

Worship Leader Guide

DATE: Sunday, December 1, 2024

SERIES TITLE: The Gift Exchange

Preacher: Pastor Amy

Liturgist: Gary T

Accompanist: Leigh Ann C

Greeters/Ushers:

Media Technicians: Tammy M

Nursery Attendant: Shirley C

[9:55 AM]

PRELUDE "Emmanuel"

by James Southbridge

[10:00 AM]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME & WORDS OF GRACE

Amy: Amy: The Lord be with you!

What a joy to see you all today. My name is Amy Sell, I use she/her pronouns and am the pastor here at Grace UMC. It is a joy to welcome you today whether you are here in our sanctuary today or joining us on livestream. We know we have a wonderful, diverse group of folks that come to worship with us online.

Friends, no matter where you come from today, or where you go at the close of this service, no matter what you believe or doubt, no matter what you feel or don't feel today, no matter your immigration status, no matter whom you love, you're welcome to come just as you are to be met by our God who knows you by name and who loves you and who wants to have an ever closer relationship with you. You are welcome here.

Let's pray: Today, O God, we recognize that even in our challenges, worries, and concerns, you are present. Your presence provides assurance that things will be alright. Even though we might feel lost in the valleys of our lives, you provide direction, strength, and comfort. Thank you for never leaving our side. Amen.

Liturgist: Please stand as you are able in body or spirit and join me in the Call to Worship.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, all who need help!

Many: Our help comes from God, the One who made heaven and earth.

One: When life feels overwhelming, and we're not sure where to turn, we ask: Where does our hope come from?

Many: Our hope comes from God.

One: When stress and despair weigh us down, we know we're not alone. God is with us, guiding us through every challenge.

Many: God watches over us now and always, in our struggles and our hope.

One: Come, let us worship the Lord, the source of our hope.

Many: We lift our eyes and hearts to You, O God, our ever-present help and hope. We come to worship you with joyful hope. Amen.

Liturgist: Please join me as we lift our voices together in our opening hymn, Come, O Come, Emmanuel, found in the red hymnal on page 211, verses 1-4.

***OPENING HYMN:** UMH #211 Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs.1-4

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

[Refrain]

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

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. [Refrain]

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave. [Refrain]

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Gray Family

(may be found on the green sheets in the pews)

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.

Many: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM "Emmanuel, God with Us"

arr. Lloyd Larson

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Second LESSON Psalm 121:1-8

Amy:

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
² My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
⁴ He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day
nor the moon by night.
⁷ The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
⁸ The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.
Many: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE “Despair for Hope” Pastor Amy

Prayer Hymn: UMH #196 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus vs.1

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,
joy of every longing heart.

JOYS & CONCERNS

Amy: As we make our way back to our seats, we will move into a time of prayer. Are there joys and concerns that you would like to lift, so that we can be in prayer and praise with each other today and in this coming week?

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

Amy:

Emmanuel, God with us,
You came to earth to share peace, hope, and love.
To show us a better way to live
A way of grace, mercy, justice, and advocacy.
Bring your peace to Ukraine, Russia, Palestine, and Israel. Guide the leaders of these nations to seek an end to oppressive systems that keep the most vulnerable in shackles. Help us to be peacemakers in our sphere of influence.
Bring your hope to the refugees of Sudan and Myanmar that they may find a safe place to rebuild their lives and form new communities with others. Help us to shower hope in all the places that we enter.

Bring your love to the people of this city who do not have a warm place to lay their heads at night due to homelessness or endless evictions. Help us share your love with everyone we meet, even when it is difficult.

In the darkness of the night, may we all feel surrounded by your peace, your love, and your hope through Jesus, the prince of peace. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we have not kept watch for you.

We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns.

We have not waited to find your will for us.

We have not noticed the needs of the people around us.

We have not acknowledged the love that has been shown to us.

Forgive us for our lack of watchfulness.

Help us to wait to know your will.

Help us to look out for the needs of others.

Help us to work and watch for your coming. Amen.

A time of silence

One: Friends, believe the good news:

In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Many: Thanks be to God.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

In times of despair, the psalmist reminds us that God keeps us day and night. As a community church, we seek to care for others. Your giving makes a difference here. This week, we celebrated Thanksgiving; a group of folks provided a Thanksgiving feast for the families at Family Promise. We also received a great note of thanks from one of the recovery groups, who were so grateful for the space to meet each week. May these gifts that we give transition suffering into hope.

There are many ways to give today. There is an offering box at the back of the sanctuary. You can give online at graceumcbillings.org/give, or you can text (406) 660-3699 and follow the prompts to give that way as well. Whatever you give, great or small, thank you for giving so we can continue to spread God's love for all people to all the people we meet.

Let's pray:

God of generosity, our strength and hope come from you. As we offer our gifts, may we present our discouragement and despair, hoping for care and protection. May these offerings be used to build hope in our communities where despair previously resided. Amen.

Prayer Hymn: UMH #196 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus vs. 2

Born thy 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,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

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.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,

And spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day

When justice shall roll down like waters

And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,

When nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

Neither shall they learn war anymore.

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. Hosanna in the highest.

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

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,

Whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.

You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts

And have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.

You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree.

You fill the hungry with good things, and the rich you send empty away.

Your own Son came among us as a servant,

To be Emmanuel, your presence with us.

He humbled himself in obedience to your will

And freely accepted death on a cross.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection

You gave birth to your Church,

Delivered us from slavery to sin and death,

and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,

gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over he took the cup,

Gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant,
Poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
We offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
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.

Gary: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
And on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
That we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
One with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
Until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
All honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever more.

Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Amy: And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us saying:
Our Creator, 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 us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Amy:

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body,
for we all partake of the one loaf.
The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
[break bread]
The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.
[lift cup]

Amy: Prayer after Communion
Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son, Christ our Lord.
Grant us grace,
so to follow your holy saints in all virtuous and godly living,
That we may come to those unspeakable joys,
Which you have prepared for those who sincerely love you;
Through Jesus Christ our Love. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Amy will introduce at the end of communion.

UMH #220 Angels from the Reals of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

[Refrain]

Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light: [Refrain]

Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star: [Refrain]

Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear;
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear: [Refrain]

CHARGE AND BLESSING

Amy:

Go in peace,
Live in love,
Seek Christ's hope this week. Amen.

Postlude: Let Christians All With Joyful Mirth

by James Mansfield
Leigh Ann Corcoran, Minister of Music

WORSHIP NOTES

<https://billingsgrace.breezechms.com/form/virtualpewcard>