



**Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 24, 2023
9:30 a.m. Service**

PRELUDE *Away in A Manger* Arr. D. Forrest

POURING OUT OF WATERS, PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST Pastor Diane

RINGING THE BOWL / CHOIR PROCESSION Pastor Craig

INTROIT *Prepare the Way of the Lord* 95

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord,
And all people will see the salvation of our God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L. All around us are signs of the significance of the season.

P. The beauty of the room in which we worship subtly whispers a hint of glory.

L. Everything seems to be in a state of readiness for Christ to come.

P. But, what about our hearts?

L. What good are the sights and sounds, the beauty and lights, if Christ is not welcome in our hearts?

All. Today God, lead us into an experience of worship that pleases you and makes our hearts ready to receive the Christ. May he be born in us.

✠ OPENING HYMN *O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?* 104

ADVENT PRAYER (by Henry Nouwen)

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

CHILDREN'S TIME Lighting the Candle of Peace

Come Holy Spirit! In this fourth week of Advent, we ask You to fill our hearts with peace as we prepare for Christ's coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Lord, we ask to receive the peace of Your Holy Spirit throughout this week. Help us to be peacemakers, sharing Your peace within our home and beyond. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

As we prepare for Jesus' coming, we are aware peace is elusive in our world, but we trust God is always with us. Even in times of war and discord, God leads us to new possibilities. **Fill our hearts with faith, hope, joy and peace! Amen.**

Sing: O Come, Desire of nations, bind all people 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 you, O Israel.

ANTHEM *O Holy Night* A.Adam/Arr. L. McKechnie

LESSONS AND CAROLS

The Prophecy

Scripture Micah 5:2-5a

Hymn *While We Are Waiting, Come* 92

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.

With power and glory, come; with power and glory come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.

Prayer

The Call

Scripture

Luke 1:26-33

Hymn

To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary

98

To a maid whose name was Mary, the angel Gabriel came.
“Fear Not,” the angel told her, “I come to bring good news;
Good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news.”

As Mary heard the angel, she wondered at his words.
“Behold, I am your handmaid,” she said unto her God.
“So be it; I am ready according to your word.”

Prayer

The Response

Scripture

Luke 1:46-55

Hymn

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

100

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age,
We remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
Who is turning the world around.

Refrain

Prayer

The Fulfillment

Scripture

Luke 2:1-7a

Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem

121

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 the king, and peace to all on earth.

Prayer

SERMON

Bethlehem: An Unusual Choice

✠ **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH I Do Believe (by Bruce Prewer)**

**I believe in God whose light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never smother it.**

**I believe that in Bethlehem there was born a Saviour,
who is Christ the Lord.**

**I believe in the Word who has become incarnate, our very flesh
and blood, yet full of grace and truth.**

**I believe in the blessed appearing of the salvation of our God,
that is for the happiness of all people.**

**I believe in his name as Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of peace;**

**Of the increase of his rule and of his unique Peace,
there will be no end.**

The zeal of the God of hosts will do this. This I surely believe!

CALL FOR OFFERING

OFFERTORY *How Majestic is Your Name*

M.W. Smith/Arr. T. Fettke

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.

O Lord, we praise You name, we magnify Your name:

Prince of Peace, Mighty God; O Lord God Almighty.

His glorious name shall be called Wonderful,

His matchless name shall be called Counselor,

The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,

The Prince of Peace through all eternity!

✠ **DOXOLOGY** 606

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

✠ **HYMN** *Love Has Come* 110

✠ **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

✠ **DISMISSAL** *Let There Be Peace On Earth*

✠ **POSTLUDE** *On Christmas Night* Arr. D. Wagner

✠ **All those who are able, please stand**

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All Worship Services are available for replay on our website.

www.valleypres.net

Monday: 12/25

CHRISTMAS! The Office is Closed Monday,
and will reopen on Tuesday.

Tuesday: 12/26

9:00 a.m. Cardio Drumming

9:30 a.m. Prayer Ministry

Wednesday: 12/27

9:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study

9:00 a.m. Parkinson's Chair Exercises

10:00 a.m. Chair Exercise Class

2:00 p.m. Valley Ringers Rehearsal

3:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday: 12/28

8:30 a.m. Session Meeting—Offsite

Friday: 12/29

9:00 a.m. Parkinson’s Chair Exercises

VPC Financial - Attendance / On-Line Viewing Metrics			
Monthly Giving Support Contributions		Weekly Attendance / Viewing	
October-2023		Through Week 48 (11/26/23)	
Monthly Giving Support	\$ 52,364	Weekly Attendance Sanctuary	270
Monthly Giving Budget	61,839	* YTD 2023 Attendance Sanctuary	12,539
*YTD Giving Support	644,071	** Weekly Viewing On-Line	112
*YTD Giving Budget	647,820	** YTD 2023 Viewing On-Line	6,314
		* YTD 2023 Attendance / On-Line	18,853
		* YTD 2022 Attendance Sanctuary	10,448
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<small>S. Ginader - VPC treasurer - steveginader@gmail.com - 952-687-1879 2023 Per Capita is \$41.50 per member</small>			

WELCOME to all who enter this place. Drink deeply of the living waters of God’s grace as we worship together in spirit.

VISITORS: Consider yourself at home while you are here! Please enjoy a cup of coffee, lemonade and a cookie while visiting the Visitor’s Table in Fellowship Hall after the church worship service. You can pick up a Visitor’s Information Packet at the Visitor's Table or the Welcome Centers. If you would like to receive more information about us, visit us at valleypres.net where you can sign up for our daily email blasts and monthly newsletter.

Children are invited to worship in the sanctuary then attend Sunday School after Children’s Time.



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REV. DR. CRAIG LINDSEY, *Head of Staff*
REV. DIANE CHRISTOPHER, *Associate
Pastor of Discipleship*
CHRISTINE ERICKSON, RN, *Parish Nurse*
JAMIE REED, *Director of Music*
JAN BRACHEL, *Organist/Accompanist*
REV. JOE HAWKINS, *Pastor Emeritus*

We are a Stephen Ministry Church