

**Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2023**

Gathering
God invites us to enter His presence

Prelude

*Silent Night
Flute/Piano duet*

Welcome & Announcements

Preparation for Worship (*Time for Silent Preparation*)

 **Call to Worship** (*Responsively*)

Jim Fox

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy hill.
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming.
It is close at hand.
Come, let us worship God.
—based on Joel 2:1, NIV

 **Invocation**

Jim Fox

Covenant God,
you heard your people yearning for a Savior.
Thank you for sending your Son so long ago.
We now rehearse your promise
that Christ will come again,
that death and suffering will end
and every tear will be wiped away.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.
As you fulfilled Israel's hopes long ago,
so we long for all these promises to be fulfilled. **Amen.**

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

Come, Light Our Hearts

McCracken

Chorus
For You, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.
For You, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.
Truly our hope is in You.
Truly our hope is in You.

Verse 1
O Lord of life, our only hope,
Your radiance shines on all who look
to You in the dark.
Emmanuel come,

come light our hearts.

Chorus

Verse 2

*O joy above all other loves,
in You we find more than enough.
We come as we are;
O heal and restore,
come light our hearts.*

Chorus

Tag

Truly our hope is in You.

Fourth Advent Candle Reading

The Fox Family

Prepare the way of the Lord.
We light this candle in love,
the love that Jesus, our Savior, has for us.
Prepare, then, the way of the Lord.



Hymn 131

Angels, From the Realms of Glory (Verses 1,2)

132

Angels We Have Heard on High (Verses 1,2,3)

Confessing

God invites us to be honest with Him

Call to Confession

Jim Fox

Prepare the way of the Lord! Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Jim Fox

Lord Christ,
we confess our willingness to be loved
but also our reluctance to love.
We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love
but also our refusal to forgive.
We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love
but also our resistance to follow you without question.
In this Advent time, forgive us our failure
to respond as we should.
Come to us anew, and by your grace, assist us to receive you
with joy, as the shepherds;
with gratitude, as Simeon;
with obedience, as Mary;
with love, as you have loved us.
Even so: come, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

Time for Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon *(Responsively)*

Jim Fox

Jesus, the long-expected Savior, was born to set us free.
He releases us from our fears and sins
and helps us find our rest in him.
Jesus delivers us from the way of sin and death.
Yet he remains the desire of people in every nation,
and he will direct us into the ways of his kingdom.
And so, with hopeful hearts, we call to him:
**Come now, long-expected Jesus,
come again to rule in our hearts. Amen.**

Leader: This is the Promise of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God!

Gloria Patri

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
A-men, A-men.*

Offering

Thankful of the gifts God has given us, we offer ourselves to Him

Invitation Remember the words the Lord Jesus himself said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
—from Acts 20:35, NIV

Offering

Offertory O Joy!
Flute/Piano Duet

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men.*

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, you have shown your great love for your Children by using commonplace things for your purpose—water to mark your children, bread and wine to feed and nourish us ordinary people to be disciples, a child in a manger to announce your grace. Take these commonplace things, these gifts of paper and metal and the lives that stand behind them. Bless and use them to proclaim your gracious love, for we offer them in the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God. **Amen.**

Proclaiming
God speaks to us through His Word

Children's Sermon

Peaceable Kingdom

Dan Baker

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Verse 4)

*O come, Desire of nations bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill all the world with heaven's peace.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 11:1-9

11 Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
a Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a Spirit of counsel and strength,
a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
³His delight will be in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
he will not execute justice by what he hears with his ears,
⁴but he will judge the poor righteously
and execute justice for the oppressed of the land.
He will strike the land with a scepter from his mouth,
and he will kill the wicked with a command from his lips.
⁵Righteousness will be a belt around his hips;
faithfulness will be a belt around his waist.
⁶The wolf will dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the goat.
The calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf will be together,
and a child will lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down
together, and the lion will eat straw like cattle.
⁸An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his
hand into a snake's den.
⁹They will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain,
for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the sea is filled with water.

John 1:10-13

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, ¹³ who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

Sermon *“Fill All the World with Heaven’s Peace”*
 Rev. Tim Latham

 **Hymn 135** *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

Responding
We respond to God’s Word

 **Profession of Faith**

In love you came to a stable in Bethlehem
to become one with us.
In love you walked the plains and hills of Galilee and Judea
to teach us how to live.
In love you were nailed on a cross on Calvary
to bear away our sin.
In love you rose from a tomb in Joseph’s garden
to defeat death’s power over us.
In love you ascended beyond the clouds
to be our reigning Lord.
You came to love us so that we need never feel
unloved, deserted, alone, condemned.

Prayers of the People

Commissioning
God sends us out into the world as His witnesses

 **Hymn 136** *The First Noel*

 **Benediction & Blessing**

 **Postlude**

