

Worship on December 18, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- BOP 119 Hope is a star (vs.) – lighting the LOVE candle
- Call to worship (Advent hand-out)
- Praise song – BOP 348 Tell me the story of Jesus
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 139 Hark! The herald angels sing

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25
- Sermon: Joseph named the baby Jesus
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering, the Doxology (BOP830), and Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 159 Oh come, all ye faithful

We Serve

- Benediction

As we come into the presence of our God, let us open our hearts and minds,
and focus on our Lord and King.

Responsive Call to Worship

Reader 1: We are people of love.

Reader 2: God has loved us so much that God has chosen to come as Immanuel, the God who is with us.

People: We are free to love others, because God first loved us.

Reader 1: The fourth candle of Advent invites us to reflect God's love in our lives.

Reader 2: We light this candle so that we can see who we are called to love today. (light the candle of love)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, help us know that we are deeply loved and to share that same unconditional love with others. May our lives reflect the warmth and wonder of this flame. Make your church a place of love and acceptance in our community. Amen.

Hope is a star (BOP 119)

Vs. 4: Love is a flame that burns in our heart. Jesus has come and will never depart.

When God is a child there's joy in our song
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong
And none shall be afraid

Praise song – BOP 348 Tell me the story of Jesus

<u>Vs. 1</u> Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear, things I would ask him to tell me if he were here: Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, stories of Jesus, tell them to me.	<u>Vs. 2</u> First, let me hear how the children stood round his knee, and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me: words full of kindness, deeds full of grace, all in the love light of Jesus' face
<u>Vs. 3</u> Tell me about the disciples from far and near, and I will listen among them eager to hear. Whose loaves and fishes did Jesus bless, showing the people God's tenderness?	<u>Vs. 4</u> Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea, tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee, and how the Master, ready and kind, chided the billows and hushed the wind.
<u>Vs. 5</u> Into the city I'd follow the children's band, waving a branch of palm tree high in my hand; one of his heralds, yes, I would sing loudest hosannas: Jesus is King!	

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Emmanuel, God with us. We praise you for your presence throughout the amazing universe you have made. The shining stars sing your praise which echoes in the depth of space. The smallest snowflake and a baby's tiny fingers reflect your intricate love for the details of each and every life. In Jesus Christ, you were born among us, one of a kind, yet one with a kind, to show us how your great love is lived out day by day. Inspire us with your loving Spirit as we move through Advent toward Christmas Day, so that our celebrations of love made flesh in Jesus will share the presence of your love with those who need it most. So may we live the praise we offer to you, Emmanuel, God with us, now and evermore.

Lord of love, We confess that we sometimes find your love daunting. You called Joseph to honour his love for Mary, even when custom called him to break his engagement.

We confess custom has a hold on us, too, and challenging expectations for love's sake makes us nervous. You call us to love our neighbour, but we resist your call if our neighbours annoy us. You call us to love our enemies, too, but that seems impossible in these contentious times. Forgive us for loving only in the safest situations. Dare us to love as Jesus loved so his love and grace will be displayed through our lives.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)

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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers in Christ, Receive the Good News of the gospel in love. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Know that God's steadfast love is yours this day, and share that love with friend and enemy alike, so that the power of such love can change the world.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

Prayer for children and youth

Loving God, thank you for our love for our children and youth. This time, we ask your power upon our precious children. We imagine their lovely faces. Their laughs. Their cries. Their peaceful sleep. Bring their hearts to your heart. Connect their hearts to yours. Let them know how great you are. Let them know how amazing your love is for them. Let them plunge themselves into your life-giving love. Emmanuel, God with us. Be present in their hearts all the time. Encourage them and give confidence in their hearts. Let them worship you all through their lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 139 Hark! The herald angels sing

<u>Vs. 1</u> Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King, peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled. Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem." Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King.	<u>Vs. 2</u> Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail the incarnate deity! Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King.
<u>Vs. 3</u> Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild, he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise the lost of earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King.	

Prayer for Illumination:

God of life and love, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, your Love Incarnate. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' 22 All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as

his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. **“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”**

SERMON: Joseph names the baby Jesus

Today’s sermon title is **“Joseph named the baby Jesus.”**

Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. It begins with **The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. “An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah ...”** and so on. There are about 40 father-son relationships.

This first verse indicates that the following genealogy intends to show that Jesus Messiah is the son of David. However, we find a problem in v16.

“and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.”

Wait a moment. This Bible does not say **“and Jacob the father of Joseph, and Joseph the father of Jesus.”** It does not say that way.

Genealogy is understood to be a biological family history. Joseph’s father was Jacob according to the genealogy in the Bible. But, what about the relationship between Joseph and Jesus?

Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born

Genealogical awkwardness.

We are going to solve this awkward problem today.

Mary’s miraculous conception is simply announced as a fact. There is no explanation. **V18, “she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.”** Joseph did not know the cause of her pregnancy. He thought Mary had been unfaithful.

They were engaged. It is the same as marriage. If Mary was disloyal to Joseph, it was counted as adultery. The marriage was completed when Joseph took his fiancé Mary to his own home. In the interval, Mary remained in her father’s house, and sexual intercourse was not permitted.

Joseph is described as a righteous man. This means that he must divorce his unfaithful wife. The law does not allow him to forgive and forget. All of the sudden, Joseph lost his lovely fiancé. However, his righteousness is more than legal. What Joseph was supposed to do was to announce Mary’s adultery. However, Joseph did not want to humiliate Mary with a public divorce proclaiming her adultery. Joseph planned to divorce her quietly.

Before he carried out his plan, he had a dream in which an angel explained to Joseph that Mary’s pregnancy was not out of adultery, but of divine origin.

V20, “But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

An angel called **Joseph Son of David**. This reminds us today’s problem. Jesus can be son of David only through Joseph. However, Joseph is not his biological father. Do you see there is a disconnection between Joseph and Jesus? Joseph is not biological father of Jesus.

How can this disconnection be removed?

This problem is solved by the angel in **v21: “She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus.”**

By naming the baby, Joseph acknowledges him as his son. In effect, Joseph adopts Jesus, and thus incorporates Jesus legally into David's genealogy.

This sounds very very simple. However, if this happened to you, how would you feel? If you were Joseph, what would you do to Mary, and about the dream? He had been asking many questions. **“What should I do about Mary?” “What does the law demand?” “What does my heart tell me?”** To this Joseph, an angel came in a dream.

Through an angel, God is saying to Joseph this: **“Joseph, son of David, I know this is not what you expected. But, it's going to okay. God is about to do something wonderful, despite the fact that according to Jewish custom and law, you are in a rather socially unacceptable situation.”**

SOMEHOW, Joseph has to trust this strange news. This dream answered Joseph's questions.

V23 is from **Isaiah 7:14, “Look, the young woman (or the virgin) is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”**

This contains the hope for salvation. **“Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua: salvation.** Also, in today's passage, **Jesus is referred to the Messiah, who brings salvation.**

In Joseph's time, in Jesus' time, Israel was under the reign of the Roman Empire and they longed to be independent. They were longing for the Messiah who would rescue them. They needed a Saviour at that time. In this Advent season, we still celebrate the coming of the Saviour, the Messiah Jesus Christ.

Do we still need a Saviour? At this time, in our daily lives?

Certainly there are some very happy and contented people around who believe that they have all they need. They have a good income, they love their families, and they enjoy life in general. This is fine as far as it goes.

Have they ever asked, **“Why was I created?” “What is the purpose of my being here?” “Where will I go at the end of this life?”** Anyone who asks those questions will know that we need more from our lives. Even the most contented person will be restless if they ask, **“What is my life really all about?”**

This is the beginning of knowing why we need a Saviour.

Once we start asking the real questions about our lives, we enter risky territory. The right questions will usually demand that we change.

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy by becoming the son of David. Through Joseph, Jesus was admitted in the family tree to become our Saviour.

In the Advent season, what is the core message? Is this love of family? Is this loving neighbour? Is this having hope, peace, joy, love? YES to all. But, what is the beginning? What is the foundation? What becomes the root of all? These comes after this one thing.

Incarnation. Emmanuel. God came to us to be with us. Holy God came to us to be with sinful us. God the Creator came into mere human body he created.

God came to us to save us. We did not even ask why we need a saviour, but God came to us to let us know that we need a saviour. And he became our Saviour. That is why he came to us. That is why he was born from a virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit in order to be sinless. So, he could become the holy and without blemish Sacrificial Lamb of God for us.

V24-25, “When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.”
Joseph named the baby Jesus.

This Saturday is Christmas eve. We will be here at 7 pm to celebrate the coming of our Saviour. The next day, Sunday, we will be here as well at 10:30 am, as our usual Sunday worship. We will worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus with joy and gladness. Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour came to us. Let us worship him and glorify him.

This is the message of the Lord for us today. Let us pray.

Prayer for the people of God

God of love, thank you for coming to us. You came to us to be with us. You came to us to save us. You came to us to love us. You came to us to show the truth, the way, and the life. Creator God came into mere human body. Creator God became his own creation. What a great love and sacrifice. God came to us, Incarnation, Emmanuel. Thank you. We praise and worship you with our whole hearts.

Gracious God, we pray for this Christmas. Christmas is the time to remember you, but this becomes the family time, shopping time, fun time. These are all good, but we tend to miss the core message of your birthday. Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, be the centre of this Christmas! Take your place and be glorified. Let your name be lifted up high. Let your name be praised and worshipped by all people. Help us have you in the centre of our hearts.

We remember our congregants. King of kings and Lord of lords, be the head of our lives. We are going through our life's situations. Illness, relational struggles, emotional difficulties, financial issues, dissatisfactions, absence of gratitude, and so on.

Give us wisdom. We do not want to stay in our problems. We want to grow somehow through what we are going through. We want to get close to you. We want to become more like you. We are created in your image and we want to have it back. Holy Spirit, who lives in us, guide our steps.

We also remember the people who are lonely in this season. Open our eyes, so we may extend our love to those who need special care in this season. Above all, God, you come to their hearts and be present in their lives, embrace them and pour out your love upon them.

Thank you for coming to us and for us. Be praised and be glorified through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Love, embracing us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that love which we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake. Let the Lord be praised and glorified. Let us lift up his name.

The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creature here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Offering prayer:

God, our Love and our Life, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that love will embrace people who feel lost and alone in this season, and places fearing they will be overlooked among so much need. Be their love and their life, through Christ our Lord.

Song for the Journey BOP 159 Oh come, all ye faithful

<u>Vs. 1</u> Oh come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; oh come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold him, born the King of angels:	<u>Vs. 2</u> God of God, Light of light, born unto Mary, the virgin blest, very God, begotten, not created:
<u>Vs. 3</u> See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle, leaving their flocks draw nigh with holy fear; we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:	<u>Vs. 4</u> Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above: "Glory to God in the highest!"
<u>Vs. 5</u> Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:	<u>Chorus</u> <u>Oh come, let us adore him;</u> <u>Oh come, let us adore him; Oh come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.</u>

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Let us have Jesus in the centre of our hearts and let us keep Jesus in the centre of this Christmas. Jesus came to us to be with us and to save us. Come, let us adore him.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.