Emmanuel Episcopal Church



The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

We are glad that you are here today — to worship God, renew your spirit, deepen your faith, meet new friends, and find new ways to serve.

Children are very welcome in worship:
in the pews, in the chapel Prayground, or in the parish hall!

If you are a visitor or newcomer, we welcome you! We invite you to sign the guest register or scan the QR code at the back of the bulletin so we can let you know of upcoming services and events.

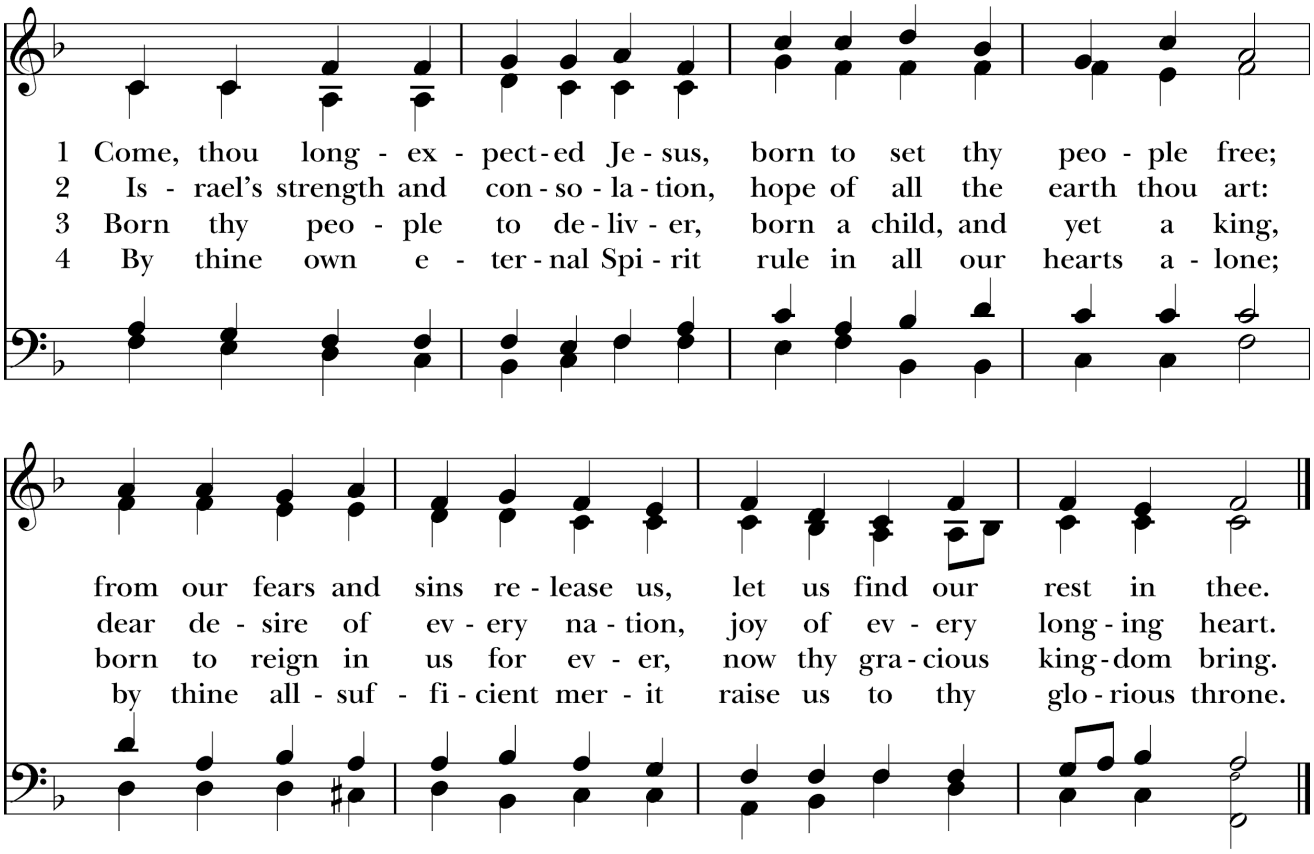
Full-service bulletins are available on our website along with the weekly announcements:
www.emmanuelepiscopal.org. Wi-Fi: Emmanuel Guest - Password: Behold961

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We respectfully recognize that we are on traditional, ancestral lands of the Kaskaskia, Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo), Myaamia, Očhéthi, Šakówin, O-ga-xpa Ma-zho^{n} (O-ga-xpa) and Osage Nations. We acknowledge our complicity in the process of colonization that removed these people from their ancestral lands and affirm our commitment to stand with Indigenous communities today as we all work toward racial justice, equity, and liberation for all people.

Prelude Hymn Prelude on “Stuttgart” Winfred Douglas

Opening Hymn: Come, thou long-expected Jesus Hymnal 66



Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Music: *Stuttgart*, melody from *Psalmodia Sacra, oder Andächtige und Schöne Gesange*, 1715; adapt. and harm. William Henry Havergal (1793-1870), alt.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath: The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reader: We have lit three candles—for hope, for peace, and for joy. Today we light the fourth candle—the candle of love. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, love that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death. We love because God loves us.

All four candles are lit.

Hymn O come, O come, Emmanuel (vs. 5 only), Hymnal 56

O come, thou Key of Da–vid, come, and o-pen wide our heav'n–ly home;
make safe the way that leads– on high, and close the path to mis–er-y.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emman–uel shall come to thee, O Is–rael!

All: Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season. As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained but must be shared. Magnify your love within us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

Reader: Depart in peace and take with you the certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world.

All: We will seek God, not in a long ago stable or ancient manger, but in the people we meet and the depths of our own hearts.

Reader: May the blessing of Christmas make you a blessing to others; may the peace of the season pervade all that you do.

All: We will welcome the challenge of discipleship.
We will offer ourselves as God's ministers.
We will go forth in hope, peace, joy, and love

The Word of God

Priest: In the tender compassion of our God
People: The dawn from on high shall break upon us
Priest: To shine on those who dwell in the shadow of death
People: To guide our feet into the way of peace.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Song of Praise

Celebrant Let us glorify the Holy One as we proclaim.

Celebrant and People

O Light of the world, first born of creation, radiance of glory, light from light begotten.
God self-revealing, holy, bright and blessed, you shine upon us.

Day's light is fleeting, your light is eternal and we look to you, our light within the shadow.
We sing to you O Creator, Christ and Spirit, you shine before us.

Light of our world, O Jesus Christ we bless you; giver of life and Child of God we praise you. Here with us the universe proclaims your glory, as you shine among us. Amen.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The children are led out to Children's Chapel.

The Lessons

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." (7:10-16)

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 **Qui regis Israel** BCP, 702

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.

3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

4 O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

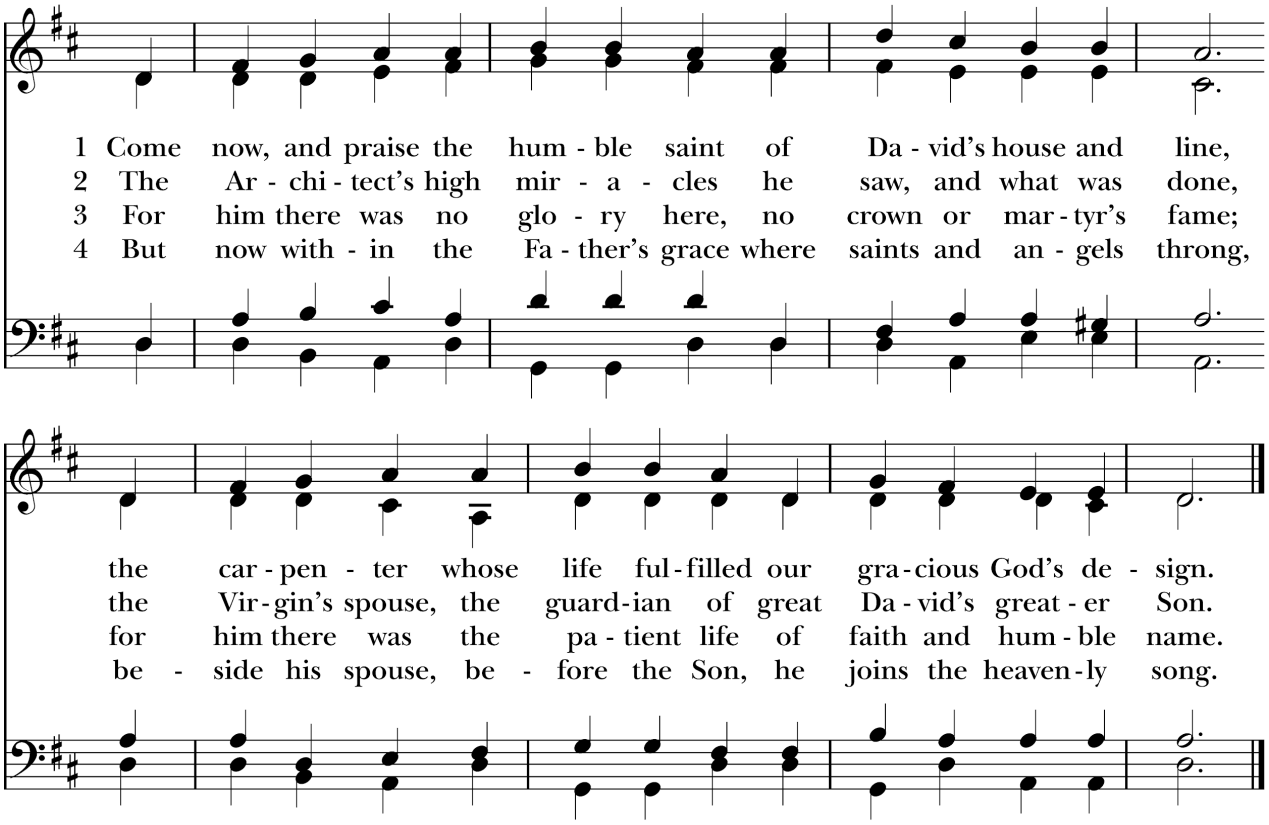
18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

A reading from the letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:1-7)

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: Thanks be to God

Sequence Hymn Come now, and praise the humble saint Hymnal 260
Before the Gospel: vs. 1-3 | After the Gospel: vs. 4



Words: George W. Williams (b. 1922). Copyright © 1979 by The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.) All Rights Reserved. Used by permission. Music: *Tallis' Ordinal*, Thomas Tallis (1505?-1585).

Deacon/Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss 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 conceive and bear 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 borne a son; and he named him Jesus. (1:18-25)

Deacon/ Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.
People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

A meditative moment of silence is kept after the sermon to allow time for the Holy Spirit to carry the Word deep into our hearts.

Advent Affirmation, Form B

Priest/Deacon In this season of waiting and wonder, we affirm our faith in the God who comes— Creator, Christ, and Spirit—whose light is born anew in every heart and throughout all creation.

We believe in God, the Weaver of all creation, who spun galaxies from starlight and shaped the earth from clay; whose breath gives life to every living thing, and whose promise is planted deep within the waiting world.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, Light kindled in the darkness, who came as a child of heaven and earth, revealing the face of God in the heart of humanity. He walked among us as grace upon grace, embracing our joys and our sorrows, and in love stronger than death he opened the way of life everlasting.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, wild as wind, gentle as breath, the Fire who dances through creation, awakening hearts, stirring dreams, and drawing all things into the circle of God's love.

We believe in the Holy Trinity—Source, Word, and Breath of Life, God beyond us, beside us, and within us— whose light shines in every shadow and whose coming we await with hope and wonder.

Until Christ is born anew in every heart, we journey on in faith, watching, waiting, and welcoming Love into the world once more. Amen.

The Prayers of the People *The people may be seated.*

Leader: May we in obedient faith assemble in prayer to await the Lord's coming. May our souls proclaim God's greatness as we pray …
People: **Come, O Lord, and save us.**

Leader: For the church throughout the world, that we may be set apart for the Gospel of God:

- For Sean our Presiding Bishop, for Deon our Bishop, for Valori, Susanna, Jerre, Mandi, Paul, and Warren our clergy, and for all the holy People of God;

- In the Diocesan Cycle, we pray for the people and ministry of Trinity Episcopal Church in St. James; we pray for our Connections partner the Faith Christian Church of India;
- In the Anglican Communion, we pray for Sarah the Archbishop-designate of Canterbury and for The Anglican Church of Burundi;
- In our companion Diocese of Puerto Rico, we pray for Rafael their Bishop and for Mision San Bartolome, Apostol in Lares;
- In our parish family, we pray in thanksgiving for Christian formation for children, youth, and adults and for our outreach ministry of Churches Together for Justice;
- For those in our parish family celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week;

Let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

Leader: For the leaders of the nations and all in authority, that they may have the wisdom and courage to bring an end to violence, oppression, and injustice in the world, praying especially for the people of Ukraine, Sudan, and Gaza; let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

Leader: For all peoples of every race, nation, and disposition; may the wars on every continent cease, may refugees, immigrants, and survivors find a new welcoming home and the spirit to begin again; let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

Leader: For the sick and the suffering; for the hungry and the oppressed; for the homeless, the lonely and those in prison; let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

Leader: For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need; in our parish family, we pray for Kevin, Ian, and for those we name either silently or aloud [pause]; we pray for all who struggle with addiction, that God may strengthen them in their recovery; we pray for those who endeavor in public service and those serving in the armed forces; let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

Leader: For the dying and the dead and for those who grieve; let us pray …

People: Come, O Lord, and save us.

The Celebrant may add a Concluding Collect

The Confession: Form B

Deacon/Priest: Let us confess our sins against God and one another. Source of all being..

People: We confess that we have chased busyness and neglected your gift of Sabbath. We have sought quick justice without deep mercy, and reconciliation without costly love. Forgive us, refresh us, and renew us by your Spirit, that we may walk again in the way of Christ.

Priest: Be assured that the Almighty God has granted you forgiveness of all your sins and has gifted you the companionship of the Holy Spirit. Your sins are forgiven. Be at peace.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

The Peace

La paz de Cristo sea siempre con ustedes. ***Y con tu espiritu****.*
Christu shanti meetho ellapudu undunnugaka. ***Neetho kooda.***
The peace of Christ be always with you. **And also with you.**

Birthday and Anniversary Blessings

Those with birthdays or anniversaries are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence

Offertory Anthem **Magnificat (Evening Service in C Major, op. 115) C. V. Stanford**
Emmanuel Choir

My soul doth magnify the Lord:
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded:
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth:
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me:
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him:
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed forever.
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. Amen.

The Doxology

The offerings are brought forward as the congregation sings the Doxology to the tune of Old Hundredth

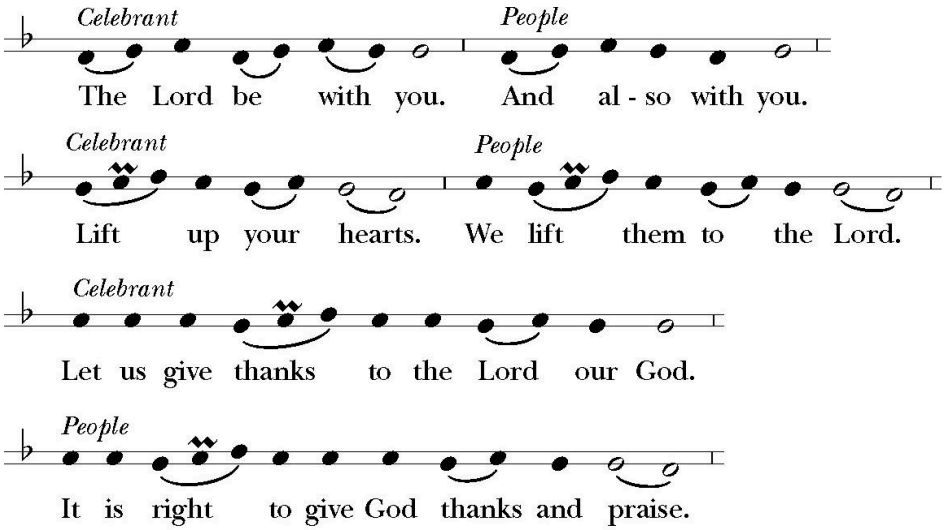
Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures high and low
Praise God in Jesus fully known; Creator, Word, and Spirit One. Amen.

Gathering at Christ's Table: Eucharistic Prayer A BCP p. 365

At the 8:00 service

Celebrant	God be with you.
People	**And also with you**
Celebrant	Lift up your hearts
People	**We lift them to the Lord**
Celebrant	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People	**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

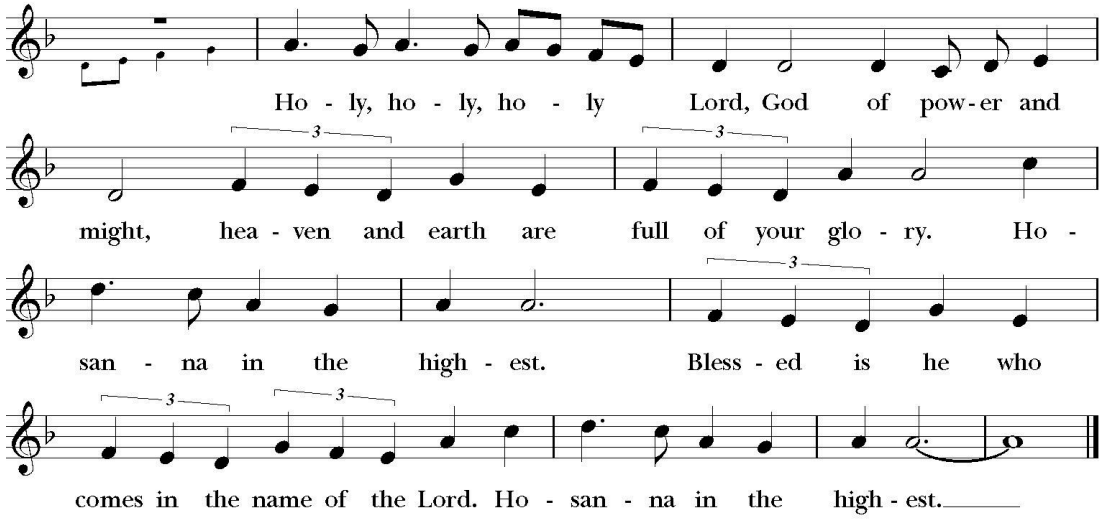
At the 9:30 service *S-120*



It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People **Sanctus, S-129**



Music: Robert Powell (b. 1932)

The people may sit, stand, or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues

Blessed are you, Holy One, for in Jesus Christ, your Word took flesh and made a home among us. In him, your hope was kindled, your peace whispered into being, your love poured out without measure, and your joy made complete. Jesus came as one of us, to share our light and our shadow, our laughter and our tears. In his life, death, and rising, you revealed that nothing—neither darkness nor light—can separate us from your redeeming love.

On the night before he gave himself to us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his friends, saying, "Take, eat: this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

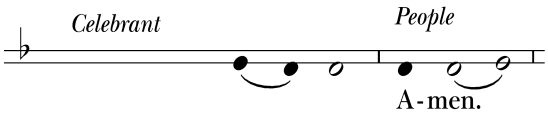
Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

+ Come, O Spirit of Promise, and rest upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the Body and Blood of Christ; nourishment for our waiting, and strength for our journey. + Come, dwell within us, that we who share this holy meal may bear the light of hope, breathe the peace of Christ, embody love's compassion, and rejoice in all that gives life.

As we await the fullness of your reign, teach us to live as children of your Advent; awake and watchful, grateful and expectant, trusting in your promise that both night and day belong to you.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, now and for ever. S 142



The Lord's Prayer, BCP p. 364 *The people may stand in body or spirit.*

Celebrant: And now as our Savior Christ has taught us we are bold to say in the language of our choice:

Our Father, who are 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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Padre nuestro, que estas en el cielo
santificado sea tu Nombre,
venga tu reino,
hágase tu voluntad,
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
Perdona nuestras ofensas,
como también nosotros perdonamos
a los que nos ofenden.
No nos dejes caer en tentación
y líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino,
tuyo es el poder, y tuya es la gloria,
ahora y por siempre. Amén.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People ***Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.***

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

This is God's table, where all are welcome to receive communion. So come to this table, you who have much faith and you who would like to have more; you who have been here often and you who have not been for a while or ever before; you who have tried to follow Jesus, and you who have failed. Come. It is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

~ Adapted from the Iona Community invitation

About receiving Communion at Emmanuel:

The fullness of this sacrament is received by taking one or both kinds (bread and wine).

The ushers will guide you to Communion.

Bread: *All of our communion bread is gluten-free, nut-free, vegan, and dairy-free.The communion bread will be offered into your hands, not your mouth.*

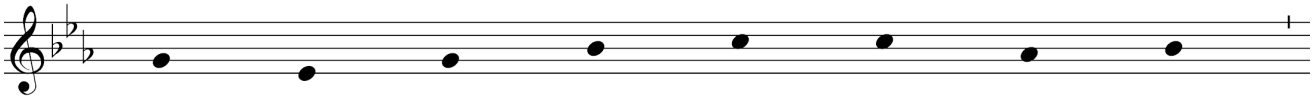
Wine: *You may choose intinction (clergy will dip the Communion bread into wine). Please do not reach into the cup of wine. OR you may choose to drink from the common cup offered by the Eucharistic Minister.*

Blessing: *If you prefer not to receive the bread or wine, cross your arms over your chest to receive a Blessing.*

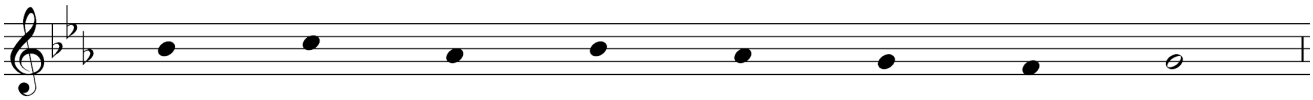


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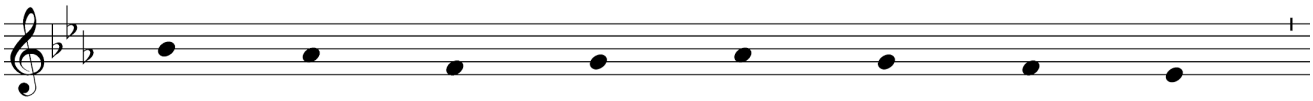
Creator of the stars of night Hymnal 60



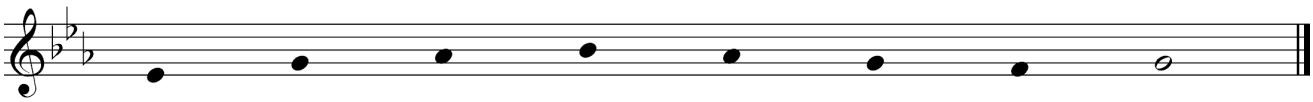
1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night,
2 In sor - row that the an - cient curse
3 When this old world drew on toward night,
4 At your great Name, O Je - sus, now
5 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray,
* 6 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son,



1 your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,
2 should doom to death a u - ni - verse,
3 you came; but not in splen - dor bright,
4 all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
5 re - deem us for e - ter - nal day;
6 and God the Spi - rit, Three in One,



1 O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all,
2 you came, O Sa - vior, to set free
3 not as a mon - arch, but the child
4 all things on earth with one ac - cord,
5 de - fend us while we dwell be - low
6 praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



1 we pray you hear us when we call.
2 your own in glo - rious li - ber - ty.
3 of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.
4 like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.
5 from all as - saults of our dread foe.
6 from age to age e - ter - nal - ly.

Words: Latin, 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*, alt. Copyright © The Church Pension Fund. Music: *Conditor alme siderum*, plainsong, Mode 4; acc. Bruce Neswick (b. 1956).

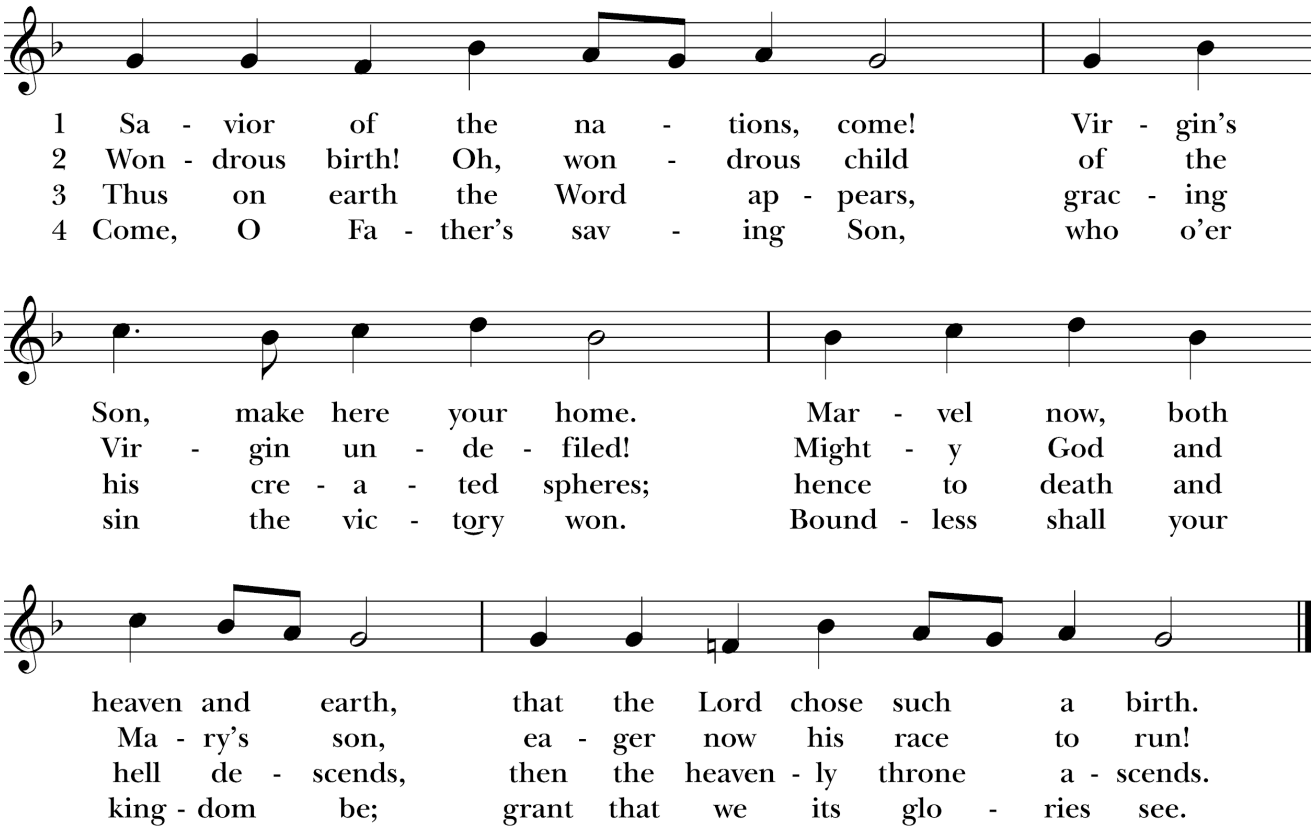
The Commendation of the Eucharistic Visitors

Celebrant: Let us pray.

People*: *God of promise, we thank you for feeding us with the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ, and for gathering us into the mystery of your Advent: a time of waiting, watching, and expectation. Send us now into the world trusting in your faithful presence in all things at all times; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

The Blessing

Closing Hymn: Hark! the glad sound! the Savior comes Hymnal 72



Words: Martin Luther (1483-1546) after Ambrose of Milan (340-397); tr. William M. Reynolds (1812-1876) and James Waring McCrady (b. 1938). Sts. 3-4 Copyright © 1982, James Warring McCrady. Music: *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, melody from *Erfurt Enchiridia*, 1524; harm. Melchior Vulpius (1560?-1616).

The Dismissal

Deacon: Alleluia, alleluia! Our worship has ended. Now our service in the world begins. Go into the world to love as God loves. Go in peace. Go in hope. Go in love.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude: Fanfare Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens

The flowers are given to the glory of God in thanksgiving of Emmanuel Parish who have been our church family for 44 years. From Katherine and Bob Ziegler

A LOOK AT THE WEEK AHEAD AT EMMANUEL - from our online Calendar

22 DEC, MON	1 – 2pm	Knitting group Tree Top Room
24 DEC, WED	All day	Christmas Eve
	All day	No Fellowship Dinner or Choir
	3 – 4pm	Christmas Eve - Festival Eucharist
	5 – 6pm	Christmas Eve - Festival Eucharist
	6:30 – 7pm	Children's Choir Rehearsal
	10 – 11pm	Christmas Eve - Festival Eucharist w/ Choir and Brass
25 DEC, THU	All day	Christmas Day
	10 – 11am	Holy Eucharist Rite II
26 DEC, FRI	All day	Office Closed - Christmas Break (Day 1/8)
	6 – 6:30pm	BLM Vigil
27 DEC, SAT	All day	Office Closed - Christmas Break (Day 2/8)
	12:45 – 1pm	New Event
	2 – 4pm	Hotaling Party
28 DEC, SUN	All day	Office Closed - Christmas Break (Day 3/8)
	All day	Christmas 1: Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist
	All day	No Formation Today for Adults or Kids
	9:30 – 10:30am	Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist

The Prayers of the People are written by Deacon Jerre Birdsong.
The Opening Acclamation, Confession, Advent Affirmation, and Eucharistic Prayer are written by Bp. Deon K. Johnson

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OUR DIVINE PURPOSE STATEMENT

WE BELIEVE that we are called to live in service to others following the example of Jesus Christ, our Savior, helping to heal a broken world and preserve God's creation. We believe God calls us to accept and celebrate everyone - LGBTQIA2S+, race/ethnicity, status, age, or ability - no exceptions.

WE WORSHIP in community, in-person and online. Grounded in the Book of Common Prayer, our prayer and music embraces diversity of spiritual life. All are invited to receive Holy Eucharist at God's table and to participate in worship. Children are a valued presence and contribute to worship.

WE SERVE all of God's people in partnership with our local, national, and international neighbors, learning from them and working with them toward true justice and equitable access to God's abundance.



EMMANUEL
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Webster Groves, MO

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson, Bishop of Missouri
The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer, Rector
The Rev. Susanna Clive, Associate Priest
The Rev. Jerre Birdsong, Deacon
The Rev. Dr. Warren E. Crews, Priest Affiliate
The Rev. Paul A. Metzler, Priest Affiliate
The Rev. Mandi Rice, Priest Affiliate

NINE SOUTH BOMPART, WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI 63119, TELEPHONE 314-961-2393