

LARGE PRINT

# Worship Celebration

## Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023 + 10 AM

### **We Gather as God's Children**

#### **Words of Welcome**

**Prelude**

*Jesus Christ, the Son of God*

J. S. Bach

#### **+ Call to Worship**

We have come to God's house

Because we know we are invited.

***We are called to invite others to the kin-dom.***

We have come to God's house

Because God has planned and prepared for us.

***We are called to play and prepare as part of the kin-dom.***

We have come to God's house

Where we know we are welcome.

***We are called to welcome all of God's children.***

Stay awhile to worship the Holy One,

Because God longs to be with us,

***We are called to worship God!***

**+ Hymn**

*The Boy-Child of Mary*

UMH 241

#### **Lighting of the Advent Candles**

**Choral Introduction**

*Preparing Our Hearts*

Ruth Elaine Schram

Today, we light all four candles,

Remembering that God has invited us all.

***We accepted God's invitation***

***As we planned and prepared through the season of Advent.***

Now we welcome the coming of Christ into the world  
And celebrate together that God walks among us.

***But Jesus came only to stay awhile,  
And then we were joined by the Holy Spirit.***

Through the Spirit, may we remember  
That in God's Kin-dom, there are no strangers.

***May we share in God's generosity,  
And invite all people to share in God's love.***

**Choral Response**

*Preparing Our Hearts*

Ruth Elaine Schram

## **We Grow in God's Word**

Leader: With disciples of every time and place,  
let us listen for the word of God among us.

**People: *Our ears and hearts are open.***

## **Come As You Are Pageant**

You are invited to participate in the story! Listen for your cue to join in the amazing story of Christmas. In the midst of the story, we will sing these hymns:

<i>Away in a Manger</i> (v. 1)	UMH 217
<i>The Friendly Beasts</i> (vv. 1-3)	UMH 227
<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i> (v. 1 and refrain)	UMH 238
<i>The First Noel</i> (v. 1 and refrain)	UMH 245
<i>O Come All Ye Faithful</i> (v. 1 and refrain)	UMH 234
<i>We Three Kings</i> , (vv. 1 & 5 and refrain)	UMH 254
<i>Joy to the World</i> (vv. 1-4)	UMH 246

## **Lesson — Luke 2.26-40 (NRSVUE)**

<sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup> “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word,  
<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup> And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup> so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

The word of God for the people of God.

***Thanks be to God.***

**Message:** *An Invitation to Welcome Christ*

**Prayers of the People and The Lord’s Prayer**

**Opportunities for Ministry and**

**Invitation to Give Our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory Special Music**

*The First Noel*

Hope Antczak, Piano

## **Doxology**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v.1 and refrain)    UMH 211

***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 Israel.***

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## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

***We are grateful for the story of Christmas,  
but more so that we are a part  
of your continuing story.  
May these gifts reflect the great hope  
we have found in Emmanuel - God with us.  
May we live in this hope,  
worship in this love,  
serve in this joy,  
and invite others to find the peace in Christ,  
which we have found this day. Amen.***

## **We Go Out to Serve in God's Name**

**+ Hymn**

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

UMH 240

**+ Benediction**

**Postlude**

*A la venue de Noel*

Michel Corrett

***Our service of worship is ended.  
Our worship through service now begins.***