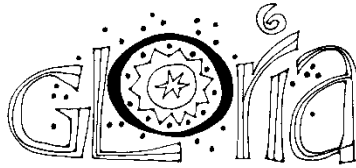


Faith United Methodist Church

December 20, 2020



Celebration of Hope

Centering

Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Romans 13:11-12

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Beloved of Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown it's true meaning.

Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem the waiting people.

Let us rejoice, in our hymns and carols, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled.

Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will bring all peoples and all things into the glory of God's eternal kingdom.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

But first, let us pray for the world that God loves so, for those who have not heard the good news of God, or who do not believe it; for those who walk in darkness and shadow of death; and for the Church in this place and everywhere, that it may be freed from all evil and fear, and may in pure joy lift up the light of those who love God.

These prayers and praise let us humbly offer to God, in the words that Christ himself taught us.

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 our trespasses and we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 40:1-8

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak 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.

³A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make
straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it
together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

⁶A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are
grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows
upon it; surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for
ever.

Prepare the Way of the Lord

Prepare the way of the Lord.

*Prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people will see
the salvation of our God.*

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 23:5-6

⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David
a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall
execute justice and righteousness in the land.

⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is
the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,

*his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
his name is called Emmanuel.*

Scripture Reading

Zechariah 9:9-10

- ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- ¹⁰ He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

*Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus
Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Scripture Reading

Haggai 2:6-9

- ⁶For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake

the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land;
⁷and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall
come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the Lord of hosts.
⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts.
⁹The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says
the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of
hosts.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates
Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here!
Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Scripture Reading Isaiah 35:1-6

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and
blossom; like the crocus

²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of
Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They
shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is
your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He
will come and save you.'

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf
unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing
for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the
desert;

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O O Israel.*

*O Come, Desire of nations bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
from dust thou brought us forth to life;
deliver us from earthly strife.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'

²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.

³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

³³He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'

³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power

of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her. cording to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

All Earth Is Waiting

*All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
And the open furrows, the sowing of the Lord.
All the world, bound and struggling,
seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice
and searches for the truth.*

*Thus says the prophet
to those of Israel,
"A virgin mother
will bear Emmanuel,"
for his name
is "God with us,"
our brother shall be,
with him hope will blossom
once more within our hearts.*

Prayer of Hope

Holy God, as we approach the darkest night of the year, fill us with your life, the life that was the light of all people. May your light shine in the darkest places in our lives so that we may witness to others. We know that in this time ,there are so many things that we want to do but cannot to show our love for our community. May us bear this burden to show the depth of love that you have for all people. Remind us that all who received him, who believe in Christ's name, have not only the power to become children of God, but the ability bear all things in love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the light of the World and giver of all hope.

Amen.

Special Music

Who Would Imagine a King

Benediction

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good,
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honor everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you
always. **Amen.**

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