



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, December 6th, 2020

Dear Lake Toxaway family and community,

Our youngest daughter, Emilee, has come home from NC State as her semester ended before Thanksgiving. Well...that is part of the story. She left again Thursday (12-3) to return to her apartment off campus because she has a project to do. She is the president of The Raleigh Wesley Foundation, the United Methodist Student ministry for NC State and the other colleges in the Raleigh area. This group has worked hard to be in ministry and to gather in small discipleship groups of 10 or less in order to meet guidelines of the pandemic. The RWF meets in a building on the campus of a Methodist Church; the building is referred to as The Hut.

Our daughter, Emilee, likes things to be clean and organized, so she had arranged a clean-up and paint day for the large common room in August. Now, she has arranged a clean-up weekend "to attack" one of the break-out rooms and the kitchen in the Hut. It has been one thing for her to notice there was "work" to be done. It is quite another one to determine you are the one who needs to organize, to recruit others, and do the work.

I think this story about Emilee is appropriate for this second week of Advent. I think we are all members of a clean-up crew to make ready, to prepare. I am appreciative to the Worship Committee and some other individuals who have prepared the sanctuary and the grounds of our church for the celebration of Advent and the birth of Christ. It makes our church look ready for the coming of Christ! I responded in a playful way to a picture of some of these individuals among the nativity out front and asked who were the Wise Men, Shepherds, and Angels.

I am issuing an invitation to you to join the clean-up crew and the road crew (John the Baptist calls out to make the paths straight from the reading in Mark's Gospel). May we see the big picture from the prophet Isaiah. God heard the cry of His people and now comes with a response! God has listened and now speaks, and the word God speaks is Jesus! The first hearers of Isaiah heard these words in the context of coming home, of leaving exile and returning to Israel. And God does bring them home - not necessarily to the home they envisioned, but to the home God envisions, the community God creates. This is the home we seek, all of us. And we find this home in Jesus, the child in the manger, the Savior on the cross. Home is where we are loved and healed and heard!

The glory of Christmas is that while there is a silent night, there is a need to listen and to shut out the distancing noise of the world and our brokenness; it is fundamentally a dialog. The Lord's highway is a two-way street. Our call is to listen and to respond: to announce, to proclaim, to make way. "Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, ... do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "here is your God!"

Company's coming, y'all! We need to be ready. Join the clean-up and the road crew. May we be ready for the One who comes to lead us home! The joy is we get to be a part of the clean up crew. May we work together in our community as we try to find ways to worship and celebrate and invite. And this clean-up and road crew has to be creative as we pray and think about ways to include our community in worship of the Savior of the World when we cannot observe the familiar ways. May God guide us to find our way home and lead others to home even as we live in a time of many challenges.

I love you and gladly serve on the clean-up and road crew with you!

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Second Sunday of Advent
December 6th, 2020**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/IWWj2pa1aG8>

PRELUDE

Prelude on "O Come, Emmanuel" Charles Callahan

GREETING

*Let us hear what God will speak,
for the Holy One speaks peace to the people,
to the faithful, and to all who turn to God in their hearts.*

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet.

Righteousness and peace will embrace.

*Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.*

***The Holy One will give what is good,
and we will bring our praise and song.***

HYMN #211

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Stanzas 5-7

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER

***God of winter and starlight,
you have promised us your presence:
to live among us,
to right all wrongs,
to bring good things to all who wait
for your new day.
In these dark days,
we look for signs of your coming:
the sounds of children at play,
the music that fills our hearts
with anticipation,
the company of all who serve
the last and the least.
Make us at home with righteousness,
that we may be ready to walk
in your holy ways. Amen.***

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Reader #1: *"A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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.*

Reader #2: *Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'"* (Isaiah 40:3-5)

(Light one blue candle.)

Reader #1: *We light the first Advent candle as a symbol of our hope that God will surely come.*

Reader #2: *In the midst of chaos, in the face of adversity, in the rocky and desolate places, the Prince of Peace will make a path that is straight and sure. May we follow in the way of God to bring peace to all the people of the world. Together, we light the second Advent candle as a symbol of the peace which comes to us in the way of Christ. (light a second blue candle)*

Let us pray:

Holy God, there is much that gets in the way of our ability to see you coming. We are burdened and distracted by many things. We carry loads that weigh us down.

We are weary and broken. But our hearts long for you.

Help us to lift our eyes to see you. Help us to clear the rubble to make way for you to enter.

Take away the clutter so that we may be free to see you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 40:1-11

- 40:1 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
- 40:2 Speak 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.
- 40:3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
- 40:4 Every 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.
- 40:5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- 40:6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

- 40:7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.
- 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.
- 40:9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
- 40:10 See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
- 40:11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (please read responsively the text in bold)

- 85:1 LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- 85:2 You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. Selah**
- 85:8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
- 85:9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.**
- 85:10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
- 85:11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.**
- 85:12 The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
- 85:13 Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.**

2 Peter 3:8-15a

- 3:8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.
- 3:9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.
- 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.
- 3:11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness,
- 3:12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

- 3:13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.
- 3:14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish;
- 3:15a and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him.

Mark 1:1-8 (Please Stand)

- 1:1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 1:2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;
- 1:3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"
- 1:4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- 1:5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 1:6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.
- 1:7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.
- 1:8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

P: Thanks be to God!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

December is upon us, Lord, and we are on the "greased slide to Christmas". Time seems to get away from us and we get trapped in the buy-wrap-send syndrome. Lord, we confess that it is easy to get involved in all these opportunities and stresses that come our way. Forgive us when we put our faith on a back burner and focus instead on pressures in our lives. Help us to take time to see your beam of direction which shines in our path, leading us to peace and hope. Clear our spirits of the frustrations and anxieties of this season, so that the Light which you are sending into the world will truly shine in and through us to others. These things we pray in the name of Jesus, our Hope and our Light. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*In God's love and mercy,
we are given each new day
for the healing of the world.*

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. AMEN.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH *(The Apostles' Creed, Ecumenical Version)*

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.***

***I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.***

***I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.***

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

***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. Amen.***

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Flor Peters

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*Lord God, you have shown us your glory:
in your holy word,
in the blessings of our daily lives,
and in the promise of your eternal kingdom.
You share your glory with us,
giving us the power to live
in holiness and godliness.
Your loving patience gives us hope
as we await the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ.
In gratitude and thanks,
we offer you our hearts, our lives,
and all that we have.
Use these gifts, we pray,
to prepare your way of salvation
and to establish your realm of peace.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

*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 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, forever. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN #196

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Veni Emmanuel Wilbur Held

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Will Cowan

Advent Candle Lighting: Scott Walker & Nancee Salyer

Liturgist: John Lefler

Prayer Concerns of the Community

Please pray for Thomas Blackstock, Cathie Fussell's nephew, Jeff Tilley, Marty Young, Chad Zimmerman Madison Coleman & the Jeter family and Frank Hardin

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months.

Announcements

Administrative Council Meeting

The Administrative Council will meet on ***Friday, December 11th at 9:00 AM***. If you are a member of the Council, you will receive a Zoom Invite. If you are not a member and would like to attend the meeting, please email Tom Blackstock or Saunders Grommesh as these meetings are open to all members, but only members have a vote if actions are required. You may e-mail Tom at Tom.Blackstock@gmail.com or Saunders at administrator@laketoxawayumc.org.

Thank you to the Worship Committee, Lay Leaders & the Shoemakers

A heartfelt thank you to the Worship Committee: Barb Kline, Paula Markert, Kay Blackstock, Gerrie McSwain, Mary Collins, Jerry Kline, Don McSwain, Fred Collins and John & Becky Shoemaker for decorating the church and grounds for Advent!

Mentors Still needed for our Students Scholars: Student Scholars Mentors are still needed. If you can pray, text, e-mail and call lending your support to our student scholars please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167. Now is a perfect time to be a mentor for next semester.

Copies of Our Daily Bread

We have copies of Our Daily Bread for December, January and February. We also have a Christmas Journey from Our Daily Bread. Copies are available in the church for you to pick up. Please reach out to Saunders at administrator@laketoxawayumc.org or 469-569-2314 to schedule a time to pick them up at the church during the week.

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Stanza 5:

**O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode. Refrain**

Stanza 6:

**O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain**

Stanza 7:

**O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace. Refrain**

Refrain:

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

WORDS: 9th cent. Latin; trans. st. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab *The Hymnal*, 1940; st. 2, Henry VENI EMMANUEL
Sloane Coffin, 1916; st. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1986 LM with Refrain
MUSIC: 15th cent. French; arr. and harm. by Thomas Helmore, 1854

Sts. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab © 1940, 1943, renewed 1981 The Church Pension Fund; trans. sts. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd © 1989 The United
Methodist Publishing House; antiphons © 1962 Sisters of St. Benedict

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 196

1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy
 2. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us,
 yet a King, born to reign in us for - ev - er,

let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
 now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art; dear de - sire of
 spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all suf -

ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
 fi - cient mer - it, raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
 MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. from *The English Hymnal*, 1906

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