



Darkness to Light

A Liturgy of Advent Lessons and Carols

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church | Coralville, Iowa
8:30 & 11:00 am | Sunday, December 18, 2016

Introduction to the Service: Advent — A Reflection

Advent is, with Easter and Christmas, the season that most speaks to our contemporary human condition. It is a season that has long been symbolized by the lighting of the candles of an Advent wreath representing the four weeks of the Advent season and culminating in the lighting of the fifth principal candle at Christmas. No doubt this tradition reaches back into our Jewish past and the Feast of Lights at Hanukkah, and has been popular within Christian celebrations particularly in Germany and Scandinavian countries down the centuries. Today, the Advent wreath has become a universal symbol, to be found in many households as well as in churches.

The lighting of a candle reminds us that though we live in a dark world, at the heart of the Christian Gospel is a message of hope. Flickering and fragile though the light of a candle may be, yet the flame of such a candle lights up a dark room. It represents that Light of the World, which illuminates our world and our lives with its transforming radiance, which guides us into all truth. It is in the belief that God is with us even in the darkness — as the story of Jesus will reveal as we travel the journey of his life from Advent to Pentecost — that many churches begin this Advent Season by lighting a single large candle in a dark church at the start of an Advent Procession. The candle recalls the hope incarnated in Jesus that shines in our dark world, as I have just described. And the procession reminds us that Christians are a pilgrim people, ever on the move for, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says: *We have here no abiding city but we seek one to come.*

Of course, Christmas awaits us at the end of this four week season, and we will then be back in our comfort zone: back with the baby and hovering angels, the ox and the ass, the shepherds and their sheep, and the incense and the gold (let's forget myrrh for a moment with its darker implications!). Christmas, profound festival though it is, as we celebrate the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, often triggers our sentimentality and a superficial optimism. We forget that, much as we enjoy Christmas, often to excess, many in our world live without the basic necessities we take for granted, and for whom life is often "nasty, brutish and short." It was among them that Jesus was born, and for them he died. Just as we cannot celebrate Easter without plumbing the depths, as Jesus did, of Good Friday, so we cannot celebrate Christmas without the sobering preparation of Advent.

Advent is rich in music and verse, including some of the finest poetry in scripture, dominated by the prophecies of Isaiah and the heroic stories of John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary. For many of us, Advent's rich texture is exemplified in the Advent hymns with their declamatory message and their thunderous melodies. But for all its plangent beauty, Advent begins in darkness and silence, reminding us of the real world beyond the shrine, where God himself was content — indeed determined — to pitch his tent.

As well as preparing for Christmas, Advent has traditionally focused on more sombre themes as well, reminding us not only of the first coming of Jesus, but also of his second coming when as the Creed rehearses, "he will come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead." This is a theme picked up in Thomas Cranmer's peerless Advent Collect where he talks of Jesus who "comes at the last day in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead." Some of our Advent hymns like *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending* focus on the Four Last Things — death, judgment, heaven, and hell — adding a penitential note to our Alleluias. Though not much preached about these days, those traditional Advent themes do concentrate on the ultimate things that confront us as human beings, and we need such opportunities as the Advent season provides to reflect on them. These themes reveal us — and indeed the whole of humanity — as we truly are. Not a pleasant sight, but extraordinary though it may seem, it is in us, — frail, wayward, prodigal humanity that we are — that God sees himself reflected and longs to get his own back — that is to bring us back home. That is why God, in Jesus, gave himself (emptied himself and was obedient even unto death is how St. Paul puts it) so that all who believe should not perish but have eternal life.

Our world is dark — despite our human ingenuity and inventiveness — and our lives are dark as well, but year by year we light a candle in a dark room, as a sacramental affirmation that God has already lit a candle in our dark world. That light of the world has a name — his name is Jesus. "That light was the true light that enlightens everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it." We will hear those words from St. John's Gospel again on Christmas Day.

That is the Christian good news, that though our world is dark, a light shines. Its meaning is this: God loves us and he will never leave us. That conviction gives hope to our world and to each one of us. That is the message of Advent.

Thank God!

The Rev. Canon Jeremy Davies, Salisbury Cathedral

Prelude | O Come, O Come, Emmanuel *setting by Anne Krentz Organ (b. 1960)*

Welcome + Announcements

Introit | Lift Up Your Heads *by Mark Schweizer (b. 1956) sung by the choir*

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; Redeemer, come, with us abide;
behold, the King of glory waits; our hearts to thee we open wide;
the King of kings is drawing near; from us thy inner presence feel;
the Savior of the world is here! thy grace and love in us reveal.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Thy Holy Spirit lead us on
until our glorious goal is won;
eternal praise, eternal fame
be offered, Savior, to Thy name!

-Georg Weissel (1590-1635), trans. Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

Candle Lighting + Opening Prayer

following the lighting of the candles:

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. Amen.

***Gathering Hymn | Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus** *all singing*

1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy
2. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us;
yet a king; born to reign in us for - ev - er,

let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art, dear de - sire of
Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all - suf -

ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

HYFRYDOL
Text: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
Music: Rowland H. Prichard (1811-1887)

Hymns + Songs | Lift Up Your Hearts *(red hymnal)*

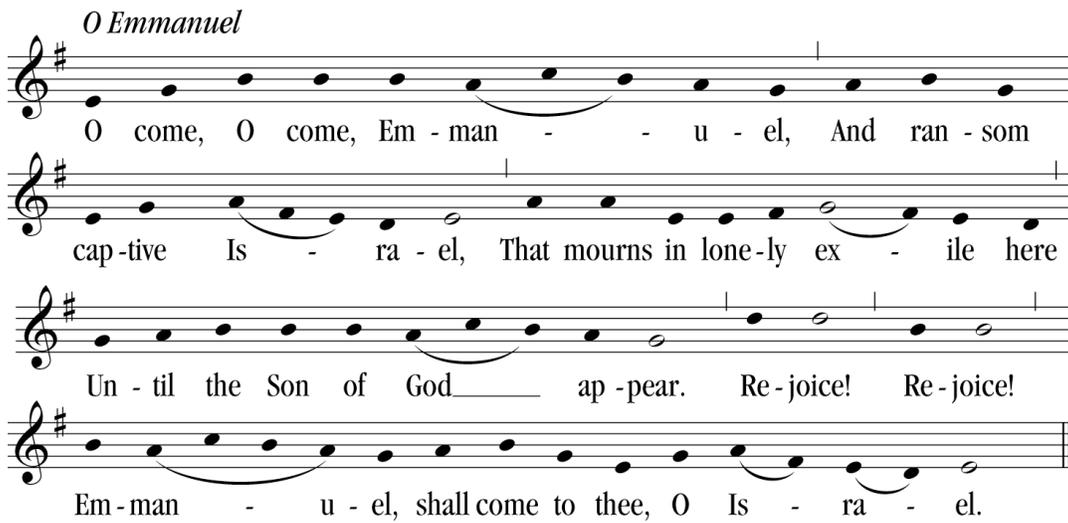
Bold Print | Speak or sing together in unison.

**Please stand in body or in spirit.*

Bidding Prayer

Antiphon | O Emmanuel *all singing*

O Emmanuel



O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce!
Em - man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson I | Genesis 1:1-5 & John 1:1-5, 14

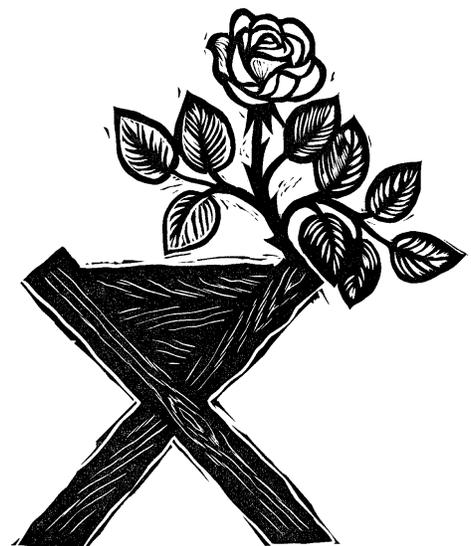
Carol | Lo, the Beginning *setting by Mark Schweizer* *sung by the choir*

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispel with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere;
true Man, yet very God,
now come and dwell among us,
sharing Thy grace and truth.

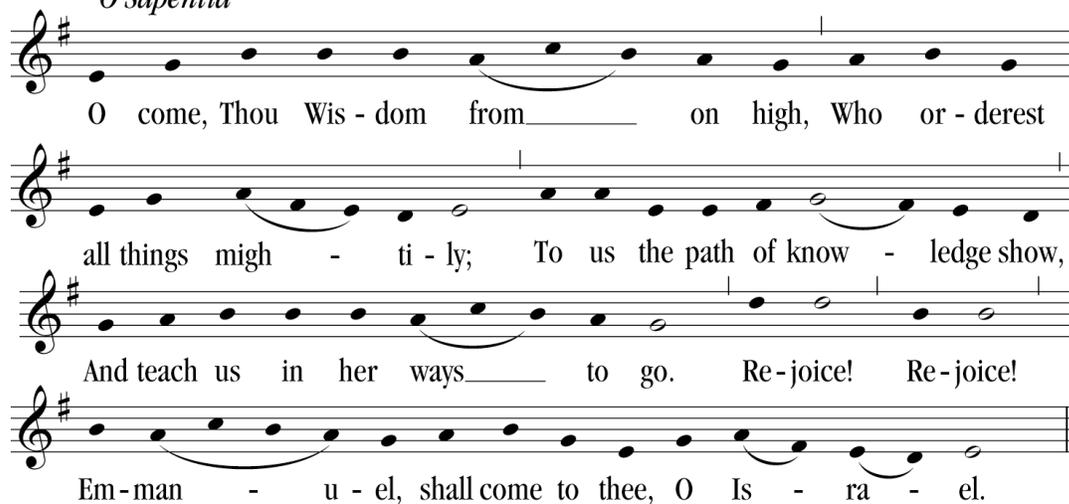
In the beginning was the Word.
The Word was with God, the Word was God.
In him was life, and the life was the light of all.
The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us
full of grace and truth.

-Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) & John 1



Antiphon | O Sapientia *all singing*

O Sapientia



O come, Thou Wis - dom from _____ on high, Who or - derest
all things migh - ti - ly; To us the path of know - ledge show,
And teach us in her ways _____ to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson II | Isaiah 61:1-3 & Luke 4:16-21

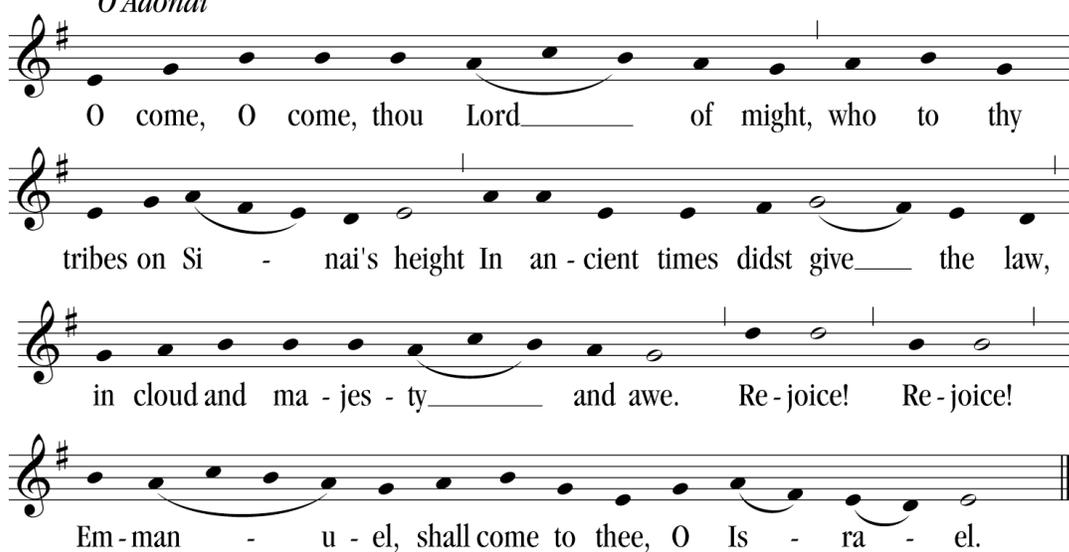
Carol | Pengyou, Ting! *setting by Carolyn Jennings (b. 1936) sung by the choir in Chinese*

Listen, friend! Good news:
Jesus came to earth for you,
came from heaven where he was Lord,
came to save us all.

Listen, hear this great good news:
Jesus Christ came to earth for me, for you!
-Anonymous Chinese

Antiphon | O Adonai *all singing*

O Adonai



O come, O come, thou Lord _____ of might, who to thy
tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst give _____ the law,
in cloud and ma - jes - ty _____ and awe. Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

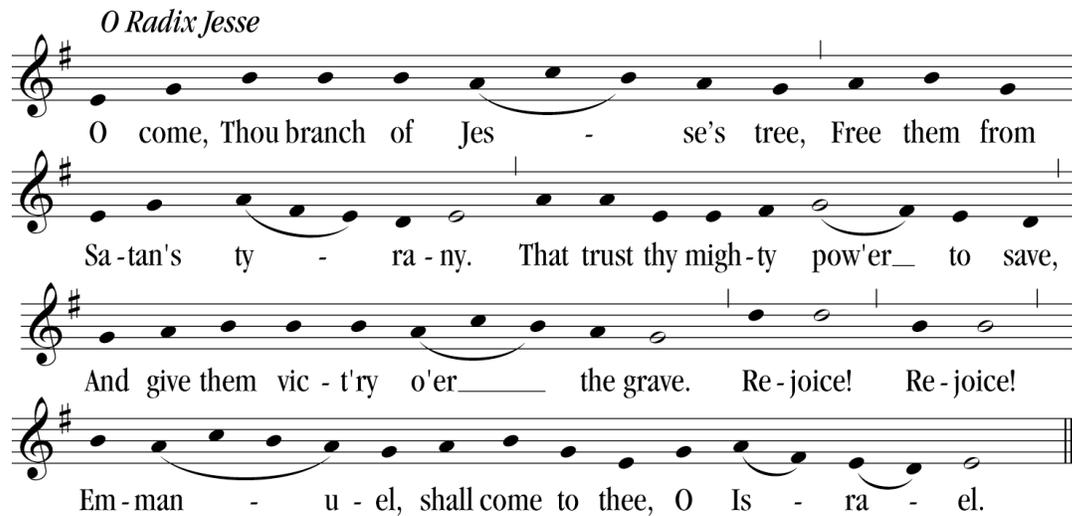
Lesson III | Isaiah 40:1-11 & Matthew 3:1-7, 11

***Carol** | Comfort, Comfort Now My People *red hymnal, #59 all singing*

Parents who would like to have their children (3 year old - Kindergarten) participate in Children's Time are welcome to accompany their children downstairs at this time. Children will be brought back to the Sanctuary during the Sending Hymn.

Antiphon | O Radix Jesse *all singing*

O Radix Jesse



O come, Thou branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from
Satan's ty - ra - ny. That trust thy migh - ty pow'er to save,
And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!
Em - man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson IV | Isaiah 9:1-2, 6 & Matthew 4:12-17

Carol | The People Who Walk in Darkness *by Pepper Choplin (b. 1957) sung by the choir*

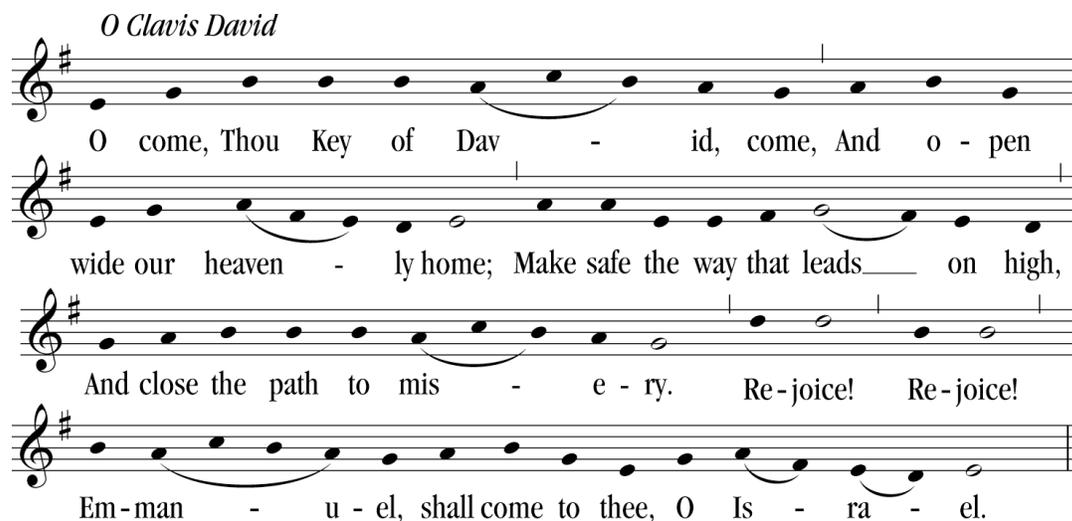
The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.
Now lift up your eyes, see the glory of the Lord, and all flesh will see it together.

The people who have walked in darkness, they have seen a wondrous light,
And all who live in death's dark shadow, rise and shine, your light has come.

Arise and shine, your light has come to the people who walk in darkness!
-Isaiah 9:2

Antiphon | O Clavis David *all singing*

O Clavis David



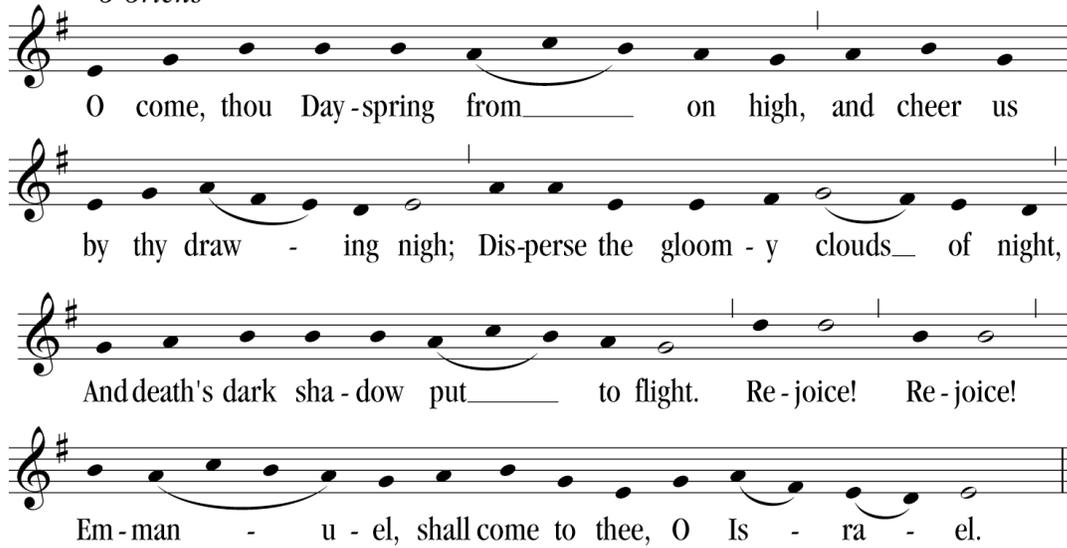
O come, Thou Key of Dav - id, come, And o - pen
wide our heaven - ly home; Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to mis - e - ry. Re - joice! Re - joice!
Em - man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson V | Isaiah 7:10-14 & Matthew 1:20-23

Carol | O Little Town of Bethlehem *red hymnal, #88 all singing*

Antiphon | O Oriens *all singing*

O Oriens



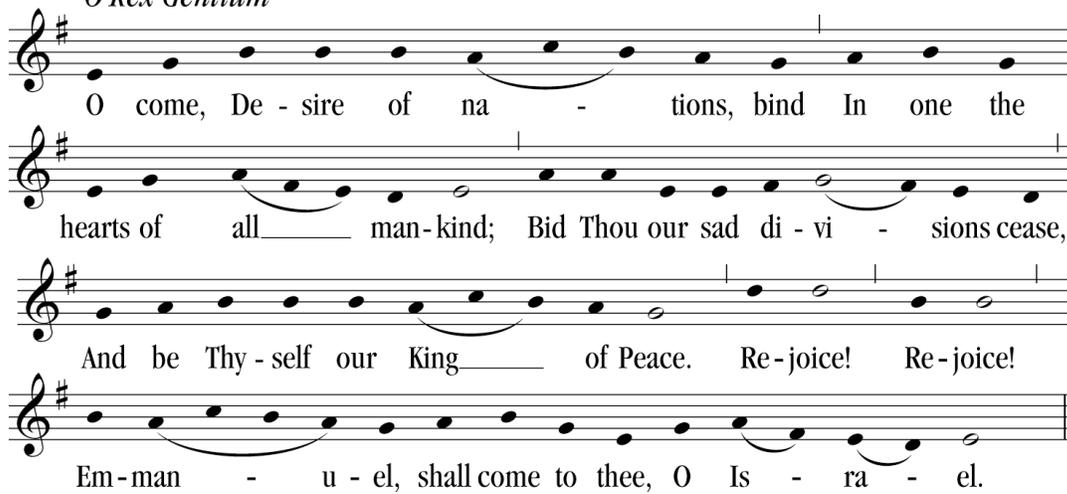
O come, thou Day-spring from _____ on high, and cheer us
by thy draw - ing nigh; Dis-purse the gloom - y clouds_ of night,
And death's dark sha - dow put _____ to flight. Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson VI | Isaiah 42:5-9 & Luke 2:25-32

***Carol** | Lord, Bid Your Servant *red hymnal, #97 all singing*

Antiphon | O Rex gentium *all singing*

O Rex Gentium



O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In one the
hearts of all _____ man-kind; Bid Thou our sad di - vi - sions cease,
And be Thy - self our King _____ of Peace. Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Lesson VII | Isaiah 35:1-6, 8a, 10 & Revelation 22:12, 16-17, 20

Carol | The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns *red hymnal, #476 all singing*

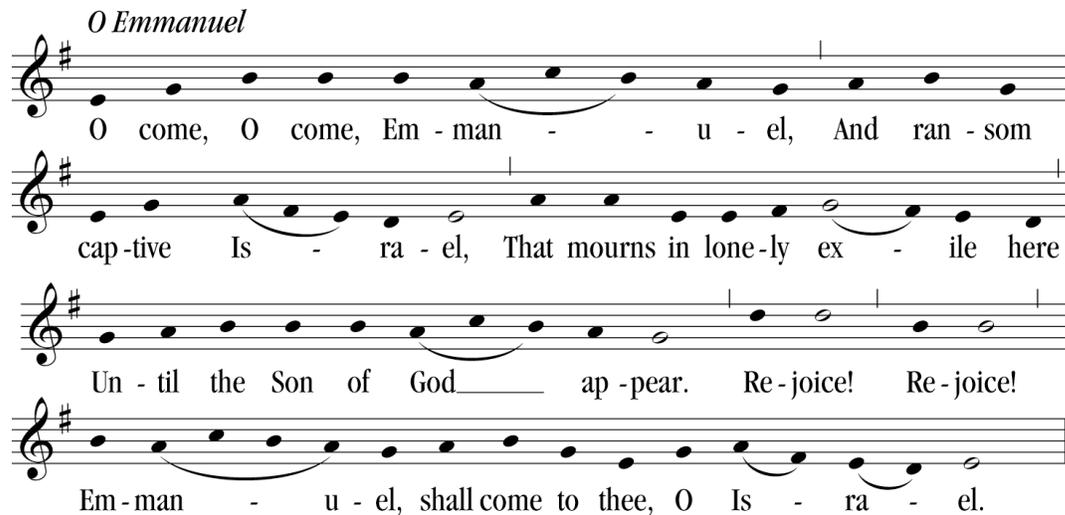
Stanzas 1 & 2: Women + Children

3 & 4: Men

5: All, *in canon: women begin, men follow after four beats*

Antiphon | O Emmanuel *all singing*

O Emmanuel



O come, O come, Em - man - - u - el, And ran - som
cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice!
Em - man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Worship in Tithes and Offerings

Offertory | Of the Father's Love Begotten *setting by Fernando Ortega (b. 1957)*

Of the Father's love begotten,
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega;
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!

-Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (343-413), tr. John M. Neale and Henry W. Baker

***Offertory Response** | sung to the tune of "Lift Up Your Heads"

**To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.**

Text: 9th century Latin hymn, translated by John Mason Neale

A 28:16 Story | Anne Dierking

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!" -Genesis 28.16

Minute for Ministry | Small Groups

Prayers of the People | **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

*Sending Hymn | Hark! The Herald Angels Sing *red hymnal, #80 all singing*

***Advent Blessing**

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came amongst us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin.

Amen.

May he whose second coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

Amen.

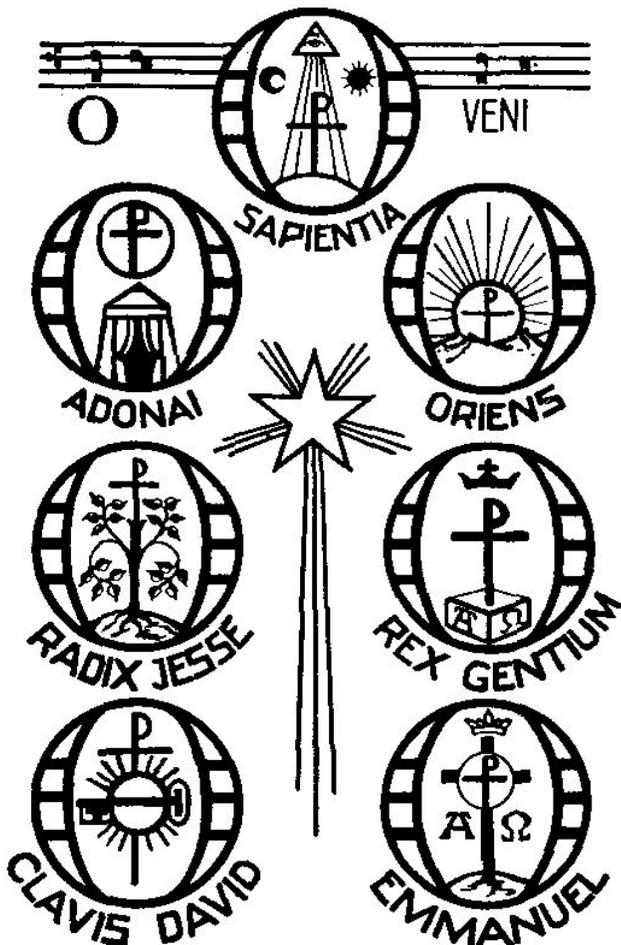
May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life.

Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever.

Amen.

If you desire a personal time of prayer, we're here to pray with you and for you. Please join a prayer partner by the baptismal font at the front of the Sanctuary immediately following the worship service.



Today's service is structured around the "Great 'O' Antiphons," known to many as the Advent hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. The "Great 'O' Antiphons" are part of the medieval Roman Catholic Advent liturgy. On each day of the week leading up to Christmas, one responsive verse would be chanted, each including a different Old Testament name for the coming Messiah. When we sing each verse of this hymn, we acknowledge Christ as the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. We sing this hymn in an already-but not yet-kingdom of God. Christ's first coming gives us a reason to rejoice again and again, yet we know that all is not well with the world. So along with our rejoicing, we plead using the words of this hymn that Christ would come again to perfectly fulfill the promise that all darkness will be turned to light. The original text created a reverse acrostic: "ero cras," which means, "I shall be with you tomorrow." That is the promise we hold to as we sing this beautiful hymn. *-hymnary.org*

Today's Worship Participants

Rev. Dr. Matt Paul and Rev. Kyle Otterbein, *Pastors*

Patti Benson and Steve Dunham, *readers*

Matthew Penning, *Director of Music Ministries*

Logos Choir, Lee Rabe (djembe), Sarah Beerends (flute), Willem Paul (trombone), Tamera Penning (piano)

Grace, Brodie, and Todd Young & Helen Bryce family (8:30), *Advent Candle Lighters*

Matt, Becca, Willem, Marina, and Arie Paul (11:00), *Advent Candle Lighters*

Today's Announcements

Welcome! We are happy to have you here with us today. If you would like more information about St. Andrew, please indicate your interest on the Connection Card. Join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments between services; this is a wonderful way to meet the St. Andrew family.

Families with children and infants are welcomed in our worship services. Worship materials for children are available on the bookshelves outside the Sanctuary.

Infant and toddler care (up to age 2) is provided downstairs in the Nursery. Children's Time, for ages 3 years through Kindergarten, also is downstairs.

Connection Cards are one way we can extend welcome and hospitality to our guests while also helping us consider steps we can take in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. We ask each person to fill out the card and place it in the offering plate. Members, once your contact information is correct, you only need to write your name. As my next step today, I will . . .

- Reread the stories of Jesus birth found in Matthew 1 and Luke 1-2:20 and meditate on the challenges Mary and Joseph faced in bringing Jesus into the world.
- Read John 1:1-18 with your household and share stories of how you see Jesus' light shining in the world and in your lives.
- Give some loose change to the Salvation Army and thank a ringer for her/his work!
- Collect non-perishable food items to bring to Christmas Eve service for the Coralville Community Food Back.
- Pray about being part or leading a small group during the Winter GroupMester.

Prayer Requests may be written on a blue Prayer Request Card and placed in the offering plate or in the Prayer Request Box by the office door. You may indicate that you would like your prayer shared with the congregation during worship, or only shared with the Pastors and Prayer Ministry. Need more? A Stephen Minister is a trained member that provides high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care and support during times of need, grief, and crisis. If you know someone who might need a friend during a life transition, please contact one of the pastors or the Stephen Ministry referrals coordinators Graham Dameron (319/337.9270 | graham3076@gmail.com) or Mary Beth Ross (319/338.0082 | iawoodsunrise@gmail.com).

The flowers this morning are given by Skip & Pat Wells in memory of their mom, Grace Palmer.

Christmas Eve

with **St. Andrew**

at the **Coralville Center**
for the **Performing Arts**

4 pm

**candlelight service
with children in mind**

7 pm

**candlelight service
with brass, choir, & handbells**

*All are invited to join us
bring a donation for the Coralville Food Pantry*

*Christmas Eve (11pm) & Christmas Day (11am)
services held at 2251 1st Ave in Coralville*

www.saintandrew-ic.org