

**Design of Four Advent Services**  
**With**  
**Bulletin Articles**

Les Galicinski,

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## 1.0 Introduction and Design Philosophy

### 1.1 Church Background:

The purpose of the project described in this paper is to design a series of four Advent services that would observe Advent for the first time at Willow Creek Baptist church. The membership of the church consists of about 160 families. The demographics are about 40 percent young married couples with young children with about 30 % middle age baby boomers and 30 % over 55 years old. Almost all are white of European descent. About 40 percent of the congregation has been attending less than three years. Children's Sunday school attendance is about 200 and the church has installed two portable classroom units to handle the large Sunday school. The church is affiliated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. As a rule, these churches do not observe the church year, except for special days such as Christmas, Easter and Good Friday. The churches' observance of time tends to center around themes that the Pastors desire to address in preaching. *Lectio Continua* tends to be the order of the day with thematic emphasis based large blocks of scripture (i.e. an eight week sermon series on the book of Nehemiah). Specifically, the summer months focus on the church's extensive ministry to Children by running a day camp that attracts between four and five hundred children. October typically includes a Missions week that focuses attention on church supported missionaries and missions.

The worship style of the church is in a state of transition. The Sunday morning worship has been very much in the conservative evangelical tradition with the sermon being the main focus with hymns, opening prayer, special music, children's prayer time and offertory being a preamble to the main event which is the sermon. After the sermon, a closing hymn is sung followed by a closing pastoral prayer. An alter call may be made during the singing of the closing hymn, and if people come forward, deacons or their wives are called forward to pray with the respondents. Modern choruses have been used to supplement the hymns (from a hymn book), and these are usually printed in the bulletin. There is no overhead projection system, although a borrowed computer projector is used occasionally. During most of its history, the church used several "Song Leaders"

to announce and lead the congregational singing. The sole congregational role was to stand and sing. Almost no participation in liturgy or responsive readings or prayer from the congregation existed. The only response encouraged was an altar call after the sermon. One on one prayer would follow.

Communion is held once a month, and usually added after the sermon. People remain in their seats and are served. The pastor emphasizes that the elements are symbols of Christ's body and blood shed for us. People are encouraged to examine themselves before they partake and portions of 1 Cor. 11 are frequently read. It is emphasized that communion is for believers only. Children are allowed to partake at their parent's discretion.

Within the last two years, the use of worship teams in the church has developed along with the use of "song leaders". There are now two individual song leaders and two worship teams that rotate. One of the worship team leaders tends to incorporate responsive readings, scripture passages and prayers into a "worship package" which tends to be a more significant block or time. The migration to worship teams has not been without controversy. Some resist the move to more contemporary worship and prefer only the traditional hymns.

### ***1.2 Design of Advent Services:***

The church is definitely non liturgical. Many of the terms used in worship writings, such as *Invocation*, *Collect*, *Confession* and *Benediction* have little or no meaning to pastors in this denomination. In this context the philosophy design of Advent services must take the tremendous amount of material available which is from liturgical churches and blend it with the worship style and culture of evangelical worship.

Because many of the worship services are designed thematically, the starting point was to identify the unique and continuing themes to be highlighted in each Advent service. In addition, the Advent wreath is something that many members have been exposed to or heard about in other churches. The wreath and candle lighting as well as the hymn and refrain "*O Come O Come Emmanuel*" would be used to provide the thread of continuity and identify the season.

To prepare the congregation for this new observance of Advent, it was decided to write a series of five small articles that would appear in the church bulletin beginning the Sunday prior to the first in Advent. Our church has no formal newsletter and this is the main mode of communication with the people. Because of its layout (see Appendix), it is especially suited to such an article on its front page. Each article is contained in this paper and outlines the thematic and structural thrust of each service.

A second point of commonality was to choose scripture texts, from the prophets, the gospels, the psalms and epistles that would be a part of each service in some way. Because, the church does not routinely have formal scripture lessons (readings), it would be a shock to the system to have four in each service. Thus, these readings are incorporated into the calls to worship, candle lighting, songs and benedictions. Rather than choosing lectionary texts as identified by the cycle year (A,B,C) and being faithful to the current year (B), it was decided to look at all the available texts for each service from all three years and choose those that seemed to fit into the theme and flow of the service with respect to music, songs, etc. Wherever possible, year B, scriptures were given preference.

Another tension was to try to refrain from singing Christmas Carols during the first two weeks of Advent and rather use songs that have an eschatological and anticipatory message.

The result is something that I am quite pleased with. In sharing these ideas with our senior pastor, he has agreed to use this material as the basis for our Advent services this year. We will also be incorporating our adult and senior choirs (normally used on an exception basis) into the third and fourth Sunday's of Advent.

The depth of the research and work in this project does not seem adequately evident in a cursory examination of the result. The bibliography is perhaps a better representation of the tremendous amount of research that this project entailed.

## 2.0 Church Bulletin Articles

### ***2.0 Bulletin Article: Week Prior to First Sunday in Advent***

This year, our church will be observing the four Sundays before Christmas as the season of Advent starting with next Sunday. The word “Advent” comes from the Latin “*Adventus*” which means “coming or grand entrance”. The early church observed this time as a time of spiritual preparation for the “coming” of our Lord. The original festival observed was Epiphany (January 6), the celebration of Jesus’ baptism and the start of his ministry. It was customary for new converts to be baptized on that date. The period preceding that was set aside as a time of somber preparation and introspection as the baptismal candidates were instructed in the faith. When the date for observing the birth of Jesus was set, the four Sundays before Christmas took on this special significance of preparation. Many churches across a wide variety of denominations have found that the meaning of Christmas is greatly enhanced by observing this special time of preparation.

In the next four weeks, our church will be making a spiritual journey – a pilgrimage into the birth of Christ. This journey will be ordered by our worship which will highlight the different aspects of us drawing closer to His birth. During this time we will be moving along a narrative and thematic, historical and theological road. To celebrate this time, we will submit to a wide range of themes and emotions: from hope to joy, from darkness to light, from yearning for deliverance to the very manifestation of God’s coming in judgment and in life giving union with humanity. We will focus on the need for repentance and purity as we make this journey.

Advent has a three fold meaning in the life of the church:

1. The coming of the Messiah in the flesh in the person of Jesus. (*He came.*)
2. The birth of Jesus not only in the flesh, but in our hearts. (*He still comes today.*)
3. The coming our Lord at the end of history. (*He will come again.*)

For these reasons, the themes in Advent are highly forward-looking and anticipatory. It is a unique time of the year where we are able to focus on what it means to be a Christian, here and now.

One aspect of our Advent services will be the Advent wreath. This is an evergreen wreath with four candles arranged in a circle and a larger white candle in the centre. Each week one of the candles will be lit during the service by one of our church families. On Christmas eve, the white, Christ Candle is lit. Along with the lighting, each family will read portions of scripture and offer prayers announcing the coming of our Lord. This practice originated in homes in Northern Europe as a way of keeping the family spiritually focussed on Christ in the weeks before Christmas. It is now observed in many churches and denominations worldwide.

Another common aspect will be the singing of the refrain “*O Come O Come Emmanuel*”. This haunting petition, written in a minor key, captures beautifully the longing, hope and expectation of deliverance that characterizes Advent. Our music and scripture readings will focus on the themes for each Sunday. Our adult and children’s choirs will also participate as we together journey to Bethlehem. Watch your bulletin each week for details of the themes and content of each of our Advent services. It is our prayer that God will richly reward us all as we together prepare for his coming in the weeks ahead.

### **2.1 Bulletin Article: *First Sunday in Advent***

The Advent season begins the church year. We enter into Advent by putting ourselves into the shoes of Godly people in the times just before Christ. The prophets had proclaimed the coming of a Messiah to redeem Israel out of bondage. Gentiles who had an affinity for the underlying truth of belief in the one God were estranged from that God and His people. The times were characterized by moral confusion, decay and philosophical pluralism. Rome ruled, and although there was peace, she robbed people of their freedom and substituted political intrigue. The Hebrew God seemed to be strangely silent, yet His people were waiting, longing and looking for the time of their redemption. The lament “*O Come O Come Emmanuel*” captures mood of this longing. As we sing “*Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel*” we enter into their anticipation that God will act. Finally, through John the Baptist, a voice in the wilderness is heard, proclaiming the coming of the Lord.

The first Sunday in Advent recalls that longing for deliverance and relief from the vanity of everyday life. It recalls a yearning for righteousness and justice that were denied by society. It recalls a passion for the holiness and righteousness of God in a lost world. In today's world, this theme is perfectly appropriate. People still despair of the uselessness of life. People are in a moral vacuum. They are searching for something, they know not what. Disasters and calamities abound and hopelessness is in the wind. The church has an answer in these times. We proclaim that since the beginning "no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God but You" (Isaiah 64: 4). God exists and He has a plan to turn mourning into dancing, hopelessness into joy. The prophets of old spoke of this plan. They testified to the one who is to come. The lighting of the Prophecy candle in our Advent wreath recalls the role of the prophets and celebrates the promise that they proclaimed. There would come a time when righteousness would be restored and peace would come on the earth. The LORD will then be our righteousness. (Jer. 33:14-16).

As we recall that waiting for the first coming of Christ, we are mindful that we are still waiting today. Christ will come again. Today's Gospel reading reminds us that no one know the day or the hour that He will return. We are exhorted to "Watch!". Watchfulness is an important part of the Christian walk. We know that we are not immune from the influences of the world, nor of the power of the evil one. How then should we live? We are exhorted to lift up our souls (Psalm 25) to the one true God. We are told that we need to keep the demands of His covenant. His covenant in Christ is that all who call upon the His name will be saved. We are exhorted to purify ourselves and prepare for his coming. We are told that we do not lack any spiritual gift and that He will through His Holy Spirit sustain us until the end, that day of His appearing when we will all know Him, face to face. (1 Cor. 1:3-9). He came once, He will come again, He comes still. Let us together watch and wait.

## ***2.2 Bulletin Article: Second Sunday in Advent***

The second Sunday in Advent continues the theme of longing and expectation, yet adds the urgency of coming judgement. The second candle on our Advent wreath is the Bethlehem candle. It symbolizes the *proclamation*

of God's coming which was proclaimed by the Angels to Mary, Joseph through a dream, and to the shepherds. Bethlehem was the chosen place where the Holy God of this universe would enter the world as a human baby. The candle also symbolizes the proclamations of John the Baptist who prepared the way of the Lord. Isaiah's famous exhortation to "make strait in the wilderness a highway for our God" reminds us of how intertwined the ministry of John was with that of Jesus. It may seem strange to some to be focusing on John the Baptist's call for repentance and coming judgement in this pre Christmas season. We hear all around us in shopping center and on the airwaves, themes of Christmas cheer, joy and peace. Yet the church is called to proclaim that God's joy, peace and Kingdom are *not* universally promised to all. Those who reject Christ can expect judgement, condemnation and fire. John preached "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is neigh!" This is also the church's message. The ways of the world lead to sin, depravity, isolation from God and death. But the answer is Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God. We can use this time, when society focuses on the Christ child to remind our neighbors of who Christ is, that He will come again, and that His second coming will not be like his first. Our music this morning reflects this. "Awake O Israel, put off Thy Slumber" and "Blow the Trumpet in Zion, Sound the Alarm" are songs that capture the flavour of John's call for repentance. We are exhorted again to Watch, to Wait and to point to the Holy One. "What do you think of Christ?" is an appropriate question for this time of year. Let us be bold and ask it as we prepare for his coming, now and at the end of the age.

### **2.3 Bulletin Article: Third Sunday in Advent**

In this third Sunday of Advent, our theme turns amidst expectation, waiting, and preparation to *joy*. This Sunday is sometimes called *Gaudete* Sunday (French for joy). The full significance of Jesus' incarnation dawns as we recognize that the God who created this universe, loved us so much that He was willing to put off his almighty, infinite power, and descend deep into the depths of His creation, to assume human flesh and become one of us. The prophet Zephaniah foresaw this as he exclaimed "The LORD, the King of Israel is with You; never again will you fear any harm." The third candle on our Advent wreath is called the Shepherd's candle. It symbolizes the joy with which the shepherds welcomed the good news of Jesus birth. It's rose

colour, stands out against the somber purple of the other candles as a symbol of joy in a world of darkness. This joy is ours because of the salvation that is available through Christ. As Isaiah proclaims: “The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation”. In this season, Christians have a cause for joy that transcends gift-buying and Christmas parties. Our joy is that we are part of His everlasting Kingdom, sons and heirs of the Most High God. Everlasting life is ours, and we shall never perish. All of this because, on a wintry night, on one of the shortest days of the year, God Became flesh and entered the human condition. Emmanuel, our God, is with us. Let us spread the Joy that we share. Let us be generous to those around us who are less blessed than we.

#### ***2.4 Bulletin Article: Fourth Sunday in Advent***

The fourth Sunday in Advent is the final Sunday before Christmas. The expectation of waiting builds as we near the time of Christ’s birth. Today we put ourselves in the shoes of Mary and Joseph and try to imagine how they must have felt in the days before his birth. We recall the angel’s visitation to Mary announcing the birth of Jesus. How she must have felt hearing this awesome news! Her response of simple submission is a model for us all. And what about Joseph? How he must have wrestled with his feelings for Mary and the realities of his situation. We marvel at God’s provision of a dream to meet his need and at his humble faith.

Our Advent candle this week is called the Angel’s candle. It symbolizes the purity of the incarnation of Christ in human form. This purity is available to us through our Lord. He only can purify us and prepare our hearts to receive His coming afresh into our hearts and minds. This Sunday, as we countdown the days to Christmas, let us together ask the Holy Spirit to renew us in a special way. May the faithful example of Mary and Joseph help us to be holy in thought, word and deed as we make our way to the manger of His birth. Let us prepare room in our hearts for Him. Even so Lord Jesus, Come!

## 3.0 Advent Services Summaries

### 3.1 First Sunday in Advent

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Themes:       longing expectation of deliverance  
                   yearning for righteousness  
                   no one knows the day or the hour – so WATCH  
                   passion for justice & holiness

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Piano Prelude: The King Shall Come when Morning Dawns

Call to Worship: Is 64: verse 4 & litany

Hymn: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus # 167

Lighting of Advent Wreath (Family lights Candle #1)	1. Reading Jer: 33 14-16 2. Lighting text – prophesy candle - expectation 3. Prayer of Invocation – preparation
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Refrain: O Come O Come Emmanuel – verse 1 and refrain

Prayer of Confession:

Words of Assurance: Believe the gospel, in Christ we are forgiven

Psalm 25: 1-10 Responsive Reading

Songs -        Unto Thee O Lord Do I lift up my Soul  
                   Refiner's Fire  
                   Spirit of the Living God Fall Afresh on Me

Pastoral Prayer: Pastor

Offering Call & Offeratory

Gospel Reading: Mark 13: 24 – 37 “Watch!”

Hymn: The King is Coming # 313

Sermon: “Watchfulness and Expectation”

Hymn: Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates # 239

Benediction – based on 1 Cor. 1: 3-9

### 3.2 *Second Sunday in Advent*

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Themes: judgement – John the Baptist’s call for repentance  
 promise – “righteousness will reign on earth”  
 hope for His return  
 He came, He comes still, He will come again

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Piano Prelude: Comfort, Comfort now My People

Call to Worship: Responsive Reading : Psalm 85: 7-13

Hymn: Come, Thou Almighty King # 341

Lighting of Advent Wreath (Family lights Candle #1)

1. Reading Is 40: 1-5
2. Lighting text – Bethlehem candle  
- proclamation
3. Prayer of Invocation – message of John the B.

Refrain: O Come O Come Emmanuel – verses 1 & 2 and refrain

Prayer of Confession: Worship Works

Words of Assurance: Worship Works – (1 John 1:9 and 1 Tim 1:15)

Gospel Reading: Mathew 3: 1-12 – John the Baptist

Songs -  
 Awake O Israel  
 Blow the Trumpet in Zion  
 I will Call Upon the Lord  
 We Worship and Adore Thee  
 Knowing You

Pastoral Prayer: Pastor

Offering Call & Offeratory

Hymn: Thou Didst Leave thy Throne # 170

Sermon: “What sort of people should you be?” - 2 Peter 3: 8-14

Hymn: “Even So Lord Jesus Come” # 419

Benedictory Prayer – based on Phil 1: 3-11

Final Word: “Even So Lord Jesus, Come!”

### 3.3 Third Sunday in Advent

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Themes:                   The joy of expectation  
                               Rejoice  
                               Consider the One who is to come - Bridegroom

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Piano Prelude: Jesus, Joy of My Desire

Call to Worship: Psalm 146: 5-10

Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is King

Lighting of Advent Wreath  
 (Family lights Candle #1)

1. Reading Zeph 3: 14-17
2. Lighting text – Shepherd’s candle - joy
3. Prayer of Invocation – joy of salvation

Hymn: Joy to the World

Scripture Reading : Is12: verse 2 – 6

Songs:                    Go Tell it on the Mountain  
                               Emanuel  
                               You are My All in All (Jesus Lamb of God)

Pastoral Prayer: Pastor

Offering Call & Offeratory

Choir Presentation – from Musical

Gospel Reading: John 3:23-30 – John the Baptist – Joy of the Bridegroom

Sermon: “The Joy of Expectation”

Hymn: How Great our Joy # 182

Benedictory Prayer – based on Phil 4: 4-7 Rejoice, in the Lord always”

Final Word – “He is Coming”

### 3.3 Fourth Sunday in Advent

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Themes:                   The birth of the promised one  
                               Mary's Visitation by Angel  
                               Joseph's dream  
                               Preparing in purity

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Piano Prelude: Song of Mary

Call to Worship: Reading : We're marching to Bethlehem

Hymn: O Come All Ye Faithful

Lighting of Advent Wreath (Family lights Candle #1)	1. Reading Luke 1: 6-38 (Annunciation to mary) 2. Lighting text – Angels Candle - purity 3. Prayer of Invocation – purify us
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Refrain: O Come O Come Emmanuel –all verses and refrain

Prayer of Confession:

Words of Assurance:

Carols: The First Noel  
               Angels from the Realms of Glory

Pastoral Prayer: Pastor

Offering Call & Offeratory

Special Music – Children's Choir

Gospel Reading: Luke 1: 46-55 – “Mary's song of praise”

Sermon: “Preparing in Purity – Mary & Joseph's example” Mathew 1: 18-25

Hymn: Refiner's Fire – (Purify My Heart)

Benediction – based on Rom 16: 25 - 27

Final Word: “The Time is Near!”

## **4.0 Details of Advent Services**

### ***4.0.1 Worship Space***

The worship space of the church is a large vaulted modern space with two lowered ceiling “wings” that create a large square sanctuary that seats 400. The platform at the front is raised four steps, and is about 40 feet wide by 15 feet deep. In the center rear of the platform is the baptismal tank, which is flush with the platform level, into which baptismal candidates descend for immersion. The baptismal tank is normally covered and not noticeable. At the front of the platform is a large pulpit that is moveable (for baptisms, etc.). Four large wing back chairs are placed behind the pulpit for the Pastors and Worship leaders. A grand piano is the sole instrument located to the far left. There is no organ. There is a large round stained glass window, behind the pulpit in the peak of the vaulted ceiling. It portrays a cross, on a clear background, with a crown at its base, and a white dove descending from above, surrounded by the colors of the rainbow. A small table is located in front of the pulpit on the floor level. It normally holds a floral arrangement and is pulled out and used for communion once a month. The worship space conveys the message that the preached word is the main focus of the church’s worship.

It is traditional in our church to “green” the sanctuary several weeks before Christmas. This typically involves, decorations such as poinsettias around the pulpit and table, as well as a large Christmas tree complete with lights and decorations that the Children make during the season. The tree is usually located on the right side of the platform, balancing the grand piano which is on the left. This “greening” of the sanctuary” would be done before the first Sunday in Advent.

The addition of the Advent wreath would be a noticeable change this year. The wreath would be placed on a large round table, to be draped in deep purple cloth, to the right side of the pulpit on the platform. The colour deep purple signifies penitence, fasting, humility and sobriety, all themes appropriate to the Advent season. The wreath would consist of a round wreath of evergreen, in which are placed four candles of equal size, three of which would be deep purple and one rose. The rose candle would be lit on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) for which the theme is rejoicing. In the center would be a larger, taller, white candle which

is the Christ Candle to be lit during the Christmas eve service. The Advent wreath is used to symbolize the four Sundays of expectation and would be the focus of the Advent liturgy that is the visible common thread throughout the season. This is where each Sunday, a church family would recite the scriptures, readings and prayers, a part of which is the actual lighting of a new candle each week. As the Sundays progress, previously lit candles are left lit as the service begins, so that by the fourth Sunday in advent, all four candles are lit.

The other side of the platform would be used for the Worship team and musicians, which is normally the practice. Choir presentations, would be made facing the congregation, in the center of the platform, behind and above the pulpit.

#### **4.1 First Sunday in Advent**

Piano Prelude: The King Shall Come when Morning Dawns

Call to Worship: (based on Is 64: verse 4) (*people seated*)

**Worship Leader:** The word of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah declares “ Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.”. In this first Sunday of Advent, we declare our longing and thirst for God. Let us read responsively:

L. Christ shall come, God’s gift to the world:

P. That the desperate should find hope –

L. That the persecuted should find peace –

P. That the lonely should find love –

L. That the dejected should find joy-

All: O Christ of the world, your time is now!, We wait, we watch, we wonder! Come! <sup>1</sup>

Opening Hymn: # 167 – Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (*people stand*)

Lighting of Advent Wreath – (*Family A comes forward, faces congregation behind Advent table.*)

**Member A:** A reading from the book of Jeremiah 33: 14-16. : “The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.’ ”

**Member B:** The first candle in the Advent wreath is called the prophecy candle. It opens the period that anticipates Christmas and remembers those who first spoke the promise of the coming Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Tilson & Cole, *Litanies and Other Prayers, Year B* P. 15

Child. We light this candle as a symbol of expectation. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way to salvation. O come, O come Emmanuel! (*lights first purple candle*)<sup>2</sup>

**Member C:** Let us pray: Almighty God, give us the grace to throw off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. We thank you for Jesus, who came to us in great humility to show us the way to salvation. We long for his coming again in glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, that we might rise to everlasting life through Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God now and forever, Amen.<sup>3</sup>  
(*family A sits down*)

Sung Refrain: O Come' O Come Emmanuel – Verse 1,2 and refrain (*people remain seated*)

O come, O come Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:           Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
                      Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse,  
Free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave.

Prayer of Confession

**Pastor A:** No one had ever heard or seen what God had done in Jesus Christ to save us from our sin. Join with me as we confess our sins from which He alone delivers us: (*leads in prayer of confession*)

Assurance of Pardon

**Pastor A:** God is the potter, we are the clay. God's mercy in Christ shapes our lives and molds us into the image of Christ. Believe the Gospel. In Christ, we are forgiven.<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 25: 1-10: Responsive Reading (*people stand*)

L: Please stand as we read responsively portions from Psalm 25.

L: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God

P: Do not let me be put to shame nor let my enemies triumph over me.

L: No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse

P: Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my Savior and my hope is in you all day long.

<sup>2</sup> Hickman, Saliers, Stookey & White, *The Handbook of the Christian Year* P. 54; also Vander Weit, George, "Lighting Up Advent" *Reformed Worship*, No. 37, 1998, P. 9-11

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Webber, ed. *The Services of the Christian Year*, section 168: Traditional Opening Prayers for Advent Book of Common Prayer, P. 121

<sup>4</sup> Prayers, Worship Works, December 1996

L: Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old

P: Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

L: Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways

P: He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

L: All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.

Worship Songs: (*lead by worship team – people standing*)

Unto Thee O Lord Do I lift Up My Soul, *Monroe, Charles F.*

Unto Thee, O Lord,  
Do I lift up my soul,  
Unto Thee, O Lord,  
Do I lift up my soul.

O my God, I trust in Thee,  
Let me not be ashamed,  
Let not mine enemies  
Triumph over me.

Show me, Thy ways,  
Thy ways O Lord,  
Teach me, Thy paths,  
Thy paths O Lord.

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Refiner's Fire, *Doerksen, Brian*

Refiner's fire,  
My heart's one desire  
Is to be holy  
Set apart for You, Lord.  
I choose to be holy,  
Set apart for You, my Master,  
Ready to do Your will.

Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold  
And precious silver.  
Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold,  
Pure gold.

Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from within  
And make me holy.  
Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from my sin,  
Deep within.

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Spirit of the Living God Fall Afresh on Me, *Iverson, Daniel*

Spirit of the living God,

Fall afresh on me.  
 Spirit of the living God,  
 Fall afresh on me.  
 Melt me, mold me,  
 Fill me, use me.  
 Spirit of the living God,  
 Fall afresh on me.

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Pastoral Prayer (of the people) (*people seated*) – **Pastor B**

Offering Call & Offeratory – **Pastor B**

Gospel Reading: Mark 13: 24 – 37 **Lay Reader** (*people stand*)

Please stand as we hear the words of our Lord according to the gospel of Mark, chapter 13, verses 24-37.

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore -- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning -- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch. (RSV)

Hymn: The King is Coming # 313

Sermon: "Watchfulness and Expectation " **Pastor A**

Hymn: Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates # 239

Benediction – **Pastor A** (based on 1 Cor. 1:3-9)

May you be given grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
 May you be enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge even as Christ's testimony is confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of His appearing. Amen

Final Word: "Even so Lord Jesus...Come! " *on projection screen*

## 4.2 Second Sunday in Advent

Piano Prelude: Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Call to Worship: Responsive Reading : Psalm 85: 7-13 - **Worship Leader**

L: In this second Sunday of Advent, our call to worship is taken from Psalm 85. Join with me as we read responsively:

L: Show us your unfailing love, O Lord and grant us your salvation.

P: We will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints—but let them not return to folly.

L: Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

P: Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

L: Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.

P: The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

L: Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps. Let us prepare room in our hearts and lives.

P: Let us come and adore Him, Christ the Lord!

L: Amen.

Anthem: Come, Thou Almighty King # 341

Lighting of Advent Wreath – (*Family B comes forward, faces congregation behind Advent table.*)

**Member A:** A reading from the book of Isaiah 40: 1-5 1

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places made plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

**Member B:** The second candle in the Advent wreath is called the Bethlehem candle. It was here that the prophet foretold the Christ child would be born. We light this candle as a symbol of proclamation. May the Word sent from God through the prophets lead us to the way to salvation. O come, O come Emmanuel! (*lights second purple candle*)<sup>5</sup>

**Member C:** Let us pray: - Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for salvation, give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ, our redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.<sup>6</sup>  
(*family A sits down*)

<sup>5</sup> Hickman, Saliers, Stookey & White, *The Handbook of the Christian Year* P. 54

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Webber, ed. *The Services of the Christian Year*, section 168: Traditional Opening Prayers for Advent Book of Common Prayer, P. 121

Sung Refrain: O Come' O Come Emmanuel – Verse 1,3 and refrain (*people remain seated*)

O come, O come Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high  
And order all things far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And cause us in her ways to go.

Prayer of Confession: **Worship Leader**

Let us pray: Almighty and Gracious God, as we journey through this season of Advent, we are confronted once again by the good news of Christ's coming. We now pause in the midst of our words and singing to be quiet before you. We confess, Lord that we fall short of your desire for us. We confess those thoughts, words, deeds and omissions that separate us from you. Hear our individual pleas, O Lord. Forgive us for our sins. (*silent prayer*)

Words of Assurance: **Worship Leader**

The word of God says "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness", for Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. In Christ, we are forgiven. (1 John 1:9 and 1 Tim 1:15)

Gospel Reading: Mathew 3: 1-12 – John the Baptist (*people stand*)

Hear now the word of the Lord taken from the book of Mathew, chapter 3, verses 1 to 12:

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

## Worship Songs

Awake O Israel , *Watson, Merla*

Awake, O Israel, put off thy slumber,  
 And the truth shall set you free,  
 For out of Zion comes Thy deliv'rer,  
 In the Year of Jubilee.

Chorus:  
 O, hallelujah, O, hallelujah,  
 Hallelujah, praise the Lord!  
 O, hallelujah, O hallelujah,  
 Hallelujah, praise the Lord!

For in the furnace of much affliction,  
 I have chosen thee behold,  
 And so for iron, I'll give thee silver,  
 And for brass I'll give thee gold.

Thou art My chosen, for I have sought thee,  
 Thou art graven on My hand,  
 And I will gather all those that gather,  
 They shall come back to their land.

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Blow the Trumpet in Zion, *Terndrup, Craig*

Blow the trumpet in Zion, Zion;  
 Sound the alarm on My holy mountain.  
 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Zion;  
 Sound the alarm.

They rush on the city  
 They run on the wall;  
 For great is the army  
 That carries out His word.  
 They rush on the city  
 They run on the wall;  
 For great is the army  
 That carries out His word.  
 The Lord utters His voice  
 Before His army.  
 The Lord utters His voice  
 Before His army.

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I will Call Upon the Lord, *O'Shields, Michael*

I will call upon the Lord  
 Who is worthy to be praised.  
 So shall I be saved  
 From my enemies.  
 I will call upon the Lord

The Lord liveth  
 And blessed be my Rock

And let the God of my salvation  
 Be exalted!  
 The Lord liveth  
 And blessed be my Rock  
 And let the God of my salvation  
 Be exalted!

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O Come All Ye Faithful, *Wade, John Francis*

O come all ye faithful,  
 Joyful and triumphant,  
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
 Come and behold Him,  
 Born the King of angels.

O come let us adore Him,  
 O come let us adore Him,  
 O come let us adore Him,  
 Christ the Lord.  
 Christ the Lord.

God of God  
 And light of light begotten;  
 Lo, He abhors not  
 The virgin's womb.  
 Very God, begotten not created.

O come let us adore Him,  
 O come let us adore Him,  
 O come let us adore Him,  
 Christ the Lord.  
 Christ the Lord.

For He alone is worthy,  
 For He alone is worthy,  
 For He alone is worthy,  
 Christ the Lord.

Knowing You, *Kendrick, Graham*

All I once held dear,  
 Built my life upon,  
 All this world reveres,  
 And wars to own,  
 All I once thought gain  
 I have counted loss;  
 Spent and worthless now,  
 Compared to this.

Chorus:  
 Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You,  
 There is no greater thing.  
 You're my all, You're the best,  
 You're my joy, my righteousness,  
 And I love You, Lord.

Now my heart's desire  
 Is to know You more,

To be found in You,  
 And known as Yours,  
 To possess by faith  
 What I could not earn;  
 All surpassing gift of righteousness.

Oh to know the power of Your risen life,  
 And to know You in Your sufferings,  
 To become like You  
 In Your death, my Lord;  
 So with You to live, and never die.

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Pastoral Prayer (of the people): **Pastor A**

Offering Call & Offeratory: **Pastor A**

Hymn: Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne # 170

Sermon: “What sort of people should you be?” 2 Peter 3: 8-14

Hymn of Response: “Even So Lord Jesus Come” # 419

Benediction – based on Phil 1: 3-11 **Pastor A**

Paul writes in Phillipians: I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. .... And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God.” (NIV) Amen. You are dismissed.

Final Word: “Even So Lord Jesus...Come” *on projection screen*

### 4.3 Third Sunday in Advent

Piano Prelude: Jesus, Joy of My Desire

Call to Worship: Psalm 146: 5-10 **Worship Leader**

“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD. “

Rejoice! The Lord is King! He came once, He Comes Still, We will come again!

Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is King

Lighting of Advent Wreath – (*Family C comes forward, faces congregation behind Advent table.*)

**Member A:** Listen to the words of the prophet Zephaniah (3: 14-17).

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm.

On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

**Member B:** The third candle in the Advent wreath is called the Shepherds' candle. It symbolizes the joy with which the shepherds welcomed the good news of Jesus' birth. We light this candle as a symbol of joy. May the joyful promise of your presence, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation. O come, O come Emmanuel! (*lights rose candle*)<sup>7</sup>

**Member C:** Let us pray: - Stir up your power, O Lord and come among us, because we are greatly hindered by our sins. Let your abundant grace and mercy help and deliver us, that we might fully know the joy of thy salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. To Him, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.<sup>8</sup>  
(*family A sits down*)

Hymn: Joy to the World

Scripture Reading : Is 12: verse 2 – 6 **Lay Reader**

“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations

<sup>7</sup> Hickman, Saliers, Stookey & White, *The Handbook of the Christian Year* P. 54

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Webber, ed. *The Services of the Christian Year*, section 168: Traditional Opening Prayers for Advent Book of Common Prayer, P. 121

what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.” (NIV)

Worship Songs:

Go Tell it on the Mountain, *Work, John W. Jr.*

Go tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain,  
That Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching,  
O'er silent flocks by night;  
Behold throughout the heavens,  
There shone a holy light.

Down in a lowly manger,  
The humble Christ was born;  
And brought us God's salvation,  
That blessed Christmas morn.

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Emanuel, *McGee, Bob*

Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
His name is called, Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us  
His name is called, Emmanuel.

God is with us, He is with us  
His name is called, Emmanuel.  
God is with us, He is with us  
His name is called, Emmanuel.

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You are My All in All (Jesus Lamb of God), *Jernigan, Dennis*

Jesus Lamb of God,  
Worthy is Your name.  
Jesus Lamb of God,  
Worthy is Your name.

You are my strength when I am weak.  
You are the treasure that I seek.  
You are my all in all.  
Seeking You as a precious jewel,  
Lord, to give up I'd be a fool.  
You are my all in all.

Taking my sin, my cross, my shame,  
Rising again I bless Your name.  
You are my all in all.  
When I fall down, You pick me up,  
When I am dry, You fill my cup.

You are my all in all.

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Pastoral Prayer (of people): **Pastor A**

Offering Call & Offeratory: **Pastor A**

Choir Presentation – from Musical

Gospel Reading: John 3:23-30 (*People Stand*)

Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized. (This was before John was put in prison.) An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan-- the one you testified about-- well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less. "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Sermon: "The Joy of Expectation"

Hymn: How Great our Joy # 182

Benediction – Phil 4: 4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (RSV) Amen

Final Word: "He is Coming!" (*on projection*)

#### **4.4 Fourth Sunday in Advent**

Piano Prelude: Song of Mary

Call to Worship: **Worship Leader** (*all stand*)

L. Join with me as we read responsively our call to worship:

L. We're marching to Bethlehem,

P. To ponder the promise of the prophet.

L. We're marching to Bethlehem,

P. To sing the carol of the angels.

L. We're marching to Bethlehem,

P. To greet the savior of the world.

All: "Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King."<sup>9</sup>

Hymn: O Come All Ye Faithful

Lighting of Advent Wreath – (*Family D comes forward, faces congregation behind Advent table.*)

**Member A:** Listen to the words of the Gospel of Luke(1: 6-38).

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

**Member B:** The fourth candle in the Advent wreath is called the Angel's candle. We recall the Angel's visitation to Mary, the virgin. We light this candle as a symbol of purity. May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God purify us that we may be ready for the coming of Jesus, our hope and joy. O come, O come Emmanuel! (*lights 3<sup>rd</sup> purple candle*)<sup>10</sup>

**Member C:** Let us pray: - Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily presence, that your Son, Jesus Christ may find in us a temple prepared for Himself, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.<sup>11</sup>  
(*family D sits down*)

Sung Refrain: O Come' O Come Emmanuel – Verse 1,4 and refrain (*people remain seated*)

O come, O come Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

<sup>9</sup> Tilson & Cole, *Litanies and Other Prayers, Year B* P. 22

<sup>10</sup> Hickman, Saliers, Stookey & White, *The Handbook of the Christian Year* P. 54

<sup>11</sup> Robert E. Webber, ed. *The Services of the Christian Year*, section 168: Traditional Opening Prayers for Advent Book of Common Prayer, P. 121

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Key of David come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
And close the path to misery.

O come, Desire of nations,  
Bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;  
Fill all the world with heaven's peace.

Prayer of Confession: **Pastor A**

Let us pray: Merciful God, we are grateful for the promise of your forgiveness. We desperately need it! So many things have crowded thoughts of you out our minds this past week. We have been so busy shopping, cooking, decorating, mailing, and entertaining that at times we have forgotten your nearness. Sadly we confess that our anxieties have been more real to us than your peace. While not our intention, we have had a tendency to focus more on our wants than on our worship of you. The prospects of exchanging gifts with our family and friends create more excitement within us than welcoming the priceless Gift of your Son. Lord, we know these practices must grieve your loving heart, for when we pause long enough to catch our breath, we realize something is missing. Forgive us, cleanse us, restore us, strengthen us— not because our faith is so great or our prayers so fervent, but because you love us so radically. In Jesus' amazing name. Amen!<sup>12</sup>

Words of Assurance: **Pastor A**

The scriptures testify that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We are reconciled to God through our faith in Jesus Christ. Having confessed our sins, we are forgiven.

Sung Carols: **Worship Leader**

The First Noel

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Pastoral Prayer (of people) : **Pastor B**

Offering Call & Offeratory: **Pastor B**

Special Music – Children's Choir

Gospel Reading: **Lay Reader** Luke 1: 46-55 – “Mary's song of praise - *Magnificat*”

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<sup>12</sup> Schwanda, Tom *Prayers for Advent Worship*, section 168, *The Services of the Christian Year* Webber, Robert E, ed.

After the Angel appeared to Mary, she praised God with these words taken from the Gospel of Luke: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

Sermon: "Preparing in Purity – Mary & Joseph's example" Mathew 1: 18-25 **Pastor A**

Response Song Refiner's Fire – (Purify My Heart), *Doerksen, Brian*

Refiner's fire,  
My heart's one desire  
Is to be holy  
Set apart for You, Lord.  
I choose to be holy,  
Set apart for You, my Master,  
Ready to do Your will.

Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold  
And precious silver.  
Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold,  
Pure gold.

Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from within  
And make me holy.  
Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from my sin,  
Deep within.

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Benediction Prayer – **Pastor A** based on Rom 16: 25 - 27

Now to him who is able to establish you by the gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him--to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Final Word: "The time is near!" (*on projection*)

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