



EPWORTH REHOBOTH BEACH

Worship Order, Announcements & Prayers

Epworth.faith

Sunday, December 24, 2023



Welcome to Epworth Worship
Sunday 10 am
in-person and online

10 am [Blended Worship Order](#)

5 pm [Especially for Children](#)

8 pm [Carols & Candlelight](#)

[Calendar](#) & [Announcements](#)

[Prayer List](#)

*VISION: Explore Faith,
Embrace Community*

*MISSION: Inviting, Belonging,
Connecting, Caring*

All Means All

As a [Reconciling Ministries Network](#) congregation, we welcome all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, to share their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.



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Epworth.faith



~ *We Gather in Worship* ~

Nöel

Matt Redman, Ed Cash, & Chris Tomlin ©2015 ThankYou Music
Praise Team

Love incarnate, love divine.
Star and angels gave the sign.
Bow to babe on bended knee,
the savior of humanity.
Unto us a child is born. He shall reign forever-
more.

Nöel, nöel.

Come and see what God has done.

*Nöel, nöel. The story of amazing love,
the light of the world given for us,
Nöel.*

Son of God and son of man,
there before the world began.
Born to suffer, born to save,
born to raise us from the grave.
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
He shall reign forevermore.

{Chorus – Instrumental - Chorus}

My Soul Magnifies the Lord

Chris Tomlin & Daniel Carson ©2009 WorshipTogether-
Songs.com
Praise Team

Good news of great joy for every woman, every
man.
This will be a sign to you, a baby born in Bethle-
hem.
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

A company of angels, “Glory in the highest!”
And on the earth peace among those
on whom His favor rests.
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.

My soul magnifies the Lord.

*He has done great things for me,
great things for me.*

Unto you a child is born, unto us a son is giv’n.
Let every heart prepare his throne
Let every nation under heav’n.
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

{Chorus Twice}

Adore

Graham Kendrick & Martin Chalk ©2015 SixStepsMusic
Praise Team / Chancel Choir

**You stepped down from heaven.
Humbly, you came.
God of all creation here with us.
In a starlit manger, Emmanuel,
Light of the World here to save.**

*Adore, come let us adore,
O come, let us adore Him!
The Lord, worship Christ the Lord.
Let all that is within us adore.*

**Wise men bring their treasures,
shepherds bow low, angel voices sing
of peace on earth.
What have I to offer to heaven's king?
I will bring my life, my love, my all.**

**Angels sing, praises ring to the newborn King.
Peace on earth here with us, joy awakening.
At Your feet we fall. {repeat section – Chorus}**

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Manifesting Love: This morning we light the fourth Advent candle—the candle that traditionally stands for love. Now we're getting to the heart of the matter! Hope, peace, joy...those things are hard to muster. But love? Love finds us right where we are—wherever we are, whoever we are.

All these prophets of old have kept inviting us to imagine a different world, a seemingly faraway world. A world filled with hope, paved with peace, overflowing with joy. It's a hard sell. But where our imaginations fall short, that's where love takes over.

Mary's song joins past, present, and future—boldly proclaiming what Love has done, what Love is doing, and what Love will continue to do. Mary's song invites us to imagine not a faraway world but this one. Right here and right now. The Love being born in us, through us, for us, with us.

This morning we light this defiant flame of love, boldly living into our own calling to manifest that same Love in our own lives. The Love who was born long ago in a manger. The Love who continues steadfast with us this day. The Love who will never give up, from generation to generation. Amen.

Come, Emmanuel

**Love that begins us, pardons and wins us,
come and reign in us, Emmanuel.
Come and speak to us, fill and renew us,
come and live through us, Emmanuel.**
*Come, Emmanuel; come, Emmanuel.
Come, Emmanuel; come, Emmanuel.*

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Baptism

- **Announcements** -

Prepare the Way!

Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812 / *Svenska Psalmboken*, 1697

**Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ that came
in God's most holy name.**

**Christ brings God's rule, O Zion;
He comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ that came in God's most holy
name.**

**Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace.
And tidings of salvation proclaim in ev'ry place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing,
O blest is Christ that came in God's most holy
name.**

Prayers of the People Mike Tyler

Great God of the prophets and truth-tellers,
Great Voice of Truth
who speaks through unexpected voices,
Great Power of the Universe
who works mighty deeds from fragile possibilities,
we gather here to know Your presence
and to listen for Your truth.
We listen in Your presence. We listen for You.

Let our listening reach to hear the voice of young Mary.
Let us listen for her voice,
the voice of an adolescent girl in an insignificant village
in a marginal province, far from the centers of power.

Extend our listening to hear her where she may be speaking today:
an adolescent girl in a village in rural China
whose parents really wanted a boy;
a girl in a remote native village in Latin America
leading the singing in a small church;
a 14-year-old working for a tiny wage
in a crowded factory somewhere
making our high-priced running shoes;
a 15-year-old helping her village in West Africa

recover from civil war;
a high school student in a U.S. city
resisting a culture of violence daily to attend school.

Extend our listening, God,
to hear the song of truth and hope
You are putting in their mouths.

Extend our listening, God,
to sense the motion of a future
You are moving in their midst,
a future world put right.

Extend our listening, God,
that we may receive and affirm and listen
with the eager ears of elderly Elizabeth,
wise with years of waiting.

Let us listen fully and deeply
for the hope You are preparing.

Let us greet Your hope
with Elizabeth's joy greeting Mary.

Let us feel the future moving in us as well.

Let us listen fully and deeply
for the hope You are preparing in us.

Let us listen deeply to the truth speaking in us.

Let us listen fully to the hope You place in us.

Extend our listening
to the deepest reaches of our own souls, God of Truth.

Extend our listening through the cares
that each of us brings on our hearts this morning.

Extend our listening through the financial worries
and the preoccupations with our health,
our concern for loved ones
whose lives are straying out of control,
our angers and aggravations,
our inundation with activity.

Extend our listening into all that we bring today
to hear there the transforming truth about our lives.

Extend our listening until we listen with all that we are,
our whole beings.

Extend our listening until we hear with Your whole voice.

Extend our listening until we become the voice that
speaks as Mary to say,

“My soul magnifies God and my spirit rejoices.”

May the listening of our souls enlarge Your listening
until we truly hear You from unexpected places
in the farthest reaches of the earth
and the most remote territories of our own souls.

Extend our listening that we may magnify You.

The Lord's Prayer

Spoken

Lesson: *Luke 1:46-55*

Gwen Osborne, reader

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

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for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is His name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”
May this scripture inspire us all...
§ to walk in the way that leads to life.

My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord

Joseph M. Martin, 2007
Chancel Choir

**My soul doth magnify the Lord.
My heart is filled with his glory and praise.
My song rejoices in God, my King.
My life is filled with his glorious grace.
Rejoice my soul. O my soul, rejoice, rejoice!
My soul doth magnify the Lord.**

**My soul doth magnify the Lord.
My heart is filled with hope and love.
My song is lifted high above,
For soon we'll see God's promised one!
Rejoice, my soul. O my soul, rejoice, rejoice!
My soul doth magnify the Lord.**

**Let the hungry rejoice and sing.
God sends the bread of life.
Let the lost and the wand'ring rejoice.
God is our shepherd and guide.
God is eternal. God is supernal.
God is the giver of life!**

**God will protect us. God will sustain us.
God will redeem us. God will complete us.
God's mercy endureth to all generations.**

**My soul doth magnify the Lord.
My heart is filled with his glory and praise.
My song rejoices in God, my king.
My life is filled with his glorious grace.
Reoice my soul. Rejoice, o my soul.
Rejoice, rejoice o my soul!
My soul doth magnify the Lord!
My soul doth magnify the Lord!**

Prayer

Gwen Osborne

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears, 1849 / Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o’er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Adore

Graham Kendrick & Martin Chalk ©2015 SixStepsMusic
Praise Team / Chancel Choir

**Angels sing, praises ring to the newborn King.
Peace on earth here with us, joy awakening.
At Your feet we fall. {Repeat Section}**
*Adore, come let us adore,
O come, let us adore Him!
The Lord, worship Christ the Lord.
Let all that is within us adore.*

~ *We Gather in Worship* ~

NOEL

Matt Redman, Ed Cash, & Chris Tomlin ©2015 ThankYou
Music

Love incarnate, love divine.
Star and angels gave the sign.
Bow to babe on bended knee,
the savior of humanity.
Unto us a child is born. He shall reign forever-
more.

*Noël, nöel.
Come and see what God has done.
Noël, nöel. The story of amazing love,
the light of the world given for us,
Nöel.*

Son of God and son of man,
there before the world began.
Born to suffer, born to save,
born to raise us from the grave.
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
He shall reign forevermore.

{Chorus – Instrumental - Chorus}

Hope Was Born This Night

Ben McDonald & Dave Frey, ©2010 Dayspring Music, LLC.

Tonight, I can see a star shine,
and its splendor fills up the sky.
It's the same that appeared,
and the Wise Men revered,
when Hope was born this night.
Out upon the snowy fields
there's silent peace that heals.
And it echoes the grace
of our Savior's embrace,
because Hope was born this night.

*Glory to God in the highest.
Peace on earth, goodwill toward all.
Let all of the world sing the chorus of joy,
because Hope was born this night.*

I can hear the Christmas bells ring,
as softly a church choir sings.
It's the song used to praise the Ancient of
days,
when Hope was born this night.
There are angels in this place,
and my heart resounded the praise.
Like a shepherd so scared, I'll rejoice and
declare
that Hope was born this night. *{Chorus}*

Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!
Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! *{Chorus Twice}*
TAG: I know Hope was born this night,
because Christ was born this night.

It's Christmas

Traditional Hymns / Arr and Chorus by Chris Tomlin &
Ed Cash

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little lord Jesus laid down His sweet
head.

The stars in the sky looked down where He
lay,
the little lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the
sky

and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

*It's Christmas! The angels are singing,
and I know the reason the Savior is
born.*

*It's Christmas! The bells are ringing,
and I feel like shouting joy to the world!*

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask You to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Your tender
care
and fit us for heaven to live with You there.
{Chorus}

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born! *{Instrumental –
Chorus}*

TAG: Joy to the world! Joy to the world!

Welcome Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

O Come All Ye Faithful

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.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest. *{Refrain}*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
{Refrain}

∞ Lessons & Carols ∞

As presented by our children and youth.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see Thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in Thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God and King,
and peace to all the earth!

The Nativity of Jesus Christ ~ Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

What Child Is This

What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems
sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
*This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels
sing.*

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*Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.*

Why lies He in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. *{Refrain}*

The Shepherds and the Angels ~ Luke 2:8-21

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Hark! the Herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this

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child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

{Refrain}

See Him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend Your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.

{Refrain}

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

*O, Star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,*

*Westward leading still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

The Visit of the Wise Men ~ Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'

And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the

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star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

**Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.**

Prayers of the People Mike Nonemaker

We come to your manger, each of us, in the stillness of this night,

Here we know our profound powerlessness,
and here you are –
a fragile powerless newborn,
yet the newborn child in whom we recognize the ruler of the universe.

We hear your newborn cry, the cry we have been waiting for – “Make room! Make room for me!”

Fragile God, born in the night –

Meet us here at your manger.

Meet us as a newborn child meets new parents,
come to change our lives forever.

Meet us as the newborn

who insists that we make room for you,

who requires that we reorder our lives to pay

attention to you,

who demands that we be re-centered on the very center of life.

Fragile God, born in the night –

You come as a tiny light in a vast darkness

yet that fragile and flickering light

changes the darkness completely.

Fragile God,

meet us here in the lighting of our small lights,

that we may know your awesome power making

room among us

as the light that shines in the darkness,

the fragile light that the darkness cannot overpower.

Fragile God, there is room in our inn.

Be born in our night.

Amen.

He Has Come for Us

Traditional English Carol / Jason Ingram & Meredith Andrews, 2010

God rest ye merry, gentlefolk,

let nothing you dismay.

Remember Christ our Savior

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was born on Christmas day
to save us all from Satan's pow'r
when we were gone astray.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.
*He has come for us, this Jesus,
He's the hope for humankind.
He has come for us, the Messiah,
born to give us life.*

From God, Creator of us all,
a blessed angel came,
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born
the Son of God by name.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.
{Repeat Chorus}

All the angels sing,
"Hallelujah! Jesus Christ is born!"
All the children sing,
"Hallelujah! He is Christ the Lord!"
*He has come for us, this Jesus,
He's the hope for humankind.
He has come for us, the Messiah,
born to give / us life.*
All the angels sing, "Hallelujah!
Jesus Christ is born!"
All the children sing,
"Hallelujah! He is Christ the Lord!"

Prayer

Mike Tyler

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

☞ The Light of Christ ☞

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." – *John 8:12*

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly
peace.

Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!"

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Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

∞ The Light of Christ

Leads Us into the World ∞

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders,
and wonders of his love

December 24, 2023 **8:00 p.m.** Carols & Candlelight

~ *We Gather in Worship* ~

Prelude

Doug Yetter, organ

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: On this holiest of nights,

**P: we come, joining the shepherds
who are stunned by wonder.**

L: On this most silent night,

**P: we come, our hopes and dreams
joining those of Mary and Joseph.**

L: On this night of carols and candlelight,

**P: we come, our glad songs
joining with choirs of angels.**

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

Congregation / Chancel Choir / Bell Choir

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.

**Come and behold him, born the King of an-
gels.**

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

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

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;

O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest.

{Refrain}

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,

born this happy morning,

Jesus, to thee be all glory given.

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

{Refrain}

LESSON – *The Promise to Abraham* - Genesis 12:2-3

Tom Groff, narrator

PEOPLE OF PROMISE, ARISE!

People arise! Prepare the way!

Let your music greet the day.

Let all the earth break forth with singing.

Let all the mountains and valleys start ringing.

People arise and share the news:

“Christ the King is coming soon!”

People arise and wake the dawn!

Shout for joy! Break froth in song!

Prophets foretold the wondrous story.

Angels will tell of his infinite glory.

People arise and share the news:

“Christ the King is coming soon!”

Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding.

“Christ is nigh,” it seems to say.

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Cast away the works of darkness,
O ye children of the day!
Honor, glory, might and blessing,
Praise the coming of the Son.

People rise, your light has come.
Come all people, arise! Arise!
People arise! People arise!
People of promise, arise!

People arise and greet the morn!
Soon a Savior will be born.
He is the hope of ev'ry nation.
All in Him shall find salvation.
People arise and share the news:
"Christ the King is coming soon!"
People arise! People of promise, arise!

LESSON – *The Peace that Christ will bring is foretold*
Isaiah 9:2-6

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us.
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, alleluia, alleluia,
Joy of every longing heart.

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us.
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israels strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart,
Joy of every longing heart.

Lord of the nations, King of all creation,
"God with us," Emmanuel.
Lord, you are holy. Lord, you are worthy.
Come to our world with us to dwell.

Lord, of the nations, Lord of creation,
Come, now and set your people free.
Lord, Jesus come!

Born your people to deliver,
Born a child, and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone.
By thine all sufficient merit,

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**Raise us to thy glorious throne,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

LESSON – *Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah*

Isaiah 11:1-3

O Little Town of Bethlehem

{Congregational Anthem}

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

**Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.**

**Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting
light.**

**The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is
giv'n!**

**So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav'n.**

**No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,**

**Where meek souls will receive Him,
Still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we
pray.**

**Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us to-
day!**

**We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell.**

**O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanu-
el!**

Our Lord Emmanuel!

LESSON – *The angel Gabriel visits Mary* - Luke 1:26-31

Vicki Gordy-Stith, soloist

My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

My heart is filled with His glory and praise.

My song rejoices in God, my King.

My life is filled with his glorious grace.

Rejoice my soul. O my soul, rejoice, rejoice!

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

All: My soul doth magnify the Lord.

My heart is filled with hope and love.

My song is lifted high above,

For soon we'll see God's promised one!

Rejoice, my soul. O my soul, rejoice, rejoice!

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

Let the hungry rejoice and sing.

God sends the bread of life.

Let the lost and the wand'ring rejoice.

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God is our shepherd and guide.
God is eternal. God is supernal.
God is the giver of life!

God will protect us. God will sustain us.
God will redeem us. God will complete us.
God's mercy endureth to all generations.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.
My heart is filled with his glory and praise.
My song rejoices in God, my king.
My life is filled with his glorious grace.
Rejoice my soul. Rejoice, O my soul.
Rejoice, rejoice O my soul!
My soul doth magnify the lord!
My soul doth magnify the lord!

LESSON – *The birth of Christ* - Luke 2:1-7

Lullabies of Bethlehem

O come little children, O come one and all,
To Bethlehem's stable in Bethlehem's stall,
and see with rejoicing this glorious sight
Our Father in heaven has sent us this night.

O there lies the Christ child on hay and on straw.
The shepherds are kneeling before him with awe;
And Mary and Joseph hold him with love,
while angels are singing sweet songs from above.

Still, still, still, come and see the child so still.
As Mary gently rocks her baby,
Angels softly sing his praises.
Still, still, still, come and see the child so still.

Holy Jesus, little one, Mary's son,
Child of promise, you have come.
As the silent stars go by in the sky,
Angels sing a lullaby.
Songs of peace and hope are sounding,
Tidings of great joy abounding.
Angel voices soaring high so sublime,
Serenade the child so divine.

Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

O come to the manger. O come to the stall.
Gloria!
O come let us adore him.
O come let us adore him.
In excelsis deo.

O come little children.
Come little children.
Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

LESSON – *The shepherds go to the manger* - Luke 2:8-17

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Angels We Have Heard on High

{Congregational Anthem}

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains;
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing.
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the lord, the newborn king.

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

Gloria! In excelsis deo!

LESSON – *The mystery of the Incarnation* - John 1:1-5

Let Christmas Begin

There's a light in the stable so golden and bright,
Bringing new hope and joy
To the cold winter's night.

O candle from heaven,

Come warm us again.

Come and shine in our darkness.

Let Christmas begin.

There's a voice in the shadows
where Jesus awaits,

Bringing new peace and joy
to a world filled with hate.

O come to our hearts,

Lord, we need you again.

Come speak to our longing.

Let Christmas begin.

There's a song in the silence, a carol of peace,
Bringing new hope and joy to the children of
grace.

Come angels of song and rejoice once again.

Come sing to our silence. Let Christmas begin.

Come sing to our silence.

Come speak to our longing.

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**Come shine in our darkness.
Let Christmas begin. Let Christmas begin.**

Sermon Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Still, Still, Still
Epworth Bell Choir

Prayer of Confession Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith

Words of Assurance Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth...

...And so, with your people on earth and all the
company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending
hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and
might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Ho-
sanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

...as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with
Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will
come again.**

...Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy
Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now
and forever. **Amen.**

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 tres-
passes, 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.**

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Sharing Bread and Cup

~Music During Communion~

Greensleeves Epworth Bell Choir
Mary, Did You Know? Chancel Choir

☞ The Light of Christ ☛

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." – *John 8:12*

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly
peace.

Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!"
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is
born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy
birth.

Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is
born!

☞ The Light of Christ

Leads Us into the World ☛

Benediction Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding
joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders,
and wonders of his love.

Postlude

Gloria! ... Jason D. Payne

Stephen Ministers, wearing blue name badges,
will be at each service if anyone in our Epworth family
wants to talk about life challenges.

The special Peace Candle on the Altar
shines to remind us of God's desire for peace
throughout
our world and our call to be God's peacemakers.

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Joys and Concerns for your prayers to Week of December 18, 2023

Sympathy

.To Gwen Osborne and Katie Handy, family and friends, on the death of Gwen's brother, James Osborne.

CONCERNS:

People in conflict of Israel and Gaza Strip

People of Ukraine

Deaf People of Ukraine

Steve Ackeret

Cody Arbuthnot

Mirta Araz0za

David Bendekovits

Cathy Benson

Jason Bezman

Brad Bingaman

Annabelle Boire

Diaz Bonville

Tom Bradley

Andy Brangenberg

The Browning Family

Diane Bruce

Tim Bush

Judy Buchanan

Fran Colavita

Miles Carhartt

Carolyn Cattafi

Sylvia Clair

Kris Coch

Lou Ann Daniels

Max Dick

Jeanne Drake

Jennifer Eden Family

David Caffier

Sylvie Drew

Andrea Esarey

Dorothy Fedorka

Carol Fehrenbach

Darlene Ford

Marion Ford

Michael Frome

LeAnne Funk

Tom Groff

Jim Handy

Susan Hargrave

Clella Harp

Elizabeth Hart Family

Joan Heckel

Kathy Hill

Ray Hilt

Barb Hoffman

Mickey Hoffman

Carolyn Horn

Lorraine Hudson

Deb Hunt

Carol Davis Garber

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Janet Idema
Kara
Ted Kerwin
Chole Kincaid Krean
Nancy Lathbury
David & Sue Laverty
Duncan Leet
Cary Lewis
Tyler Lewis
Robert Lewis
Annette Licitra
Lorretta Mahan
Jerry Mahon
Ryan Martin
Steve Meadors
Jack Mears
Missy Mehring-back procedure
Pam Mehring
Brenda Milbourne
Laura Miller
Payton Miller
Joy Mitchell
Karen Mitchell
Ann Paulen
Ron Paxton
Leslie Petty
Glenn Pierce
Sandy Pierce
Richard Pioli
Bruce Powell
Annette Predeaux
Presley
Constance Quillen
Barbara Simpson
Joanne Smith
John Riley Spillane
Vernon Redding
Charlie Reynolds
Holly Reynolds
Carl Richards
Beth Rinker
Betty Robbins
Sandy Roca
Pete Roche
Wilmarie Rodriguez
Sandi Russell
Dorothy & John Sadler
Irene & Tom Saffrit
Mark Saunders
Ed Scarborough
Dianne Shearon
Susan Shollenberger
Linda Simms
Henry Simpson
Michael & Anna Skiles
Fred and Sharyn Smith
Ray Sonderfan
Rob Socorso
Paul

Streit

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Scott Strickler
Michael Stugard
Mark Thompson
Beth Toney
Renee Toney
Susanne Truitt
Harvey and Peggy Waltersdorf
Amy Wall
Wanda Walton-Hummel
Tim Weschler
Michael Wills, Sr
Carol Wine
Dan Wine in Beebe
Jack Witmer
Denise Wolfe
Charlotte Woods
Claire Worrall
Susan Yates
Jean Young

**Continued Prayers for those in Assisted Living,
Homebound, Hospice or in Long Term Care**

Donna Blomquist, The Moorings
Ann Chambers, The Moorings
Leon Cromer, Harbor Health
Carolyn Robinson-Brandywine
Linda Rooney
Quinn Smith
Elaine Trexler

College Students

Autumn Reynolds-Cedar Crest College
Kristina Alexander, UD
Cole Thomas Juliano, Elon
Wade Stout-
Alex Tamburello, Delaware College of Art and Design
Thomas Vyas, Delaware Tech
Griffin Barrows, Marist

Epworth Ministry Organization



Staff & Leadership

Church Office: 302-227-7743 (plus extension)

Lead Pastor: [Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith](#) (x102)

Pastor of Community & Communication:

[Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith](#) (x103)

Minister of Music: [Doug Yetter](#) (x106)

Caring Minister: [Mickie McManamon](#) (x104)

Belonging Minister: [Gwen Osborne](#) (x108)

Youth Minister: [Joy Gordy-Stith](#)

Minister to Deaf and Hard of Hearing: [Sandy Roca](#)

Preschool Director: [Betsy Plowman](#) (x107)

Administrative Assistant: (x100)

Bookkeeper: [Darlene Ford](#) (x105)

Scheduling/Rentals & DOVs: [Susan Jimenez](#)

Facilities Manager: [John Hilt](#)

Cemetery Superintendent: [Jay Stevenson](#)

Governing Board Chair—[Linda Kauffman](#)

Lay Leader—[Todd Popham](#)

Finance Chair—[David Hagelin](#)

Staff-Parish Relations Chair—[Sandy Pierce](#)

Board of Trustees Chair—[Bunny Maher](#)

Inviting Leadership Team

(Inclusive Ministries, Food Ministries, Ecumenical/Interfaith, Social Justice)

[Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith](#) and [Bob Joynson](#)

Belonging Leadership Team

(Small Groups, New Members/Belongings, Sunday School, Youth & Adult Groups)

[Gwen Osborne](#), [Linda BenderHilt](#), [Loretta Mahan](#),

[Cathie Lewis](#) and [Teri Moore](#)

Connecting Leadership Team

(Worship, Music, Arts)

[Doug Yetter](#) and [Murray Archibald](#)

Caring Leadership Team

(Missions, Pastoral Care Team, Care Ministries)

[Mickie McManamon](#), [Dee Speck](#) and [Holly Reynolds](#)