

THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2017

“O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.”

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS
BORN TO SET THY PEOPLE FREE

Prelude to Worship

Alma Evett

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Invocation

Greg Barmer

Message in Song

Michael W. Smith

Sing Noel, Sing Hallelujah

Sing Noel! Sing we all Noel! Come behold this Child in the manger, gift of the Father's great love.

Angels look down as His glory surrounds them, starlight from heaven above.

Lift up your heads all who wander in darkness, shine for your light has come.

Down through the ages, though sin's battle rages, Christ, our Messiah, has won.

*Let every daughter and son of the Father rise on this Christmas morn. With heaven voicing all praise and rejoicing,
Christ, our Redeemer is born. Sing Noel, sing Hallelujah! Lift high His praises, Christ come to save us all.*

The Congregation Responds, Hymn 87

Joy to the World

Lighting the Peace Candle

Macy Morgan

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent. We have already lit the candles of Hope and Love and Joy. Today they shine again to remind us that Christ was born first in Bethlehem but is coming again to keep all God's promises.

The fourth candle is the candle of Peace. Jesus said that those who make peace would be called the children of God.

We are his children. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and we say to all the world that He is our only hope for peace. True peace is like a light shining in a dark place, and Jesus wants us to be His light in the world.

Thank you Lord, for the peace you bring us. While we wait for your coming, may it make us stronger. May your peace, your joy, your love, and your hope shine through all our worship, through all our words, and through all our deeds. Amen.

The Congregation Responds

Come to Us, O Child of Light*

Come to us, O Child of Light, born to us this holy night.

Grant us grace for canceled sin and make us pure within.

Come to us, O Child of Light, You alone turn faith to sight.

Darkness gone, the light has come. Christ is born in us today. Christ is born in us today.

Blessing of the Children

Joy Stallings

FROM OUR FEARS AND SINS RELEASE US

LET US FIND OUR REST IN THEE

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Greg Barmer

Isaiah 49:1-6

The Congregation Responds, hymn 100

Angels We Have Heard On High

Reading from the Gospels

Luke 2:8-20

The Good News from God's Word

Scott Setzer

The Best Gift of All is Jesus

Our Response to the Gospel, Hymn 93

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

ISRAEL'S STRENGTH AND CONSOLATION

HOPE OF ALL THE EARTH THOU ART

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Worshippers

Christmas Medley

Barbara Owens, Alma Evett

An Advent Doxology

Worshippers

“Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!”

Benediction

Postlude

Go Tell It On the Mountain

The Sanctuary during Advent and Christmas

Far from the usual red and green are the liturgical colors of purple, white, and even pink at times, that all serve to point us toward the redemptive work of Christ. Purple, symbolic of repentance and fasting, as well as royalty, is traditionally used during both Lent and Advent (beginning 4 Sundays prior to Christmas Day). White and gold are symbolic of purity and celebration. At the center of the Advent Wreath is the larger white Christ Candle, lit on Christmas Eve. At times the Wreath may include one pink candle as a reminder to rejoice in anticipation of Christ's coming. The Chrismon (meaning “Christ monogram”) Tree ornaments are all made of white and gold to symbolize the holiness and purity of Christ. Each ornament represents a Biblical symbol.

None of these elements serve as “decorations,” but as reminders of our Sovereign God, righteous beyond our understanding, coming in humility and love to dwell with us and cleanse us from the horror of our sin.