

**An Advent Service
of
Lessons and Carols**



**December 23, 2020
7 pm**

On Zoom

The Central Michigan Episcopal Covenant

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OPENING ACCLAMATION

Officiant Stay with us, Christ, for it is evening.

People Make your Church bright with your radiance.

Officiant If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike.

COLLECT

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The candles are now lit. You are invited to light your own candle at home.

PHOS HILARON *(spoken in unison)*

**Light of the world, in grace and beauty,
Mirror of God's eternal face,
Transparent flame of love's free duty,
You bring salvation to our race.
Now, as we see the lights of evening,
We raise our voice in hymns of praise;
Worthy are you of endless blessing,
Sun of our night, lamp of our days.**

BIDDING PRAYER

Officiant Dear People of God: In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this city.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to gather all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Officiant The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Account of Creation, *Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-25*

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

HYMN: Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Hymnal 1982 – 81

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom 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 a-right,
She bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

O Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere;
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death now save us, and share our every load.

SECOND LESSON: Adam and Eve rebel against God, Genesis 3:1-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

HYMN: On Jordan's Bank

Hymnal 1982 – 76

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every breast from sin; make straight the way for God within,
Prepare we in our hearts a home where such a mighty Guest may come.

To heal the sick stretch out thine hand, and bid the fallen sinner stand;
Shine forth and let thy light restore earth's own true loveliness once more.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee, whose advent doth thy people free;
Whom with the Father we adore and Holy Ghost for evermore.

THIRD LESSON: The First Covenant, Genesis 9:8-16

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

HYMN: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus,

Hymnal 1982 – 66

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art:
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child, and yet a king,
Born to reign in us for ever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

FOURTH LESSON: The Second Covenant, Genesis 17:1-7

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

HYMN: Creator of the Stars of Night

Hymnal 1982 – 60

Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
we pray you hear us when we call.

In sorrow that the ancient curse
should doom to death a universe,
you came, O Savior, to set free
your own in glorious liberty.

When this old world drew on toward night,
you came; but not in splendor bright,
not as a monarch, but the child
of Mary, blameless mother mild.

To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.

FIFTH LESSON: A new covenant is promised, Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

HYMN: In the Bleak Mid-Winter

Hymnal 1982 – 112

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heaven can not hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air:
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

SIXTH LESSON: God promises a child who will be known as “God with us,” Isaiah 7:10-15

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

HYMN: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Hymnal 1982 – 56

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

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.

O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of thy people be;
Before thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on thy mercy call.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations,
Bind in one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease,
And be thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

SEVENTH LESSON: The Coming of the Virtuous King, Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

HYMN: What Child is This

Hymnal 1982 – 115

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom Shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,
whom Shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King,
whom Shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

EIGHTH LESSON: God promises a new heaven and a new earth, Isaiah 65:17-25

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

HYMN: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Hymnal 1982 – 89

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel-sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And warring humankind hears not the tidings which they bring;
O hush the noise and cease your strife and hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world gives back the song which now the angels sing.

NINTH LESSON: The Birth of Jesus Foretold, Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Hymnal 1982 – 265

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

"How blest among all women you shall be,
Whom ev'ry age will praise continually.
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

COLLECT AND BLESSING

Officiant Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

O God of love and light, on this night of introspection on the nature of divine presence, turn us inward to your indwelling Spirit. On this night of reflection on the nature of divine power, turn us outward to the needs of this broken, but beautiful world. **Amen.**

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us and scatter the darkness from before our paths; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us, and remain with us always. **Amen.**



*Service taken from The Book of Occasional Services
and Enriching Our Worship.*