



# Jesus' Birth Announced

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Sunday Virtual Worship at 10:30am



[www.riverofhopehutchinson.org](http://www.riverofhopehutchinson.org)

Music to Prepare Us for Worship

### **Call to Worship**

One: The Lord has done great things!

**All: Holy is God's name!**

One: God's justice is fair:

**All: Raising the low and downgrading the proud.**

One: The hungry are fed and the rich do not prosper.

One: The Lord has done great things!

**All: Holy is God's name!**

## **Gathering**

Gathering Songs – O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Sara Shorter) & Your Little Ones  
Dear Lord (Jim & Sara Nelson)

The Story with Kids

No Longer Strangers Prayer

Let us pray together. God of the Stranger, **we wait for you to come among us and yet, you tell us you are already here. You are here in the hunger of a stranger, the handshake of a friend, the hug of a loved one. Give us eyes to see you in the face of everyone we meet. May we greet all people, friend and stranger, as we would greet you. Amen.**

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

(Adapted from One Candle Liturgy, Rev. Karen Ware Jackson)

One: Today we light one candle for love.

**All: Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but love never ends.**

One: Love faithfully goes about the work of speaking truth, healing wounds, crossing the divides that so often separate us.

**All: A deep breath, a courageous truth, a humble heart.**

One: "Here I am," she whispers,

**All: The servant of the Lord**

One: Today, we light one candle for love,

**All: Christ is with us**

Hymn- Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory (Nan Crary and Kristen Schlauderaff)

## Greeting

Wherever you are on your journey of faith, we believe God meets you right where you are. We gather in the name of our Triune God – Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit-- Our God of hope who is always with you!

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

God of surprises, **You blessed Mary and Elizabeth with the gift of holy children, and they faithfully embraced your calling. Give us peace and joy as we await your coming among us, in the form of a humble baby—our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

# The Word

**Narrator:** Our story and God's story continues with a reading from Luke

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. In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.

And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his

descendants forever. And Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

Stay tuned for the continuing saga that is our story and God's story.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

Hymn- Let My Prayer Rise Up (from Holden Evening Prayer) (Jim and Josiah Nelson)

## Prayers of the People

*Together we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.*

Each petition will close with the words: God of Hope

And we invite you to please respond: **Hear our prayer.**

## Offering

*We are grateful for your financial gifts; it's the only way churches are churches.*

*Set up automatic giving by going to our website, [riverofhopehutchinson.org](http://riverofhopehutchinson.org) and follow the directions to "give online".*

Offering Song – My Soul Proclaims (Jim & Sara Nelson)

# The Feast

## Setting the Table

*The children lead us in prayer as we prepare for God's feast:*

Let's pray: **Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. And let these gifts to us be blest. Blest be God who is our bread, may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.**

## Confession

Now ready to be welcomed at Christ's table, let us first confess that God is God and we are not.

God of light,

**We confess that we have not loved our sisters and our brothers.**

**We have not looked to your kingdom, but have looked to building our own.**

**We want more and more and we want bigger and better.  
We have squeezed the margins until there is nothing left.  
Forgive us for not looking to your kingdom that is coming,  
that encompasses all, that is not full of things, but full of life and the promise of  
hope.**

**Your kingdom includes all of creation, all people, whom we have squeezed out.  
Forgive us. Call us to open our tightly clenched fists, to let go of what we have  
been holding onto, and allow your kingdom, your love, to be our life.**

*Silence*

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

God is doing something new, and it won't look anything like we want it to. It's how God works best. God will lead us through, transform our lives, forgive long before we ever do. God does not define you as the things you've done but as a Child of God. Trust in God: You are forgiven. As far as the east is from the west, so far God removes your sin from you. God will see you through to the new kingdom, into new life. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## **Thanksgiving at the Table**

The Lord is with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

In the night when Jesus was betrayed by his best friends, he took bread. He blessed it and broke it and gave it to these same friends saying, "Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup, blessed it and gave it for all to drink saying, "This is the new covenant, the new promise, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Jesus, remember us, and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, in heaven, holy is 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 sins,**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil,  
for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

### Invitation to the Meal

*This is not my table or River of Hope's table, but rather this is Christ's table and all are welcome. If you hunger and thirst for grace and mercy that comes through Jesus Christ, then Christ has set this table just for you. Bring all that you are and all that you have to the table. You will be fed. You are forgiven. There is enough.*

*"This is the body of Christ given for you and the blood of Christ shed for you."*

Communion Hymn – Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers (Jim & Sara Nelson)

### Blessing and Prayer After Communion

#### Prayer After Communion

Let us pray. **Almighty God, we give you thanks that you have fed us with your body and blood. In your grace and by your Spirit, help us to be what we celebrate, the body of Christ in the world. Renewed in this meal, send us out to reflect your love. Through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## The Sending

Why does our church exist? What is our purpose? **We go out to transform lives through Jesus Christ.**

#### \*MILESTONES

*It's time for milestones - a time where we join together as a community to share the big, small, good, and hard milestones in our life. Splash in the water this morning and remember that God joins us in hearing these milestones today.*

*If you gather on Facebook Premiere today, write your milestones in the comment section. Then after each person shares their milestone, the congregation is invited to respond by saying "MILESTONE!"*

**Blessing** (by Rev. Elizabeth Rawlings, Disrupt Worship Project)

May you find time for rest this season  
May you create space to prepare  
May the Lord our God fill you with hope  
May Jesus Christ be ever present in your heart  
May the Holy Spirit illuminate your way  
Amen

**Sending Song – He Came Down (Jim & Sara Nelson)**

Go in peace, Serve the Lord  
**Thanks be to God!**

**Music to Send You Out**

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