

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.  
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  
“Menuet and Alternativo” by J. C. F. Bach (1732-1795)

*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:** Jana Nakase-Lee, Judy Yee  
**Ushers:** Cathy Nishizaki, Irene Uno  
**Parking:** Tak Fukuman  
**Sound System:** Jonathan Sakikabara  
**Zoom Moderator/Greeter:** Lori Hart  
**Altar Flowers:** Tak & Judy Fukuman



## **The Celebration of Worship**

November 30, 2025 • First Sunday in Advent

*Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Advent means  
“coming,” and in this holy 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 God’s Son Jesus Christ.*

Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave
Worship Leader:	Phillip Chew
Pianist:	Haruko Sakakibara
Choir Conductor:	Ben Pryor
Japanese Reader:	Haruko Sakakibara

### **Centering Prayer for Advent Worship**

*Emmanuel, God-with-us, we come to worship today to be renewed by the  
compelling resilience of Your hope. Hope is like light shining in a dark  
place. God of love, You are so generous, sending Your Beloved Son to live  
among us and to tell us who You are. We set down our despair and rest in  
Your light. As we offer You our love and praise, may we be refreshed and  
renewed by Your Spirit. Amen.*

**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.**

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*\* Those who can, please stand*

## Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

### Advent Candle Lighting

Jack Nordman

Reader: This morning we light the first candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of Hope. (Light the first candle now.)

We think of Hope as the anticipation of something in the future, but Hope can be actively trusting in God's loving presence with us right now. With the lighting of this candle, we celebrate the Hope that we have in Jesus Christ, Who is Emmanuel, God-with-us. Let's pray:

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

**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

Phillip Chew

Leader: People of Advent, lift up your hearts and your hopes. As the sun rises on this new season of Advent, we turn within and ask God to renew hope in each of us.

**People: In this season of watching and waiting, Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning of our spiritual journey, not the final destination of our journey.**

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

## 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

Phillip Chew

### Joys & Concerns

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

### Pastoral Prayer & 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.

The Arrival of the Son of Man will take place in times like Noah's. Before the great flood everyone was carrying on as usual, having a good time right up to the day Noah boarded the ark. They knew nothing—until the flood hit and swept everything away. The Son of Man's Arrival will be like that: Two men will be working in the field—one will be taken, one left behind; two women will be grinding at the mill—one will be taken, one left behind. So stay awake, alert. You have no idea what day your Lord will show up. But you do know this: You know that if the homeowner had known what time of night the burglar would arrive, he would have been there with his dogs to prevent the break-in. Be vigilant just like that. You have no idea when the Son of Man is going to show up.”

**3<sup>rd</sup> Scripture Reading & Sermon** Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Advent #1: “Light Amidst Darkness” Isaiah 2:1-5

The word that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that God may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. God shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

**Musical Interlude** Haruko Sakakibara

“Water Lullaby” by Junichi Kameyama (1948- )

**\*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!

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** Phillip Chew

Leader: When we pause to look at our lives, we find a lot that doesn't measure up to God's good intentions for us. This holy season, the circular Advent wreath with no beginning and no end, reminds us of God's endless mercy toward us. Let's admit the places we need God's wholeness as we ask God for forgiveness.

**Prayer of Confession** Phillip Chew

Leader: Holy God of Advent, it's not a year abundant with hope. In these days when our hearts are weighed down with stress and fear, come to us. In this season when our minds 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 sometimes the news is so dark, and it's so noisy out there, it's hard to allow your light and peace to fill us. So we feed on devastation and despair instead. Forgive us.**

**All: Forgive us, God, for abandoning hope in favor of fear, and for harming others with our words and actions. And inaction. Renew us, so that we may be awake and alert, watching for the glorious return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*A Time for Silent Contemplation*

## Assurance of God's Grace

Phillip Chew

Leader: God has promised that the day of salvation is near. As we are faithful in prayer and in offering kindness and doing justice, God's Spirit of hope will fill us and sustain us.

**All: Thanks be to God! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

**\*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

Phillip Chew

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

"Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child"

## Children's Message

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

**\*Hymn of Reflection:** Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness (#314 Glory to God hymnal)

*Sing verses 1, 2, 3, and 5.*

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

*Refrain.* Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice.

*Refrain.*

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

*Refrain.*

Many the gifts, many the people,

many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.

*Refrain.*

## 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.**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Scripture Reading (Japanese)

Haruko Sakakibara

Romans 12:11-12

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Lord, cheerfully expectant and hopeful. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Scripture Reading

Phillip Chew

Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus Talks about Remaining Watchful for His Return

Jesus said, "But the exact day and hour? No one knows that, not even heaven's angels, not even the Son. Only the Father knows.