

No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

***Benediction** Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

***Response:** “Shalom”

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom,
Kami no mi megumi.**

(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, may we be blessed with grace from God.)

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom,
yuta kani, yuta kani, yuta kani.**

(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, abundantly, abundantly, abundantly.)

Postlude Haruko Sakakibara
“Love Divine!” All Love Excelling by John Stainer (1840-1901)
*We invite you to remain seated during the Postlude as we enjoy the music and God’s presence together. If you need to go, please feel free to do so.
Go with God’s blessings.*

In Appreciation:

Greeters:	Terri Bowman, Sue Goodwin
Ushers:	Terri Bowman, Julie Chew
Parking Barriers (Sat):	Russ Hart
Parking:	Tak Fukuman
Sound System:	Jonathan Sakakibara
Zoom Moderator/Greeter:	Lois Van Beers
Altar Flowers:	Victor & Sherri Yee



The Celebration of Worship

December 1, 2024 • First Sunday of Advent

Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave
Worship Leader:	Christine Umeda
Pianist:	Haruko Sakakibara
Choir Conductor:	Ben Pryor
Japanese Reader:	Miyo Uchida
Communion Elders	Phillip Chew, Gary Younglove

Centering Prayer for Worship

Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Advent means coming,” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, people of faith turn to symbols such as candles, evergreens, and wreaths to proclaim our belief in the unquenchable light of God shining in Jesus Christ

Prelude Haruko Sakakibara

*Introit

All: Make us one, Lord, make us one. Holy Spirit make us one. Let Your love flow so the world will know, we are one in You.

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

** Those who can, please stand*

Advent Candle Lighting

Dave McGill, Ben Pryor

Readers: This morning we light the first candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of Hope. (Light the first candle now.) Hope is like light shining in a dark place. With the lighting of this candle, we celebrate the hope that we have in Jesus Christ as we pray for God's love and peace to come in more fullness into our world. Let's pray:

Dear God, We continue to hope in Your promise that Christ will come again to fill our lives and all the world with love, joy and peace.

All: Thank You, God, for the light of hope. As we prepare for Christ's coming this holy season, help us share your hope with others. Amen.

***Advent Candle Lighting Song:** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (#2)

Sing verse 1.

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.

Call to Worship

Christine Umeda

Leader: People of Advent, lift up your hopes. In all seasons of life, God approaches us, God is always with us.

People: In this season of waiting, Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning of our discipleship, not the end of our journey.

All: In this season of Advent anticipation and hope, may God's Spirit open our hearts to the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

***Opening Hymn:** Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (#8)

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates, behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!

Opportunity To Present Offerings

All: Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One. Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, God's Son. (Repeat) And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich" because of what the Lord has done for us. (Repeat) Give thanks. Give thanks.

*Doxology

All: Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Christine Umeda

Joys & Concerns

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

The Lord's Prayer

Congregation

All: Our Parent Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your 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, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

***Sending Hymn:** "O Little Town of Bethlehem (#44)

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the king and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.

had seen a vision. He continued speechless and had to use sign language with the people. When the course of his priestly assignment was completed, Zachariah went back home.

Musical Interlude Haruko Sakakibara
“Pastorale” (8th Concerto Grosso) by A. Corelli (1653-1713)

***Communion Song:** “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” (#5)
Sing sverses 1 and 2.

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; Ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in His hand, Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth He stood, Lord of lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood, He will give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food.

Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord’s Table Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave
This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and for those who want to love him more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is the Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

- from the Iona Community

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Receiving the Elements

Prayer after Communion

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me Thy inner presence feel; Thy grace and love in me reveal.

Invitation to Confession Christine Umeda

Leader: When we pause to look at our lives, we find a lot that doesn’t measure up to God’s intentions for us. This holy season, the circular Advent wreath with no beginning and no end, reminds us of God’s never-ending mercy toward us. Let’s admit the places we need God’s healing and wholeness as we ask God for forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession Christine Umeda

Leader: Holy God of Advent, these days as our hearts are filled with stress and sorrow and what-ifs, come to us. In this season when our hearts are filled with worry, not wonder, come to us.

People: God of grace and truth, In Jesus Christ You came to us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we haven’t always welcomed the light, but have turned from it. We live in denial, as though we have no need of grace. Forgive us.

All: God we have disappointed Your hopes and harmed others through our arrogant words and actions. Renew us by Your Spirit this holy season, that we may be alert, watching for the glorious return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Time for Contemplation

This time of quiet is offered to encourage you to share your personal thoughts with God as well as listen to God through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Assurance of God’s Grace Christine Umeda

Leader: As we are watchful in prayer and faithful in showing kindness and doing justice, God’s peace and hope will strengthen and sustain us.

All: We believe the message of God's saving grace given to all the world in Jesus Christ, God-with-us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

***Response to God's Forgiveness:** Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me (#582 Glory to God hymnal)

All Sing: Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace** Christine Umeda
Leader: As the forgiven and redeemed people of God, let us share our peace and joy with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Choir Song

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

Children's Message Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Unison Prayer of Guidance

All: Now may the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts, the interpretation of our minds, and the response of our hands be acceptable to You, our Lord and our Redeemer. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Japanese Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:3-5 Miyo Uchida
Prepare for GOD's arrival! Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God. Fill in the valleys, level off the hills, Smooth out the ruts, clear out the rocks. Then GOD's bright glory will shine and everyone will see it.

2nd Scripture Reading: Luke 1:5-17 Christine Umeda
During the rule of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zachariah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Together they lived honorably before God, careful in keeping to the ways of the

commandments and enjoying a clear conscience before God. But they were childless because Elizabeth could never conceive, and now they were quite old.

It so happened that as Zachariah was carrying out his priestly duties before God, working the shift assigned to his regiment, it came his one turn in life to enter the sanctuary of God and burn incense. The congregation was gathered and praying outside the Temple at the hour of the incense offering. Unannounced, an angel of God appeared just to the right of the altar of incense. Zachariah was paralyzed in fear.

But the angel reassured him, “Don't fear, Zachariah. Your prayer has been heard. Elizabeth, your wife, will bear a son by you. You are to name him John. You're going to leap like a gazelle for joy, and not only you—many will delight in his birth. He'll achieve great stature with God.

“He'll drink neither wine nor beer. He'll be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment he leaves his mother's womb. He will turn many sons and daughters of Israel back to their God. He will herald God's arrival in the style and strength of Elijah, soften the hearts of parents to children, and kindle devout understanding among hardened skeptics—he'll get the people ready for God.”

Sermon & 3rd Scripture Reading: Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave
Advent Sermon Series: Angels Among Us
Gabriel and Zachariah

The rest of the story from Luke 1:18-23...

Zachariah said to the angel, “Do you expect me to believe this? I'm an old man and my wife is an old woman.” But the angel said, “I am Gabriel, the messenger of God, sent especially to bring you this glad news. But because you won't believe me, you'll be unable to say a word until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken to you will come true on time—God's time.”

Meanwhile, the congregation waiting for Zachariah was getting restless, wondering what was keeping him so long in the sanctuary. When he came out and couldn't speak, they knew he