

November 28, 2021  
Bread for the Journey – First Sunday in Advent  
An Act of Faith: Gingerbread

**PREWORSHIP MUSIC**

*The Thrill of Hope*  
*Breath of Heaven*  
*An Angel Foretells Christ's Birth to Mary*

**PRELUDE**

*The Angel Gabriel from Heaven* (Kerr)

**GREETING & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

**Pastor:** Today is the fourth Sunday before Christmas, the first Sunday of a new Christian calendar year, and the beginning of the season called Advent. The word “Advent” comes from a Latin word meaning “coming.” Advent is a time for Christian disciples to prepare themselves for the coming of Jesus, as we remember his birth in Bethlehem long ago. Just as the season of Lent is a multi-week spiritual preparation before Easter, so Advent is recognized as a four-week spiritual preparation before Christmas.

**Liturgist:** Each of the four candles in the Advent wreath represent one Sunday before Christmas. The fifth – or white candle – representing Christ and his birth is placed in the wreath’s center, just as Jesus is to be at the center of our lives.

**Congregation:** **The wreath is circular. It has no beginning or end. This symbolizes the infinite nature of God as well as God’s eternal presence and unending love for us. The wreath is made of evergreen branches. These symbolize the everlasting life we have through our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Savior.**

**Pastor:** Throughout the Old Testament, as early as the first book of Genesis, God promised to send a Savior into the world; One who would deliver and liberate God’s people. Reading from the book of Micah 5:2 we hear these prophetic words, “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.”

**Liturgist:** Micah’s words, “But you, O Bethlehem” are delivered in a tone of honor. How beautifully fitting that our Lord would be born in the city of Bethlehem, a Hebrew name meaning “House of Bread.”

**Congregation:** **Our Savior, Jesus, was born in the “House of Bread.” Then, in his adult ministry, Jesus would proclaim, “I am the Bread of Life: Whoever comes to me will never hunger again. Whoever believes in me will never thirst.”**

**Pastor:** Not only was our Savior, the Bread of Life, born in the House of Bread, after his birth he was laid in a feeding trough from which the animals ate.

**Liturgist:** How interesting are the names given to places and people in the Bible! Matthew 1:21 reads, “And she will birth a son and name him Jesus; for he will save his people from their sins.”

**Congregation:** **“Jesus,” a name which means “he saves” was more than a name for the Son of God. It was WHAT he would do. Jesus came to save us from death. He would feed us words of life, liberate us from fear, save us from sin, rescue us from death and raise us to new life. Thanks be to God!**

**Pastor:** God’s Holy Word is God’s promise, and the Promise of a Savior has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

**Liturgist:** So, we light this first candle as an act of faith; trusting that our Lord, the Bread of Life, born in the House of Bread, has saved us from our sins. Let us pray together:

**All:** *Holy God, from the very beginning you knew that we could never walk this journey of life alone. Thank you for giving us Bread for the journey – in this life and the next. Thank you for the many times you have brought us out of trials, through suffering, and restored our brokenness. As the first Advent candle flickers with light, so you give us light in our*

darkness. Feed us again this Advent, that we might find our souls nourished, our spirits fed for the remainder of our days in this life, and into the next. Amen.

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie;  
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove,  
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given;  
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.  
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.  
so God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.  
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;  
O morn - ing stars to - geth - er, pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!  
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

## OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup>and provide for those who grieve in Zion- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

## PSALTER

Psalm 85:10-13

<sup>10</sup>Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. <sup>11</sup>Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. <sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest. <sup>13</sup>Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.

## NEW TESTAMENT

John 6:5-11

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup>He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" <sup>8</sup>Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup>"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

## SERMON

*An Act of Faith  
Out of the Ashes: Gingerbread*

Rev. Laura C. Bair-Baker

## PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

*All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom comes. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

## ANTHEM

*"I Call Him Lord"* (Rambo)

Chancel Choir

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also, with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give God our thanks and praise.

**Congregation: How good it is to be thankful and give God our praise.**

Pastor: Who is invited to the Lord's Table?

*All: All are invited;  
the young and the old,  
the rich and the poor,  
the lowest and the least;  
sinners and saints together in communion.  
Come find your place here,  
where there are no strangers or foreigners,  
only brothers and sisters in the sight of God.*

Pastor: Why do we give thanks at this table?  
*All: We give thanks because Jesus showed us the way,  
we give thanks because Jesus is the Way – the Bread of Life.  
Jesus was a gift for the world.  
He was called Emmanuel, “God with us”.  
His was named Jesus because he came to save us from our sins.  
Jesus lived a life of thankfulness  
and gave his life as a sacrifice for many.  
We give thanks that he is our Savior, Christ the Lord.*

Pastor: Why do we eat and drink at this table?  
*All: We eat because on the night before Jesus died,  
he ate with his friends.  
He gave them bread and said,  
“This is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.”  
At that same meal he took a cup of wine and said,  
“Drink this cup. This is my blood of the covenant,  
which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Pastor: What do we remember at this table?  
*All: We remember Jesus’ birth and his presence as God with us.  
We remember Jesus’ life and his love.  
We remember Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.  
We remember the resurrection and the promise of life.  
We remember that we are waiting in hope to see Jesus again.*

Pastor: Let us pray:  
God of grace, thank you for this bread and wine,  
and for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.  
God of hope, fill us with your Spirit today  
that we might have the wisdom to understand the mystery of this Table,  
and the depth and height and breadth and length of your love for us.  
Through this meal, strengthen us to be followers of Jesus,  
a community of peace in a broken world. Amen.

### **ELEMENTS SHARED**

#### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*All: Jesus, you truly are Emmanuel “God with us”.  
In this season of hope, may the meal we’ve shared together  
nourish us to be your body in the world.  
Amen.*

**HYMN**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**Bulletin, Last Page**

#### **BENEDICTION**

Pastor: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.  
Go with us now into the world.

In faith we proclaim, "We can begin again!"  
Our Lord promises that everything has the potential to be transformed.

**Congregation: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.**

**Make everything new. Make us new.**

Pastor: Reveal yourself in our lives and in the ministries of this church.

**Congregation: Let nothing get in the way of your coming.**

**Let nothing get in the way of rising in Jesus' name!**

*All: Amen.*

**POSTLUDE**

*The King Shall Come* (Kerr)

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

From Latin, 12th century  
 Stanzas 1 and 2 Tr. JOHN MASON NEALE, 1851  
 Stanza 3 Tr. HENRY S. COFFIN, 1916 8. 8. 8. 8. 8. Ancient plain song, 13th century (Mode I)

*Unison, with spirit*

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive  
 2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by Thine  
 3. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
 heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and dis - cord cease;

HARMONY

Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 Fill the whole world with heav - en's peace. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -

UNISON

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!  
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!  
 man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el! A-MEN.