



*Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Second Sunday of Advent, December 10th, 2023*

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Second Sunday of Advent, December 10th

9:30 A.M. Livestream is available on the LTUMC YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgtuJe20i8DN7S_Cfg1sWCg

RINGING OF THE BELL – *Please observe silence as we prepare for the service.*

PRELUDE

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice Paul Manz

INTRODUCTION OF PASTOR ANDREW

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Please stand as you are able*)

L: In the middle of dark times, our Lord cries out:

P: "Comfort, comfort my people!"

L: When it seems as though we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel,

P: Our Lord says to us, "Be at peace, for your time of difficulty has ended."

L: Lord, we await the time of comfort and peace!

P: Lord, we are thankful for your compassion and never-failing love for us. AMEN.

HYMN #211

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Stanzas 5-7)
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader 1: *In days when God's people longed for peace, Isaiah declared, "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 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" (Isaiah 40:1).*

Reader 2: *We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace.*

Congregation: *We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community for all.*

Reader 1: *We light these candles as signs of God's hope and peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all people can gather together to worship and glorify God. Amen.*

(Light two blue candles of the Advent wreath.)

OPENING PRAYER *(Please be seated)*

***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.***

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 (Psalter Lesson ~ Please read the bold text)

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 (Epistle Reading)

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 for the Gospel)

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: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Please be seated)*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

Into the dark depths of our fear and anguish, you, O Lord, reach out to us. We need your guidance this day, for we have found it far too easy to stray into selfish pathways. We seek first our own comfort; we gather our toys and trinkets and proclaim that all is right with the world, yet our hearts feel strangely discomforted. Guide us and gather us, Lord. Teach us again to be people of peace and hope. Help us to cast off the mantle of greed and hatred. Forgive us for the many times when we have ignored the cries of those in need; when we have turned our backs on opportunities to help others. Forgive us, Lord. Touch our hearts and bring your bright light of salvation to them that we might turn again to you and in your love may be part of ministries of peace and justice. Help us again to hear the voice of one who cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we offer this prayer. AMEN

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God's forgiving love has been poured upon each one of us. Hear the good news! You are healed and forgiven! AMEN.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH #883 *(United Church of Canada – Please stand as you are able)*

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

***who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.***

We trust in God.

***We are called to be the church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. 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.

HYMN #218

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Kenneth T. Kosche

DOXOLOGY #95 (Please stand as you are able)

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost***

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Please continue standing)

Almighty God, we enter this season from a chaotic world filled with violence, division, and injustice. We hear your prophet Isaiah promising comfort -- then John the Baptist calling us to construction projects. We are reminded we are called to prepare the way, to be the designers of peace, the builders of justice, the producers of kindness. As we bring our tithes and offerings to you, we pray that our giving continues to point to the Christ who comes in love and compassion. May our giving in this season reflect our hope for the promised kingdom to reign in our world. We pray this in the name of the Messiah, Jesus our Savior. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Please be seated)

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 #213 *(Please stand as you are able)*

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates
Located in the back of the bulletin - (printed w/permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *(Please be seated)*

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice Robert J. Powell

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Guest Pastor

*Please extend a warm welcome to **Pastor Andrew Crimmins**. He is the current pastor at St. Timothy's in Brevard. We are grateful he is filling in as Marcus is recovering from surgery. Pastor Andrew received his Masters in Divinity from Vanderbilt University. He is married to Rebecca and has two sons Desmond and Oscar.*

Flowers on the Altar

*The flowers on the altar are given by the **Klines and Dodsons** in loving memory of **Ruth Cech & to the Glory of God**.*

Thank you

*Thank you, **Fred and Paula Markert**, for providing the Christmas wreaths on the front doors of the church.*

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for Arlene Hendrix as she enters into hospice care at home.

Please pray for those who have long-term illness, health concerns and special intentions.

Please pray for those having or had a surgery and their recovery. Especially for Marcus as he recovers from his other elective knee replacement surgery. Please continue to pray for Sherry Minnich and her healing.

Our heartfelt prayers for all who have experienced the recent passing of a loved one.

Please continue to pray for our student scholars taking finals and traveling home for Christmas, our local students, teachers and staff.

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: Paula Markert: 828-553-9434 & Scott Walter: 314-374-2969

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Audio/Visual Scheduler: Fred Markert: 828-553-3303

Liturgist: Scott Walter

Hymns are located on the next few pages and used with permission via One License #737113-A

211 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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**

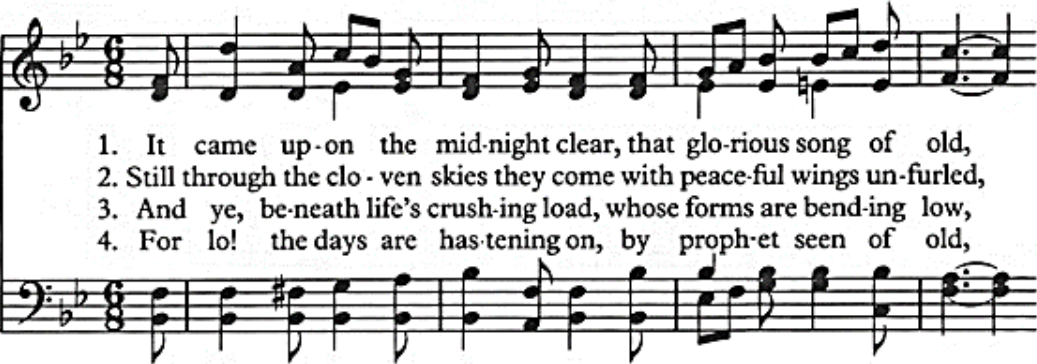
Stanza 7:

**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**

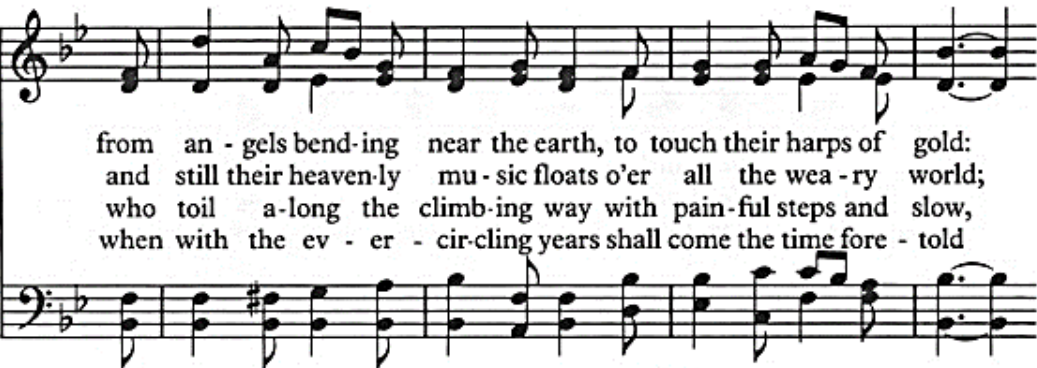
Refrain:

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

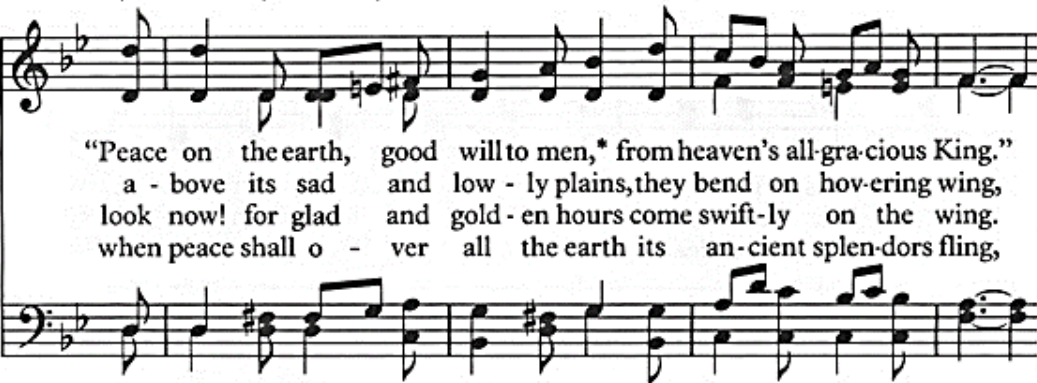
218 It Came upon the Midnight Clear



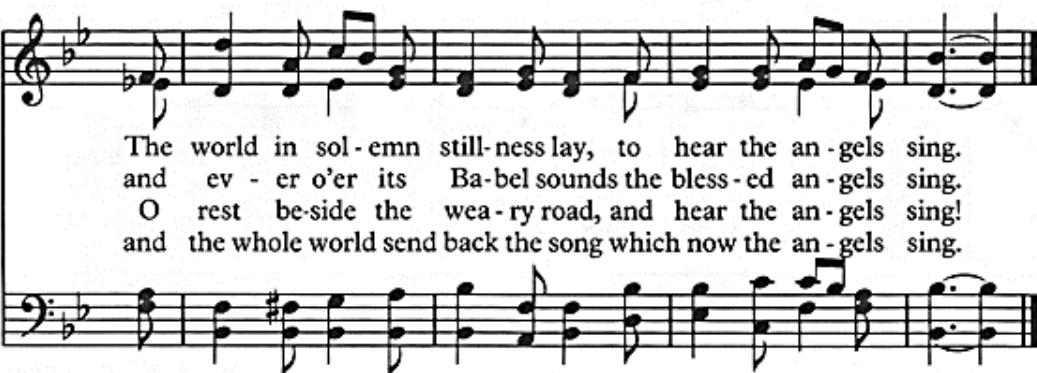
1. It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
 2. Still through the clo-ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un-furled,
 3. And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
 4. For lo! the days are has-tening on, by proph-et seen of old,



from an - gels bend-ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
 and still their heaven-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world;
 who toil a-long the climb-ing way with pain-ful steps and slow,
 when with the ev - er - cir-cling years shall come the time fore - told



"Peace on the earth, good will to men,* from heaven's all-gracious King."
 a - bove its sad and low - ly plains, they bend on hov-ering wing,
 look now! for glad and gold - en hours come swift-ly on the wing.
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay, to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its Ba-bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 O rest be-side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!
 and the whole world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

*"all" may be substituted

WORDS: Edmund H. Sears, 1849 (Lk. 2:8-14)
 MUSIC: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

CAROL
 CMD

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 213

1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates;
 2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart;
 3. Re - deem - er, come, with us a - bid;e;
 4. Thy Ho - ly Spir - it lead us on

be - hold, the King of glo - ry waits;
 make it a tem - ple, set a - part
 our hearts to thee we o - pen wide;
 un - til our glo - rious goal is won;

the King of kings is draw - ing near;
 from earth - ly use for heaven's em - ploy,
 let us thy in - ner pres - ence feel;
 e - ter - nal praise, e - ter - nal fame

the Sav - ior of the world is here!
 a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 thy grace and love in us re - veal.
 be of - fered, Sav - ior, to thy name!

WORDS: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. by Catherine Winkworth, 1855 (Ps. 24)
 MUSIC: *Psalmodia Evangelica*, 1789

TRURO
LM