

THOSE
WHO *are*
DREAM *not alone*
4TH sunday in Advent



THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
A Service of the Word

December 20, 2020 ✦ 10:00 a.m.

The 4th Sunday of Advent

“Elizabeth’s words and actions invite us to reflect on our own openness to the ways that God chooses to act in our world. What is God doing through unexpected people in our society today? Where is God at work through people whom our neighbors and fellow church members often exclude or treat as shameful? Will we listen to the Spirit’s prompting when the bearers of God’s new reality show upon our doorstep?”

— *Judith Jones*

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day, the day of Christ’s resurrection

Prelude — “Savior of the Nations, Come,” BWV 662, by Bach

Dr. Patricia Snyder

Welcome

Greeting

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: **And also with you.**

Call to Worship

Nancy Tomastik, liturgist

One: I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,

Many: **suddenly, joy was overflowing.**

One: I knew love, but when you held my hand,

Many: **suddenly, love was overflowing.**

One: I knew God, but when you showed me grace,

when you forgave me,

when you loved me,

when you raised me,

Many: **suddenly, God was overflowing.**

One: So, let us worship Holy God together

as a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.

Many: **This is community.**

One: This is the body of Christ.

Many: **Welcome home.**

Hymn — “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

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Confession & Forgiveness

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Many: An angel spoke to Mary: “Do not be afraid!”
And yet, O Lord, we find ourselves paralyzed
by fear of what we do not know.
We are not ready to meet you;
 we find no room for you in our lives;
 we fail to welcome others.
Forgive us of our sin, O Lord.
Give us the faith of Mary
 to respond to your grace with lives of grateful praise.
Teach us to laugh, like Elizabeth.
Teach us to trust and to witness, like the angels.
Help us hear always and again the good news:
 Light is breaking. Love is coming.
 The world is about to turn!
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

Lighting the Candle of Love

Members of the Lake family

News from our Life Together

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

Refrain — “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful”

IN THE LORD I’LL BE EVER THANKFUL (Taizé)

In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re -
joyce! Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your
voic - es; the Lord is near. Lift up your voic - es; the Lord is near.

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading — 2nd Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

Scripture Reading — Luke 1:26-45

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. We are then presented the encounter between Elizabeth, John-the-Baptist's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus—two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith.

The *refrain* (“In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful” – music above) is repeated.

Sermon — “Those Who Dream... are not alone”

The Rev. Matthew Emery

RESPONSE

We begin our lives of responding to the gospel in prayer and offering

Responding with our Gifts

Give online: Go to www.storrsconchurch.org and click the green “Give now...” button.

Text: Text “StorrsCongChurch” to 73256, followed by your gift amount (i.e. “StorrsCongChurch \$100”).

Those participating via Zoom are welcome to submit prayer petitions (joys and concerns) via the Chat feature.

An Offering Thought

“For nothing will be impossible with God.”– Luke 1:37

This Sunday we celebrate Mary’s faithfulness and willingness to do God’s will. This brave young woman hears the angel’s words and believes. As a faithful steward, what possibilities do you see for our community and congregation?

OFFERTORY MUSIC — “There Is No Rose of Such Virtue” by Caracciolo SCC Choral Scholars

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu. *Alleluia!*

For in this rose contained was heaven and earth in little space, *Resmiranda.*

By that rose we may well see there be one God in persons three, *Pares forma.*

Leave we all this worldly mirth and follow we this joyous birth. *Transeamus.*

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu. *Gaudeamus.*

— anonymous, circa 1420

(“Resmiranda”: marvelous thing. “Pares forma”: equal in form.

“Transeamus”: let us go. “Gaudeamus”: let us rejoice.)

The Prayers of the People, *ending with* The Lord’s Prayer

Many: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us forth in mission for the world

Hymn — “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

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Affirmation

One: We await the Christ,

***Many:* the One who will reveal God to us.**

One: He comes to us as sparkling light:

***Many:* twinkling with joy and playfulness.**

One: He comes to us as everyday light:

***Many:* brightening the ordinary world around us.**

One: He comes to us as softened light:

***Many:* creating a gentle, healing space in the shadows.**

One: He comes to us as a focused spotlight:

***Many:* bringing truth and justice into stark relief.**

One: This is the Light of the world—

***Many:* Jesus Christ, coming to shine among us.**

Musical Blessing — “Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming,” arr. Praetorius

SCC Choral Scholars

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

— *anonymous 14th century German carol;*
trans. Theodore Baker & Harriet Krauth Spaeth

Benediction

Postlude — “Toccatà on VENI EMMANUEL” by Carter

Dr. Patricia Snyder

Following the postlude, the Zoom Meeting will remain open for those who wish to connect and chat—a bring-your-own-coffee “coffee hour”! We look forward to connecting with you!

88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
 and make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
 our spirits by thine advent here;
 disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 and death's dark shadows put to flight.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 all peoples in one heart and mind;
 bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)

Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)

Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)

Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)

Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and
world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and
win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by
near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the
free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break
light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens
bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der
forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be
love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heav - en - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
of his an - them's rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.
raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

Notes and Acknowledgements

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STORRS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*We share in God's love by growing in faith,
courageously seeking justice, and generously caring for all people.*

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