

**THE WORSHIP OF GOD**  
**DECEMBER 6, 2020**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**PRELUDE**

**Fantasia on 'Veni Emmanuel'**

Heathcote Statham  
(1889-1973)

*As the prelude is played, prepare your home, yourself, and your family to enter into this time of worship.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (RESPONSIVELY)

Leader: In the middle of dark times, our Lord cries out:

**People: "Comfort, comfort my people!"**

Leader: When it seems as though we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel,

**People: Our Lord says to us, "Be at peace, for your time of difficulty has ended."**

Leader: Lord, we await the time of comfort and peace!

**People: Lord, we are thankful for your compassion and never-failing love for us. Amen.**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE** (RESPONSIVELY)

The Moran Family

*"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old...*

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins." (Luke 1:68-70, 76-77, NRSV)*

God chooses the most unlikely messengers...

...a desert wild-man dressed in animal skins and eating locusts and wild honey ... a poor shepherd, shunned by a polite society, keeping silent watch in the fields ... or today perhaps a school teacher, a waitress, a plumber, a laborer ... or even a child.

Jesus comes, not just to those of us at Front Street, but to everyone in the world. Jesus not only comes to us in the words of a preacher and in the lyrics of a Christmas carol, but also in the siren of an ambulance, in a letter opened in a prison cell, and in the smile — or cry — of a child.

***[Light the second candle on the Advent wreath.]***

**Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

# 211 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran-som cap-tive  
 2. O come, thou Wis-dom from on high, and or - der all things  
 3. O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 4. O come, thou Root of Jes - se's tree, an en-sign of thy

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone- ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show  
 Si - nai's height in an-cient times once gave the law  
 peo - ple be; be - fore thee ru - lers si - lent fall;

*Refrain*

un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 and cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 all peo - ples on thy mer - cy call.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

### CALL TO CONFESSION

May we help prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts by confessing our sin.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (IN UNISON)**

**Into the dark depths of our fear and anguish, you, O Lord, reach out to us. We need your guidance this day, for we have found it far too easy to stray into selfish pathways. Guide us and gather us, Lord. Teach us again to be people of peace and hope. Help us to cast off the mantle of greed and hatred. Touch our hearts, and bring your bright light of salvation to us, that we might turn again to you. Help us again to hear the voice of one who cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we offer this prayer. Amen.**

**PERSONAL CONFESSION AND MEDITATION (IN SILENCE)**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Leader: God's forgiving love has been poured upon each one of us. Hear the good news! In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

**All: Glory to God. Amen.**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (IN UNISON)**

**Heavenly Father, as we receive your word, may it find a place deep within our hearts, and may it reveal to us truth about you and our relationship with you. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Isaiah 40:1-11**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.  
A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it  
together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."  
A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon  
it; surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.  
Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; [a] lift up your  
voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, [b] lift it up, do not  
fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"  
See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is  
with him, and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.



**CALL TO PRAYER**

Minister: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Minister: Let us pray.

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**GIVING**

**3 WAYS TO GIVE**

		
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**OFFERTORY****Of the Father's Love Begotten**

Laura Sam, soprano

Craig Courtney

(b. 1954)

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!

O ye heights of heaven adore Him; angel hosts, His praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before Him, and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore!

Christ, to Thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be: honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore!

**DOXOLOGY****Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow****LASST UNS ERFREUEN****Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;****Praise God, all creatures here below:****Alleluia! Alleluia!****Praise God, the source of all our gifts!****Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!****Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!****Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!****BENEDICTION**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Sanctuary Flowers:** The **2021** flower calendar is available in the Welcome Center. If you are interested in placing flowers in the Sanctuary in honor or in memory of a loved one, please write your name on the Sunday you wish to put flowers in the church. For more information, please contact Linda Paul at 336-543-5081 (cell) or kpaul5@triad.rr.com (email).

**Advent Devotions:** Front Street's Advent Devotions 2020 is now available. Please pick up a copy in the Welcome Center. We ask that you only take one copy per family. Devotions are posted on Front Street's Facebook page three times a week. 'Like' us to receive notifications. Alternatively, sign up at our website, [www.frontstreetumc.org](http://www.frontstreetumc.org), to receive Advent devotions straight to your inbox. We hope these devotions will be a source of renewal for you this Advent season.

**Offering Envelopes:** Offering envelopes are now available for pick-up outside the church office. Please collect your envelopes by the end of December. Thank you.

**Stock Gifts:** If you give a stock gift to the church, please call the church office and inform Tammy Page, Finance Manager, of your gift. When the church receives a stock gift, the donor name is not always provided. We want to ensure the correct individual is credited with the donation.

**Church Office Hours:** Until January 4, the office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The office will be closed on Fridays.

**Christ Offering:** On **Sunday, December 13**, as has been our tradition, we will receive this year's Christ offering. This offering assures that we not only meet our obligations for the year, but that we testify to the light which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Please mail your offering to the church or send it by any electronic means you prefer. Just indicate "Christ Offering" on your gift.

**Trees of Love:** The Trees of Love are located near the Welcome Center. This season, share Christ with our neighbors by adorning our trees with love:

**Tree of Grace:** Share love with our neighbors in financial distress by making a gift to the Pastor's Discretionary Community Relief Fund. Specifically, this fund helps to pay for electric, gas, and water bills.

**Tree of Hope:** Our Sister's House has women and children residing there over the holidays. Help make Christmas special for them by taking an ornament and returning the item listed on the reverse. Let's bring some hope to our neighbors who need our help the most.

**Tree of Life:** Help feed the hungry in our community by stocking our local food pantry this Christmas. The Salvation Army has specific requests for the following food items:

- any canned goods
- mac and cheese
- cereal
- spaghetti (noodles and sauce)

Take an ornament and return all items (unwrapped) to the trees by **Sunday, December 20**. Note: if you are donating money or gift cards, please return to the church office. Thank you!

**Christmas Eve Services at noon | 5 p.m. | 8 p.m.:** You are invited to join us as we celebrate the birth of our savior this Christmas Eve. As with most events this year, these services will be slightly different than in the past. All services (20-30 mins) will be held

outside (weather permitting) on the grassy area by the playground and will include the reading of scripture and singing of Christmas carols. Our 5 p.m. service is designed especially for children and their families. Votives will be distributed during the 8 p.m. service for the singing of *Silent Night*.

For the health of everyone please:

- Maintain a 6 feet distance between families
- Wear a mask
- Bring your own lawn chair or blanket, if you wish to sit during the service. Of course, standing is also an option. Alternatively, worship with us from your car with the windows rolled down.

## **WORSHIP NOTES**

### **Prelude**

Heathcote Statham was a British organist, conductor, and composer who studied at the Royal College of Music under Sir Walter Parratt (1841-1924). He was organist at Calcutta Cathedral (1913), St Michael's Tenbury (1920), Southampton Parish Church (1928), and Norwich Cathedral (1928-1966). Fantasia on 'Veni Emmanuel' comes from the first book (of six) of Festal Voluntaries published by Novello in 1956. The use of the word "festal" likely means "significant," rather than "triumphant." The composers in the series are mostly of the cathedral organist type, such as Statham, William Harris, Francis Jackson, etc. The familiar melody is contained within flowing lines of music that have an air of drama and mysticism about them. Eventually, these flowing lines take over, and the tune becomes completely obscured. However, after a brief pause, the refrain is stated once more in a churchly manor on the Swell diapason.

### **Offertory**

Craig Courtney is an American composer and musician who earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. His output of sacred music includes over one hundred and sixty choral octavos and eight vocal collections. The text of this Advent hymn dates back all the way to the fourth century, during a time when there was an intense theological controversy as to whether Christ was truly God. The plainsong melody is from an eleventh-century vocal embellishment or trope on the word "Sanctus." This setting sets each of the three stanzas differently: the first is without accompaniment (*a cappella*), the second includes light piano accompaniment, and the third features the melody in canon between voice and piano.