

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 21, 2025
11:00 AM

As a courtesy to others, please silence your phone.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

RINGING OF THE BELLS

LIFE OF THE CHURCH Rev. Timothy T. Boggess

PRELUDE *O Holy Night* arr. Frank Voltz, pianist

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES Lisa & Ric Saba

***HYMN 121** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ST. LOUIS

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth.

3 How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy and gracious God,
you come to us in ways we do not expect,
and your salvation often takes forms we do not recognize.
Forgive us for resisting the work
you desire to birth in our lives.
By your Spirit, speak to us again—
calming our fears, clarifying our purpose,
and leading us in the way of faithful courage.

(a moment for silent reflection)

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God.

***SONG OF JOY 113** (refrain) *Angels We Have Heard on High* GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

ANTHEM *Sing Now a Song of a Child Who Was Born* arr. Sally Morris
(The Chancel Choir)

Refrain
Sing now a song of a child who was born,
Promise of peace and joy;
Born to a world of questions and fears,
Mary and Joseph's boy.

What is that sound waking our hearts,
Breaking the silent air?
Is it a laugh? Is it a cry?
Is it an answered prayer? (Refrain)

What is that gleam high in the sky,
Piercing the dark of night?
Is it a star? Is it a sign?
Is it the dawning light? (Refrain)

What lies ahead facing this child?
Will he know gain or loss,
Blessings or blows, wonders or woes,
Hope or a heavy cross? (Refrain)

Prayers feel unheard; laughter falls still;
Light's brightest rays grow dim.
Yet we sing on, sharing our song,
Finding new faith in him. (Refrain)

Promise of peace and joy.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

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SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 1:18-25

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON *Three Semesters, and Other Prayers God Ignores* Rev. Boggess
Advent Series: Learning to See in the Dark

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER Lisa Saba

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.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY *What Child is This* arr. Steven Phillips
(Isaac Mingus, cello and Steven Phillips, piano)

***DOXOLOGY** *What Child Is This* GREENSLEEVES

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

A Declaration of Faith (1977)

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** Lisa Saba

We recognize the work of God in Jesus' power and authority.
He did what only God can do.
We also recognize the work of God in Jesus' lowliness.
When he lived as a servant
and went humbly to his death
the greatness that belongs only to God was manifest.
In both his majesty and lowliness
Jesus is the eternal Son of God,
God himself with us.

BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

***HYMN 110** *Love Has Come* BRING A TORCH

Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high. *(continued next page)*

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION** Rev. Boggess

POSTLUDE *Ding Dong, Merrily on High* arr. Steven Phillips

The postlude concludes our worship today. It's the custom of this congregation to sit and enter into this moment with gratitude and celebration.

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