom Nguyen, Katie Pickard,
Heather Reyes (chair), Jack Swanson, Amy Treier, Rebecca Williams*

STAFF

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

Immanuel is affiliated with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC).