



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.ELPC.church

As a diverse community of believers, we strive to follow God – the Creator who calls us, Jesus who teaches us, and the Spirit who empowers us. We show God’s unconditional love by providing a refuge for spiritual growth, ardently pursuing justice, and extending Christ’s radical hospitality to all. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT NOVEMBER 29, 2020 — 11 AM LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

PRELUDE

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”
(Es ist Ein Ros entsprungen)

Ethan LaPlaca, *organ*
Johannes Brahms

OPENING WORDS

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

SHARING GOD’S PEACE

The Rev. Woodworth

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: Y también contigo.

And also with you.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY *(responsive reading)*

Linda Lane

Leader: We light Advent candles as an act of prayer, trusting that our preparation for Christmas includes looking outward in love, looking forward in hope, and looking around expectantly for Christ, the Word made flesh, coming to us once more.

People: **We light the first candle of peace, praying that swords can be beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, and nations shall not lift up sword against nation.**

Leader: Living Christ, Light of the World, shine in our lives and shine among us now.

HYMN #88 *(vs. 1, 4, 6, 7)*

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

VENI EMMANUEL

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

Refrain: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Root of Jesse, free thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save and give them victory o’er the grave. *(Refrain)***

**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. *(Refrain)***

**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. *(Refrain)***

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: **En Jesucristo tenemos perdón!
¡Alaben a Dios!**

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Praise God!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ephesians 2:19-22

Jess Duvall

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

TIME FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

HYMN #129

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

ES IST EIN' ROS'

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.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us
And lightens every load.

GOSPEL LESSON (*New Living Translation*)

John 1:1-14

The Rev. Woodworth

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

SERMON

The Word Becomes Flesh Again:
"Making a Home Among Us"

The Rev. Woodworth

HYMN #90 (*sing 3x*)

"Wait for the Lord"

WAIT FOR THE LORD

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

GREATER PITTSBURGH FOOD BANK VIDEO

Jordan Hartman

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

OFFERING INVITATION

The Rev. Woodworth

We offer our gifts in response to God's love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation. Please visit www.ELPC.church/donate if you would like to make a contribution.

HYMN #109

“Blest Be the God of Israel”

MERLE’S TUNE

Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
Who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise and bring the people peace.

God from the house of David a child of grace has given;
A Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
The prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
The dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner’s eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

BLESSING & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Woodworth

POSTLUDE

“Finale from Symphony IV”

Ethan LaPlaca, *organ*
Charles-Marie Widor



**PARTICIPANTS
IN TODAY’S SERVICE**

Preaching: The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Liturgists: The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush
The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Jess Duvall
Jordan Hartman
Linda Lane

Musicians: Ethan LaPlaca, *Organist*
Adrianna Cleveland, *Cantor*

A/V: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

As part of ELPC’s mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is now being livestreamed on:

Facebook

www.facebook.com/EastLibertyPresbyterian

YouTube

<http://tiny.cc/elpc-youtube>

and archived at www.ELPC.church

If you would like to make a contribution, visit:
www.ELPC.church/donate

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (vs. 1, 4, 6, 7)



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-joice! Re-joice!
 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.

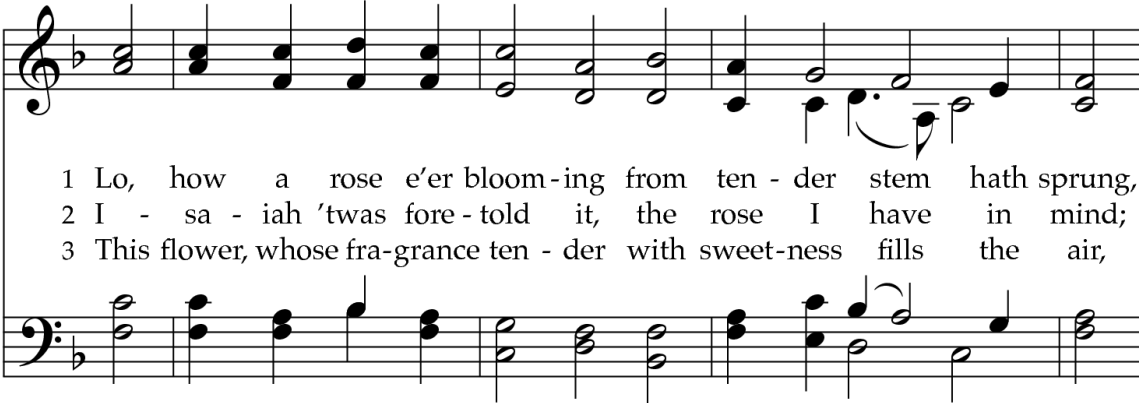
- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
 and open wide our heavenly home;
 make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> | <p>6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
 our spirits by thine advent here;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

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

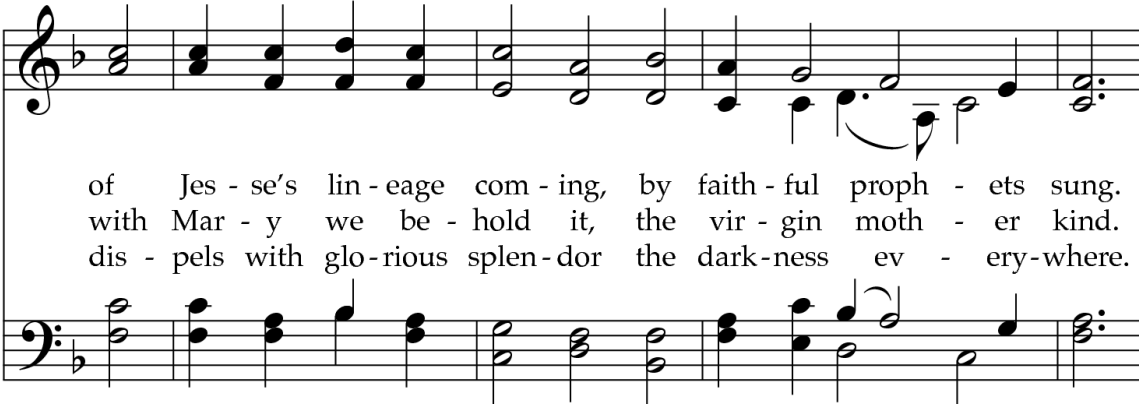
Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)	Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)	Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)
Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)	Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)	
Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)	Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)	

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.

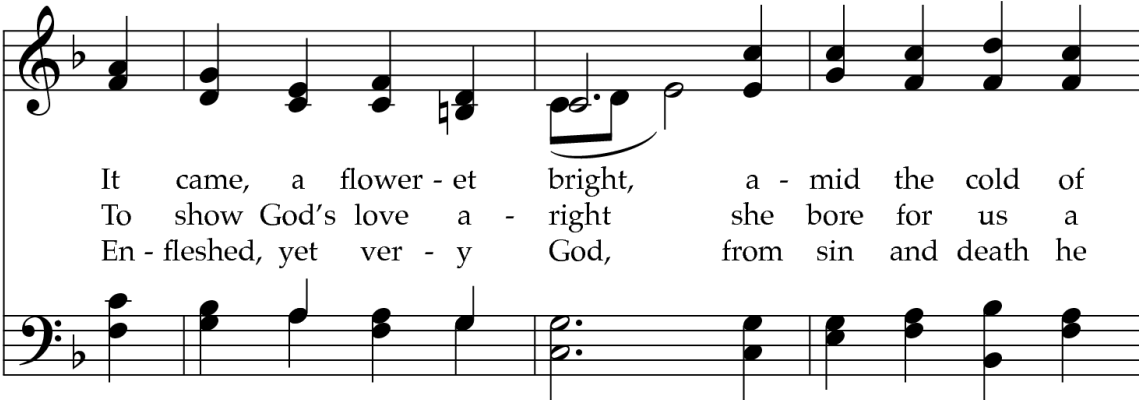
LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING



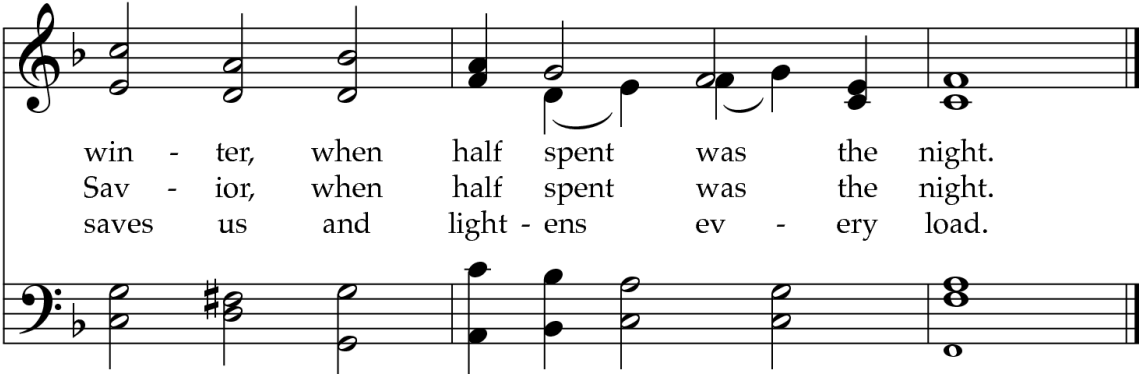
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung,
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind;
 3 This flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air,



of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, by faith - ful proph - ets sung.
 with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind.
 dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - ery - where.



It came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the cold of
 To show God's love a - right she bore for us a
 En - fleshed, yet ver - y God, from sin and death he



win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
 saves us and light - ens ev - ery load.

Although the early copies of this 15th-century German text include many more stanzas than are printed here, this simpler, shorter form has much to commend it. This early 17th-century harmonization of the traditional chorale melody invites and rewards singing in parts.

WAIT FOR THE LORD *(sing 3x)*

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 2/2 time. The first system contains the first line of the song, and the second system contains the second line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staves.

TEXT Ref. Taizé Community, 1984

MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1984

Text and Music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

Responsive Reading © 1993 the Order of St. Benedict (admin. The Liturgical Press)

WAIT FOR THE LORD

8.8

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BLEST BE THE GOD OF ISRAEL



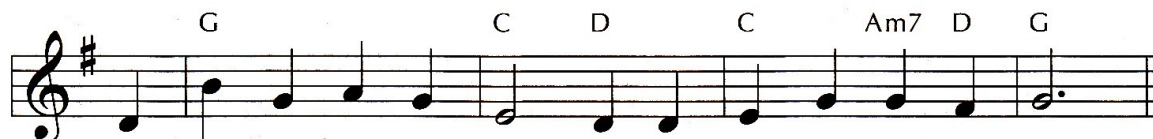
1 Blest be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free;
 2 God from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given;
 3 On those who sit in dark - ness the sun be - gins to rise,



who vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty.
 a Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.
 the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes.



The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
 Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
 God guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.



God shall ful - fill that prom - ise and bring the peo - ple peace.
 the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
 O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

This 20th-century British paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79) broadens the implications of what John the Baptist's father says in order to affirm that God's work is ongoing. The tune is named for the composer's oldest sister, who was his first piano teacher.

THE CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE — DUE DEC 9

The holidays are almost here! As in years past, the ELPC Deacons are organizing the Christmas Giving Tree to benefit children and families from ELPC's Mission, Christian Education, and Hope Academy ministries, East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM); and Casa San José.

This year's Giving Tree will be different. There will be no physical gifts, only gift cards to stores like Target and Walmart. Instead of having the Giving Tree outside of different services, we will be using SignUpGenius.

When the gift requests are all complete, we will send out a link to the sign-up form, where you will be able to select that you will purchase a real gift card. You also could choose to send donations for the purchase of a gift card. Both gift cards and donations will need to be sent to the church by Dec 9. You can mail the gift cards or drop them off at the church's front desk. Donations can be sent in via checks made out to "ELPC Giving Tree" or through the "Donate" button at ELPC.church. Please designate that your donation is for the "Giving Tree."

If you are not computer savvy, but would like to help out with the Giving Tree gifts, please contact Trish Buben (tab190@gmail.com; 410.504.2561) or Pastor Patrice (PatriceFS@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x130).

PW'S BIBLE STUDY — DEC 1 AND 7

Sorrow, suffering, and grief characterize both mourning and lament. However, lament boldly asks God to act. Lamenting may be the only way to respond to atrocity and fear—pandemic, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass violence. We can lament, trusting that God hears and will act. Join us on Tuesday, Dec 1 at 10 am, or Monday, Dec 7 at 7 pm, on Zoom for this month's lesson *Lamenting Death*. If you have questions, please email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

CAN YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR? — DEC 13

Even though we continue to gather "virtually" as a community of faith, we will still celebrate the story of Christ's birth together! Join the kids of ELPC on Sunday, Dec 13 at 10 am via Zoom for our annual Christmas Pageant. Led by kids of all ages, we will hear once more the good news that in Christ, God is with us always. Please contact Megan Leisher (MeganL@coh.net) for the Zoom link if you'd like to attend!

CHRISTMAS IN EAST LIBERTY CONCERT — DEC 18

Join us for our virtual *Christmas in East Liberty* Cathedral Concert and relive some of our favorite Christmas performances by The Brass Roots, organist Dr. Edward Alan Moore, and the ELPC Chancel Choir! Watch live on Friday, Dec 18 at 7 pm on our YouTube or Facebook pages. Please visit www.ELPC.church for more details.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE:

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS — DEC 19

This year has brought many challenges to our physical, emotional, and spiritual lives. As the season of Christ's birth approaches, the ELPC Deacons invite you to join us in worship on Saturday, Dec 19 at 7 pm to feel God's presence in this time of unprecedented isolation, loss, and distress. Our *Blue Christmas* service is designed as a resource of strength, hope and community as we journey together through Advent. Due to ongoing safety considerations, this year's *Blue Christmas* service will be held virtually on our YouTube or Facebook pages. Visit www.ELPC.church for more details.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING — DEC 20

God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. The *Christmas Joy Offering* addresses the support needed by our leaders—including leadership development programs in communities of color and Presbyterian church workers in their time of need. Will you consider supporting this offering when you receive a *Christmas Joy Offering* envelope in the mail from the Mission Board? The offering will be received on Sunday, Dec 20.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES — DEC 24

The season of Advent and Christmas is a time of joy and celebration. And while we may not be able to worship in person on Christmas Eve, Thursday, Dec 24, we will livestream our services. Join us virtually for our *Friends & Family* service at 5 pm, and our *Candlelight* service at 8 pm. Both services will be available on YouTube and Facebook. Visit our website for links (www.ELPC.church).

