

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:18



Grace Presbyterian Church

Fort Wayne, IN

December 21, 2025

4th Sunday of Advent

Community Worship on Zoom – Live Stream/Replay on Facebook

Sunday Service – December 21, 2025

How can we pray for you? Let us know in the Zoom/Facebook Chat!

We invite you to join in the liturgy by speaking the parts in ***BOLD*** with us from your homes!

10:15 – Zoom Meeting Starts ~ ~ ~ 10:20 – Facebook Live Stream Starts

10:30 – Live Prelude Starts

Coventry Carol arr. by Lindberg

Welcome

Call to Worship –

Not in the mighty places of power, but in little Bethlehem, in a room out back:

The Messiah is coming.

Not born in nobility and wealth, but of Mary and Joseph, who pondered and planed wood:

The Messiah is coming.

Not announced by prophets, priests, and kings, but by two women, who were the first to know:

The Messiah is coming.

Nothing will be impossible for God, but when and where we least expect it, look among the straw and the stars:

The Messiah is coming.

Fourth Sunday in Advent – The Candle of Rejoicing

Our scripture passage for “The Candle of Rejoicing,” is taken from Matthew 1:18-25. This is also our Gospel reading for today.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She

will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

LIGHT ALL FOUR ADVENT CANDLES

In our passage today from Matthew, we see an angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph. The angel tells Joseph that Mary’s child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and would be a son. This reveals an important truth about Jesus – he is both God and human. The infinite unlimited God took on the limitations of humanity so he could live and die for the salvation of all who would believe in him.

The Season of Advent invites us to rejoice and remember the words the angel said, the name Jesus which means, “the Lord saves.” Jesus came to earth to save us because we can’t save ourselves from sin and consequences. No matter how good we are, we can’t eliminate the sinful nature present in all of us. Only Jesus can do that. Jesus didn’t come to help us save ourselves; he came to be our Savior from the power and penalty of sin. That is news we can rejoice with! As the Apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:4-5, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again, Rejoice! . . . The Lord is near.”

Rejoicing during Advent takes us beyond our present state. We take comfort in the promise of God, not only to be with us in the midst of our sorrow, but to take us beyond our sorrow! We rejoice that the Lord Jesus is coming to deliver us from any disaster, sorrow or hurt we are feeling.

Prayer: Let us pray. Dear God, continue to remind us that Advent rejoicing is an anticipation of the joy that Jesus has with the Father and the Holy Spirit

from all eternity and wants to share that joy with us. Like Joseph, Mary, Paul and all who have served you, help us to rejoice and welcome Christ into our hearts, and those often-hidden parts of our lives. Amen.

We will now sing verse 4 of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.*

Opening Hymn #85 “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

Call to Confession —

God calls us to rest in grace, to let down our guard and be truthful about ourselves and the world. When we allow some breathing room, we can see the Spirit moving, calling us to a new way of life. Before God, with all the people of God, let us confess our brokenness and make room for healing. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession —

Gracious and steadfast God, you come to us with news of hope, freedom, and restoration. We confess that we have not believed your word or trusted your promise. We have been silent when we could have spoken your mercy, selfish when we could have shared our time and gifts, and timid when we could have shined your light into the world. God of compassion, hold us gently. Forgive what we have done or failed to do. Free us from the shadow of death, and guide our feet into the way of peace, through Jesus Christ.

Time for silent confession

Assurance of Pardon –

Hear this good news: God is at work in you. Live this truth: God's grace is more than enough for whatever you carry. Know that you are forgiven, loved, and free. rejoice and be glad!

Thanks be to God. Amen!

Song of Assurance #581 “Gloria Patri”

Passing the Peace

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The Peace and Love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you!

Please take a moment to greet your neighbor and others with the peace of Christ.

Children's Message

Time for Music & Meditation

Prayer for Illumination

Let us Pray: Holy God, Word made flesh, let us come to this word open to being surprised. Silence our agendas; banish our assumptions; cast out our casual detachment. Confound our expectations; clear the cobwebs from our ears; penetrate the corners of our hearts with this word. We know that you can, we pray that you will, and we wait with great anticipation. **Amen.**

Hebrew Bible Reading – Micah 5:2-5a

p.1445

2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

4 He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

5 And he will be our peace
when the Assyrians invade our land
and march through our fortresses.
We will raise against them seven shepherds,
even eight commanders,

Choir Anthem #119 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Sermon *Finding Joy*

Affirmation of Faith: The 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 Ghost, 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 sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn of Response #129 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Prayers of the People and 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.

Call to Offering

In this season of sometimes frantic gift buying and giving, we pause to remember that the greatest gift has already been given -God's great love in Christ. In our offering we respond with thanks to that gift, bringing our own tithes & offering as our act of worship and praise.

Offertory

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence arr. by Butler

Doxology #606 “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Prayer of Dedication –

Let us pray. Holy One, whose heart abounds with gifts, receive this offering as a sign of our intention to live surrounded by your mercy, inspired by your Spirit, open to the joy of your presence, hospitable to one another and generous toward your world. **Amen.**

Announcements

Closing Hymn #136 “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

The First Noel arr. by Thygerson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Olivia Craft Sale (donations) for Kate's Kart: This Sunday, Olivia Palmer will be offering her various crafts for donations to Kate's Kart. Kate's Kart is a nonprofit that provides new books to children staying in hospitals — offering comfort and promoting literacy. You may recall her table of crafts that she offered last year. These items make great gifts and stocking stuffers.

Approved! Grace to Extend Call: Last Sunday, 12.14, Grace voted to extend a call for Sandy Garcia to be our next pastor. We look forward to her ordination and installation, hopefully early March 2026. Copies of her Statement of Faith and Bio are in the narthex.

Worship Service Volunteers Needed: We need Worship Service Volunteers for our 2026 calendar Year. Please contact the office if you could help by being a Lay Leader, Soundboard, Video Tech or Counter. Training is easy and provided.

Birthdays

Betsy Kachmar – December 27

Anniversaries

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

To connect to our worship services on Zoom, follow these instructions to watch or listen. You can connect at 10:15 for fellowship; the service starts at 10:30.

Option 1: Automatically Join the Meeting

Follow the link in the email sent every week. This is by far the easiest way to connect to the live video.

Option 2: Manually Join the Meeting

You can download Zoom from <https://www.zoom.us>.

After you have installed the program/app, click on “Join” and enter this information:

Meeting ID: 9712063468 **Password:** 030414

Option 3: Call in to Listen (Audio Only)

On Sunday Morning, you can call to listen to the service. After you call, it will ask you to enter the Meeting ID and Password Below:

Phone Number: (301) 715-8592 **Meeting ID:** 9712063468 **Password:** 030414

88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 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.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great *O Antiphons* may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: *O Wisdom* (2)
Dec. 18: *O Lord of might* (3)
Dec. 19: *O Root of Jesse* (4)

Dec. 20: *O Key of David* (5)
Dec. 21: *O Dayspring* (6)
Dec. 22: *O Desire of Nations* (7)

Dec. 23: *O Emmanuel* (1)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

TEXT: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.; trans. composite
MUSIC: Plainsong; adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1852; arr. John Weaver, 1988
Music Arr. © 1990 John Weaver

VENI EMMANUEL
LM with refrain

10

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

85

1 Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 2 Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 3 Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
 4 Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the

light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall bring sal -
 light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall feed the
 light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift your heads and
 light ban - ish dark - ness. He is com - ing;

va - tion to Is - rael, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
 lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
 tell the glad ti - dings. Let your light be shin - ing.

This text works best when used incrementally during the four weeks of Advent. It underscores the “waiting” theme of the season and concludes appropriately with reference to Matthew 25:1–13. The tune name meaning “deep in the forest” comes from the opening of a Yiddish love song.

TEXT: Wayne L. Wold, 1984

MUSIC: Yiddish folk song; arr. Wayne L. Wold, 1984

Text and Music Arr. © 1984 Fortress Press (admin. Augsburg Fortress)

TIF IN VELDELE

10.7.9.6

Glory Be to the Father 581

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the
 Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the be -
 gin - ning, is now, and ev - er shall be,
 world with - out end. A - men, a - men.

TEXT: Trad. liturgical text
MUSIC: Henry W. Greatorex, 1851

GLORIA PATRI (Greatorex)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming 129

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung,
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind;
 3 This flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air,

of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, by faith - ful proph - ets sung.
 with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind.
 dis - pels with glo-rious splen-dor the dark-ness ev - ery-where.

It came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the cold of
 To show God's love a - right she bore for us a
 En - fleshed, yet ver - y God, from sin and death he

win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
 saves us and light - ens ev - ery load.

Although the early copies of this 15th-century German text include many more stanzas than are printed here, this simpler, shorter form has much to commend it. This early 17th-century harmonization of the traditional chorale melody invites and rewards singing in parts.

TEXT: German carol; stanzas 1, 2 trans. Theodore Baker, 1894, alt.; stanza 3 trans. Harriet Knuth Spaeth, 1985, alt.

ES IST EIN' ROS'
7.6.7.6.6.7.6

MUSIC: *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1609

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

to Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.

rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.

TEXT: African American spiritual; stanzas, John W. Work II, 1940
 MUSIC: African American spiritual; arr. John W. Work III, 1940; harm. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987
 Music Harm. © 1989 Melva Wilson Costen

GO TELL IT
 7.6.7.6 with refrain

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