

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Nancy Curtis

PRELUDE

The Journey to Bethlehem

James Mansfield

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Candle of Hope is lit.

OPENING HYMN

Soon and Very Soon

1,4 Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King!
2 No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King!
3 No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King!

Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King!
No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King!
No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King!

Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King! Hal-le-
No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King! Hal-le-
No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King! Hal-le-

lu - jah! Hal-le - lu - jah! We're going to see the King!

Text and music: Andraé Crouch (b. 1947)

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

During Advent, O God, it strikes some of us as odd to confess our sins before you. This time of year makes us so joyful and hopeful that many of us forget that we are part of a covenant community that has lost its way. Yet, in our moments of honest reflection, we know that we are people who have been negligent. We have sought our will and not yours, O God. We pray for forgiveness and implore you to put us back on a righteous path. Give us gracious hearts to remember those in need among us. Give us generous spirits, O Lord, by which we might have the courage to reach out to those who need your help with our hands and bounty. Make us the holy people you first created us to be as we prepare for the coming of Christ...*Time of silent reflection*

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS – *adapt. from Romans 13:8-14 & Matthew 18:15-20*

Jesus Christ has called us to lay aside the works of darkness and to confess our sins and be reconciled to God. You have confessed your sins in the company of God's people. Your forgiveness, declared on earth, is sealed in heaven. Sisters and brothers, your sins are forgiven. Be at peace.

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 Matthew 24:36-44

SERMON

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



- 1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And
 - 2. O come, Thou Day - spring, come and cheer Our
 3. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, And
 4. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All



ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 spir - its by Thine ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of
 or - der all things, far and nigh; To us the path of knowl - edge
 peo - ples in one heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels



here, Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 show, And cause us in her ways to go.
 cease, Fill all the world with heav - en's peace.

*Refrain
 parts optional*



Re - joice! Re -



joice! Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

TEXT: Latin Hymn, *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, 1710;
 translated by John M. Neale, stanzas 1, 2, altered;
 Henry S. Coffin, stanzas 3, 4, altered

VENI EMMANUEL
 L.M. with Refrain

MUSIC: Adapted from Plainsong by Thomas Helmore; arranged by Tom Fettke

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"THE ADVENT OF OUR LORD—A Brief Service of Joyful Expectation"

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OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, AND PRAYER REQUESTS

OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Take our gifts, giver of every good and perfect gift, as gestures of our love and devotion to both you and your creation. We recognize that we are a part of your realm, O God, by the mercy of your holy name. Use our gifts in the spreading of your good news. Help us bestow upon others your gifts with glad and generous hearts so that we reflect the thanksgiving in which we live. May we be good stewards of your mercies, just as these mercies have blessed us. Let us live in expectancy of your coming realm through the birth of the holy child in Bethlehem. In Jesus' holy name we pray. 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

Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re - ceive her King;
2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; Let men their songs em - ploy;
3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the ground;
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions prove

Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him room,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
He comes to make His bless - ings flow
The glo - ries of His righ - teous - ness,

And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing,
Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy,
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,
And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His love,
1. And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na -

And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
Far as, far as the curse is found.
And won - ders, won - ders of His love.
ture sing,

TEXT: Isaac Watts

MUSIC: George Frederick Handel, arranged by Lowell Mason;

Choral ending arranged by Tom Fettke

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CLOSING BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Sing a New Song

Edward Broughton