



**“WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM”**

**MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE**

**DECEMBER 7, 2022**

**ST. PAUL’S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**FRANKLIN, WISCONSIN**

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE

## WELCOME

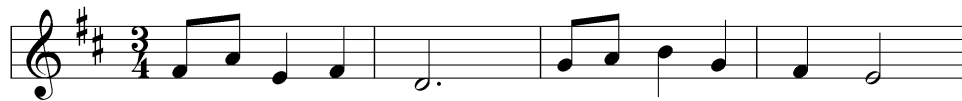
## GATHERING RITE

## LEAD US TO YOUR LIGHT

*The Junior Choir/Soloist will sing the verses.*

*The congregation is invited to join the Junior Choir/Soloist on the refrains following verse 1.*

### Refrain:



Lead us to your light, lead us out of dark-ness.



Lead us to your light. Come, Je - sus, come.

1. Lord, we await your coming to our world;  
Bring us the gift of salvation. **Refrain**
2. Lord, you are hope and healing for our world;  
Come, now, and bring us your good news. **Refrain**
3. Come, O come, O come, Emmanuel;  
Come with us on earth here to dwell. **Refrain**
4. Rouse us from sleep, wake us from our slumber;  
Banish the darkness of night. **Refrain**
5. Child of the light and love beyond all telling,  
Fill our hearts with wonder and praise. **Refrain**

## INTRODUCTION

Are you ready for Christmas? As we get closer to Christmas there are gifts to purchase and wrap, concerts or parties to attend, and holiday recipes to enrich the celebrations. There are some of you who can't wait for Christmas. And there are those among us who are lonely and hurting, missing a loved one or overwhelmed with heartache when everyone around us seems happy. But even with our varied backgrounds and situations, we all have a common need. We all desperately need a Savior. We once again will see that the little child lying in manger is that, Savior. It is Him that we worship. We are here to be reminded of what a treasure we have been given in Jesus, to praise Him with our songs and prayers, and be strengthened by His life-giving Word.

Tonight, let us look back to the Wise Men who began a long journey to come and worship that same Savior. I'm sure that their journey felt like a challenge. It took preparation, planning and work. It was a journey that began a long time before they arrived in Bethlehem to see Jesus. As we walk through this journey of the Wise Men, let us see that:

1. THEY WERE LED BY THE LIGHT OF A STAR
2. WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM LIKE THEY DID
3. WE ALL ARE GUIDED HOME BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Please Stand*

## A RESPONSIVE READING OF MATTHEW 2

- P:** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked,
- C:** **“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”**
- P:** When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.
- C:** **“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”**
- P:** Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said,

C: "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

P: After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

C: **On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.**

P: Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

C: **And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.**

*Please be Seated*

## CONGREGATION HYMN

## AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HYMN #83, VERSES 1-2

1 As with glad - ness men of old Did the guid - ing  
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to your  
star be - hold, As with joy they hailed its light,  
low - ly bed, There to bend the knee be - fore  
Lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright, So, most gra - cious  
You whom heav'n and earth a - dore, So may we with  
Lord, may we Ev - er - more your fol - lowers be.  
will - ing feet Ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.

## 1. LED BY THE LIGHT OF A STAR

### PASTOR MESSAGE

Most of us have an image of the Star of Bethlehem in our minds. It is a serene, picturesque image that reflects the beauty and quietness of Christ's birth. But the Star of Bethlehem was so much more than just a pretty star on a special night. It was a star that God placed in the sky to lead the Wise Men to Jesus. Just think about it...our powerful God, who rules over the heavens that He created, placed a unique and majestic star in the sky to serve His divine purpose of leading the Wise Men. Don't miss the miracle here that displays God's incredible power, and don't forget that His incredible power continues to work today.

Wouldn't it be great if God would show his power in such a way today? Wouldn't it help if God put a star in the sky to lead you through all the ups and downs of life? Imagine a light that would light your path and lead you and give you real direction, real purpose in life. Wouldn't it be great to see God's powerful hand guide you through your whole journey of life?

Yet, God does exactly that. The light that we follow is not a special star in the sky. There is a light shining before us, leading us to Christ and the life He won for us. We hear of it in the Scriptures where Isaiah invites us to "walk in the light of the Lord." (Is. 2:5) King David reminds us that, "The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us." (Psalm 118:27) We're encouraged because "the unfolding of [his] words gives light." (Ps. 119:130) As Christians we are followers of Christ and He leads the way with a light that is brighter and more constant than the Star of Bethlehem. He leads us with His Word.

To be sure, there will be days ahead of us during this Advent season that we don't feel like we're being led by the Lord; days with countless errands and packed schedules that make us feel driven, not gently led by the Lord. Days are coming when our focus in life can dissolve into a blurred streak and we can't slow down long enough to think about what we're doing, let alone enjoy it. There will be moments of guilt because we're overwhelmed and we just can't do it all.

At those times, the Lord says, "Take your eyes off yourself and look at the light!" God says you are His child by grace and He wraps you in the light of His love and forgiveness. Every sin has been paid for by Christ; He lived a life of perfect obedience in your place. He made you His own and fills you with His light and love. The apostle Paul says, "You all are children of the light and children of the day." (1 Thess. 5:5) The apostle Peter says, "He has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light!" (1 Peter 2:9) The light is shining.

Just as God led the Wise Men to the Savior, He is leading you to faith through His Word. His guiding light is bringing you to the manger to see the same Savior, He is Christ the Lord.

With Jesus in our hearts and His Word constantly before us we will be led by God as certainly as the Wise Men were guided by the star. We will be led to treasure Him as our Savior from sin. We will be led to worship Him. We will be led by our faithful God because of His good and gracious promises. Look. Listen. Follow.

**CONGREGATION CAROL**

**THE FIRST NOEL**



1. The first No - el the an - gel did say was to  
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing  
 3. And by the light of that same star three  
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, o'er



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in the east, be - yond them far; and to the  
 Wise Men came from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem it took its rest; and there it

3



they lay keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that  
 earth it gave great light, and so it con - ti - nued both  
 king was their in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher  
 did both stop and stay, right o - ver the place where

*Refrain*



was so deep. No - el, No - el, No - el, No -  
 day and night.  
 e - ver it went.  
 Je - sus lay.



el, \_\_\_\_\_ born is the King of Is - ra - el.

**PRAYER**

**P:** Lord God, in your power and majesty you move the stars in their courses. You led the Wise Men to Bethlehem with the brilliant light of a star, and we too have seen the light of the Gospel which draws us to you. Thank you for shining the truth of Christ so clearly in our lives that we can know you as our Savior and live in your light. May we be faithful followers of you in thankful obedience for your gift of grace. Amen.

**CONGREGATION HYMN**

**THE STAR PROCLAIMS THE KING IS HERE**

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HYMN #91, VERSES 1-2



1 The star pro - claims the King is here; But, Her - od,  
 2 The wis - er Ma - gi saw from far And fol - lowed



why this sense - less fear? For he who came from heav - en's  
 on his guid - ing star, And, led by light, to Light they



throne Does not de - sire an earth - ly crown.  
 pressed And by their gifts their God con - fessed.

## 2. WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM

### PASTOR MESSAGE

You may have a moment in the coming weeks that you ask yourself, “*What am I doing – and why am I doing it?*” We can feel so overwhelmed with the busyness in front of us that we really lose sight of the big picture. Schedules and tasks push us through every day and sometimes we are so busy we can barely look up to see what’s next. That makes it pretty easy to get off track and forget why we’re on this journey through Advent.

If that begins to happen to you, think about the wise men. They had a purpose. They knew their calling. God led them on a journey which culminated at the feet of their Savior, in worship. Have you ever considered what went into that journey? Think about the hardship of extended, primitive travel, the expense of going such a distance, being away from family and loved ones. Did you ever think about what they had to do in preparation for the journey? What work was being left undone and who was taking care of matters at home? And think about the dangers they faced. Think about the uncertainty of where they were going and the questions they had about what they would find. This was not an easy or effortless journey. But it was their privilege and calling. And they beheld the face of Jesus.

I think we can understand how they may have felt. The needs of our family, responsibilities at work, finances and uncertainty can dissuade us from the journey to the manger by creating distraction and doubt. How will we find time to worship when there’s so much to do? We have the same purpose and calling as the Wise Men because we have the same need for a Savior. We are called to faith and we humbly respond with worship.

Our journey through Advent culminates in joyful Christmas worship because we, too, have received the forgiveness of sins. Our sin, guilt and shame have been paid for with the holy, innocent blood of the Christ child. Jesus has called us to be His sons and daughters. He has called us to worship Him. That is our privilege.

Nothing about the journey of the Wise Men implies that our calling means life is easy. Yet we look to the manger and see the Savior of the world - and life has a new perspective. Knowing that our sins are forgiven and having the gift of eternal life, we understand our own life and purpose more clearly. We belong to God.

He calls you to trust Him with your cares and concerns, and worship Him. He calls you to remember all He’s given you in Christ, and worship Him. His love and grace will give you

the strength and motivation to journey on. With Christ at the center of our Christmas, with Christ at the center of our lives, we will radiate His light to others on the journey. And life becomes a privileged time of grace; because it’s all about Jesus. May the center of our Christmas be the worship of Christ. Not just on Christmas Day, but every moment that we spend in the journey of life. To God be the glory!

### CONGREGATION HYMN

### LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YOU MIGHTY GATES

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HYMN #4, VERSE 1

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of six staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: "I Lift up your heads, you mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits. The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here. Life and salvation he will bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing. To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise." The score ends with a double bar line.

### PRAYER

**P:** Lord Jesus, this season truly brings us to your manger with praise on our lips and humility in our hearts. In grateful thanksgiving we pray that our lives would be living sacrifices of praise that honor you. We ask that you receive our worship every day as we lift our thoughts to the greatness of your love and mercy. Lord, we worship you in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## JUNIOR CHOIR ANTHEM

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel!

Prophets knew long ago that Christ would come to earth. Led by Isaiah they foretold His birth. God in human frame, Emmanuel His name. Prophets knew long ago, long ago.

Prophets knew long ago that Christ would be the King! "Glory to God!" Let heav'n and nature sing. God in human frame, Messiah was His name. Prophets knew long ago, long ago.

Micah prophesied that Christ would be born in Royal David's town; Redeemer of Israel, promised to all, a King without a crown!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Prophets knew long ago that in a manger stall angels and shepherds would find the Lord of all! God in human frame, Jesus was His name. Prophets know long ago, long ago. Prophets knew long ago, long ago.

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel!

### 3. GUIDED HOME BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

## PASTOR MESSAGE

Do you remember the end of the story? Wicked King Herod had instructed the Wise Men to return to the palace with news of the baby's location. At the time, it seems they didn't realize Herod's evil plan but before they left, the Lord sent a dream to guide the wise men home. And they didn't stop at the palace on the way. God's guidance didn't end when the star faded. His protective care didn't stop after the Wise Men had brought their offerings. God doesn't bring us half way and then say, "Now you're on your own." There is comfort for you here that God is watching over your coming and going.

We talked earlier about how God leads us with His light. The Holy Spirit calls us to faith and brings us to the manger in humble worship. But He also leads us home. He is there with us for every step of our lives. In His Word he gives us guidance and strength. It is a lamp

## PROPHETS KNOW

for your feet and a light for your path. It is there that he comforts us and leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. He transforms our minds and always speaks the truth. It is there in His Word that he assures us that our sins are forgiven. He strengthens our confidence as we understand His plan for our life - plans to prosper us, plans to bring us a hope and a future. And the steps along the way will be guided by God as He works all things for our spiritual good. This is how the Holy Spirit leads us every day. No spectacular dreams or visions. No miraculous signs. He is there every day with his constant Word to strengthen and guide us. Not only does it guide us through this life, he also leads us to our heavenly home.

He will never leave you unattended on your path, He promises that He will be there, even until the end of the age. Walk with Him – and enjoy the journey.

## CONGREGATION HYMN

## WE WALK BY FAITH

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT HYMN #756, VERSES 1-3

1 We walk by faith and not by sight;  
 2 We may not touch his hands and side  
 3 Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief,  
 No gra - cious words we hear  
 Nor fol - low where he trod,  
 And may our faith a - bound  
 From him who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
 But in his prom - ise we re - joice  
 To call on you when you are near  
 But we be - lieve him near.  
 And cry, "My Lord and God!"  
 And seek where you are found.

## CLOSING RESPONSIVE PRAYER

**P:** Lord Jesus, we thank you for the gift of faith which you have poured into our hearts because of your great mercy.

**C:** **Keep our faith strong through your Word and Sacraments that we may reflect your love and grace to those around us.**

**P:** Heavenly Father, as we have been reminded of the Wise Men who came to worship you, we pray that you would guide us through this Advent season and strengthen us to follow you as the light of the world.

**C:** **Turn our eyes to see your presence in our lives as we find you in the Scriptures, encouraging, leading and loving us.**

**P:** Lord Jesus, how many people have come to worship you? Yet you long for each one of us to be at your manger and at your throne worshipping you as our Savior from sin.

**C:** **Lord, we have come to worship you! Receive our heartfelt thanks and praise; glory, laud and honor are yours! Just as the angels announced your birth, we give you glory for you are God in the highest!**

**P:** Spirit of God, you hovered over the earth at creation and have continued to watch over the people of God, calling them to faith and keeping them in the family of God. In the same way, we pray that you would watch over us and our loved ones with your faithful care.

**C:** **Guide our steps and guard our path that we may ever follow you with joy and confidence. Allow our faith to flourish as we dwell in your Word and let it overflow in thankfulness as we live in your love. Find us approaching you confidently in prayer as you have taught us,**

**All:** **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## THE BLESSING

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C:** *(Spoken)* Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

## COMFORT, COMFORT ALL MY PEOPLE

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HYMN #11, VERSES 1-2

1 "Com - fort, com - fort all my peo - ple; Speak of peace,"  
2 All their sins our God will par - don, Blot - ting out

so says our God. "Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness,  
each dark mis - deed; All that well de - serve his an - ger

Groan - ing from their sor - rows' load. Speak to all  
He no more will see or heed. They have suf -

Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;  
fered man - ya day; Now their griefs have passed a - way.

Tell them that their sins I cov - er,  
God will change their ach - ing sad - ness

That their war - fare now is o - ver."  
In - to ev - er - spring - ing glad - ness.

## **HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

*During the upcoming holiday season there are many opportunities for worship! Please join us!*

**Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM**

Children's Christmas Service (K5-Grade 8)

**Friday, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 AM**

Preschool & Junior Kindergarten Christmas Service

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM & 10:00 PM**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM** (one service only)

Christmas Day Service

**Sunday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 AM** (one service only)

New Year's Day Worship Service with Communion