

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Nancy Curtis

PRELUDE

O Word of God Incarnate

David H. Hegarty

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Candle of Joy is lit.

OPENING HYMN *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Charles Wesley, 1744

Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715; alt.

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
3. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,
4. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;

From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Very present God, we yearn to lay down the burdens of our apathy, of our unhealthy ways, of our pain. We yearn to unfold in strength and blossom in grace. We have been crippled by our own pride. We have been wounded by the prejudice we feel toward others. We have been blinded by our anger and greed. Forgive us those choices that lead us away from you into sin. Speak your good news to us again, making us messengers of your light and your hope and send us out to try once more to live as Christ lived...*Time of silent reflection*

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Behold and believe in the wondrous power and love of God! It is poured out for you and for God's beloved world. Rejoice in this good news, for it is given especially to you. Amen.

SEASONAL RESPONSE

**All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace!
Good will to all from highest heav'n begin and never cease!**

THE WORD OF GOD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 1:46b-55

SERMON

HYMN

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-413)
Trans. John Mason Neale, 1854,
and Henry Williams Baker, 1859

Plainsong, Mode V
Harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940



1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten, Ere the worlds be - gan to be,
2. O ye heights of heav - en a - dore Him; An - gel hosts, His prais - es sing;
3. Christ, to Thee with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly Ghost, to Thee,



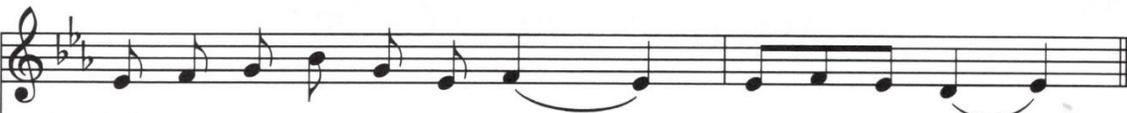
He is Al - pha and O - meg - a, He the source, the end - ing He,
Powers, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him, And ex - tol our God and King;
Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing And un - wea - ried prais - es be:



Of the things that are, that have been, And that fu - ture years shall see,
Let no tongue on earth be si - lent, Ev - ery voice in con - cert ring,
Hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion, And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry,



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Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.



OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, AND PRAYER REQUESTS

OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

MUSICAL OFFERING

A Christmas Hallelujah
Barb Antoniewicz, solist

Leonard Cohen

I've heard about this baby boy who's come to earth to bring us joy,
And I just want to sing this song to you.
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall, the major lift
With every breath I'm singing Hallelujah.

A couple came to Bethlehem expecting child, they searched the inn
To find a place for you were coming soon
There was no room for them to stay so in a manger filled with hay
God's only Son was born, O Hallelujah.

The shepherds left their flocks by night to see this baby wrapped in light;
A host of angels led them all to you.
It was just as the angels said; they found you in a manger bed.
Immanuel and Savior, Hallelujah.

A star shown bright up in the east; to Bethlehem, the Magi kings
Came many miles and journeyed long for you.
And to the place at which you were their frankincense and gold and myrrh
They gave to you and cried out Hallelujah.

I know you came to rescue me; this baby boy would grow to be
The Savior who would one day die for me.
My sins would drive the nails in you; that rugged cross was my cross, too;
Still every breath you drew was Hallelujah.

SONG OF PRAISE

**As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

You have waited patiently, God, for your seeds of generosity to grow in us, yielding a good harvest. Receive this bounty of hands and heart, that it may become new seed for a new crop of abundance, enough to feed your whole creation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER with the Lord's Prayer

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN

Once in David's Royal City

Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848; alt.

Henry John Gauntlett, 1849
Harm. Arthur Henry Mann, 1919

1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a low - ly
 2. He came down to earth from heav - en Who is God and
 3. Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by day like
 4. And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own re -

cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her ba - by
 Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a sta - ble,
 us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak and help - less,
 deem - ing love, For that Child so dear and gen - tle

In a man - ger for His bed. Ma - ry was that moth - er
 And His cra - dle was a stall. With the poor, op - pressed, and
 Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He feels for all our
 Is our Lord in heaven a - bove; And He leads His chil - dren

mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 low - ly, Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 sad - ness, And He shares in all our glad - ness.
 on To the place where He is gone.

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CLOSING BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Son God

J.S. Bach