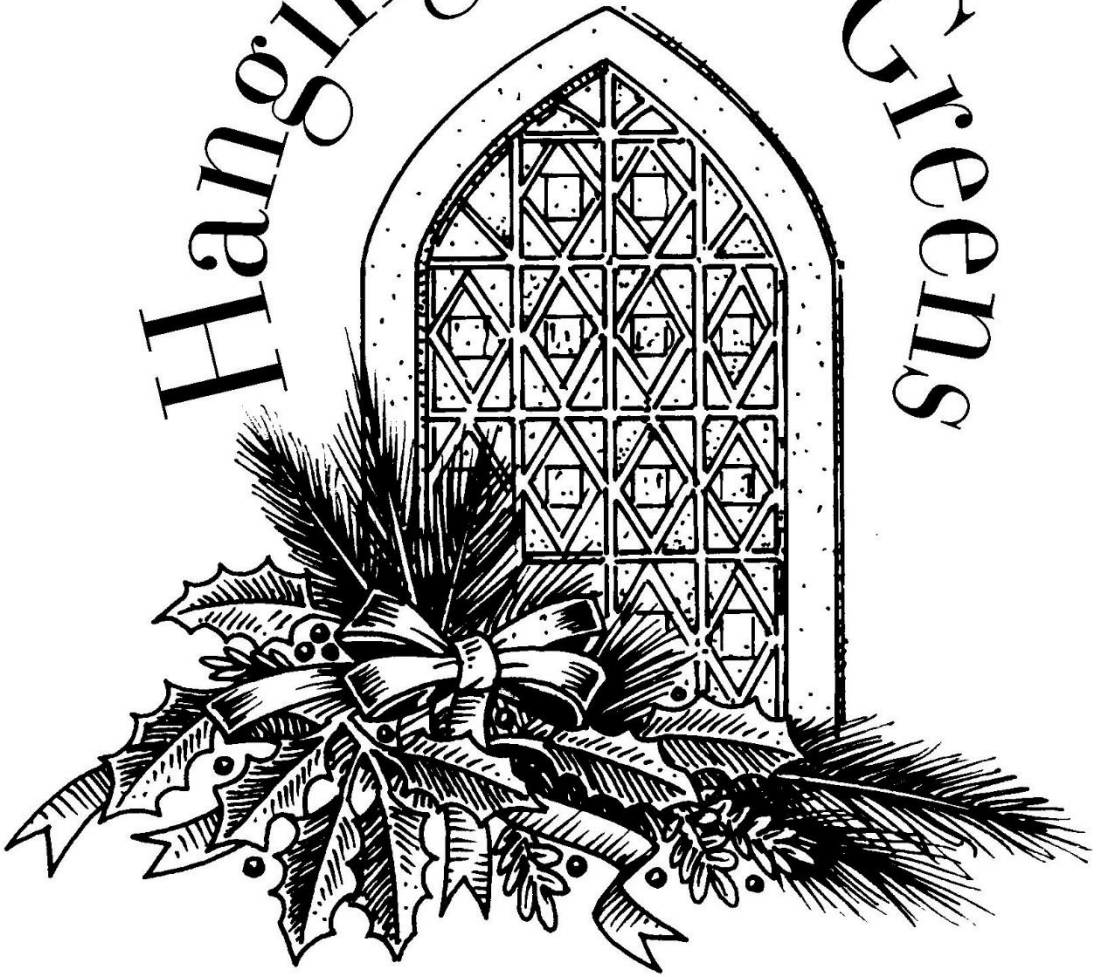


Hangings of the  
Greens



Worship Service

# HANGING OF THE GREENS WORSHIP SERVICE

## December 4, 2022

### Prelude

#### Call to Worship (*L = Leader, P = People*)

L: Tonight we come together to prepare for the birthday of our Savior.

**P: Tonight we make ready our welcome for God's only Son, Jesus.**

L: We have begun the holy season of Advent,  
the season of preparing for the birth of Christ.

**P: As we renew the special meaning of Advent,  
a season of reflection and anticipation,**

L: Let us clear our minds and open our hearts  
to the coming of the Christ.

**P: Let us honor Christ's birth by adorning our church  
for the coming of our Savior.**

L: Let our songs and symbols represent our personal re-dedication  
to God's glory and the incarnation of God's love in the world.

**P: For God loved us so much that God sent us the Prince of Peace.  
Now more than ever, we need to follow Christ's peaceful ways,  
so that the world may live with justice and in peace.**

### Invocation

Gracious Lord, by your mercy guide our outward actions  
in such ways that our inward being is formed in faith, hope, and love.  
May the decorations we offer engage our senses  
during the days of Advent and enliven our praise and worship,  
in the name of the child of Bethlehem,  
our risen and coming Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Advent

Why do we do this? What does it mean?

During the Advent season we prepare for the One who has come, whom we expect to come, and who will come again. We prepare our hearts and make room for the Messiah. In the hanging of the greens we share with Christians throughout the ages the memory and anticipation of Christ's coming. We decorate our church with the symbols of love, joy, hope, and peace. Why do we do this?

To tell the story again and then proclaim: Jesus is born. God is with us!

Hymn No. 93

**"LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES"**

TRURO

***Lift up your heads, ye might-y gates;  
be-hold, the King of glo-ry waits;  
the King of kings is draw-ing near;  
the Sav-ior of the world is here.***

***Fling wide the por-tals of your heart;  
make it a tem-ple, set a-part  
from earth-ly use for heaven's em-ploy,  
a-dorned with prayer and love and joy.***

***Re-deem-er, come! I o-pen wide  
my heart to thee; here, Lord, a-bide.  
Let me thy in-ner pres-ence feel;  
thy grace and love in me re-veal.***

## Lighting the Advent and Window Candles

This simple circle of evergreen branches testifies of the continuation of life and of life without end. The four candles represent the four weeks in Advent and encircle the Christ candle which signifies Jesus as the light of the world. The candles of the Advent wreath are significant not only in the light they share, but in their color. The three purple candles symbolize the coming of Christ from the royal line of David, through his

earthly father, Joseph, and in contemporary days, we use the purple candles to signify hope, love and peace. The single pink candle symbolizes joy and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent. The growing light of these candles stresses the growing power of Christ Jesus over darkness. We lit the hope candle last Sunday and the love candle this morning, and we will light those two again tonight. We will continue to light one candle each week, culminating with Christmas Eve services when we light the center Christ candle.

As we move through Advent, expectantly waiting, we see the Light that shines in the darkness. The light that shines reveals the hurt and pain and needs of the world, places where we can help with small acts of kindness and love.

L: We light the candles

**P: remembering the light that shines in the darkness  
so that the darkness could not overcome it.**

Hymn No. 85     **“LIGHT ONE CANDLE TO WATCH FOR MESSIAH”**  
*Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si-ah:  
let the light ban-ish dark-ness.  
He shall bring sal-va-tion to Is-rael,  
God ful-fills the pro-mise.*

TIF IN VELDELE

*Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si-ah:  
let the light ban-ish dark-ness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd,  
gent-ly lead them home-ward.*

*Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si-ah:  
let the light ban-ish dark-ness.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way  
for the King of glo-ry.*

***Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si-ah:  
let the light ban-ish dark-ness.  
He is com-ing; tell the glad ti-dings.  
Let your lights be shining.***

## Hanging the Wreaths

Evergreens have long been considered a symbol of eternity, like God's everlasting nature. Ancient people viewed evergreen with awe and wonder because of its changeless characteristic. Isaiah 60:13 tells us: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify where my feet rest." Christmas greens point to deep, rich meanings of the season: laurel and bay symbolize victory and triumph; yew and cypress stand for eternal life; mistletoe symbolizes peace; and the prickly leaves of holly are symbols of the crown of thorns. The circle shape of the wreaths are a Christian symbol of the eternal God and eternal love, without beginning or end.

L: We hang the wreaths

**P: remembering God's everlasting love for us  
that we share with one another.**

Hymn No. 92

**"WHILE WE ARE WAITING, COME"**

WAITING (Cason)

***While we are wait-ing, come;  
while we are wait-ing, come.  
Je-sus, our Lord, Em-man-u-el,  
While we are wait-ing, come.***

***With power and glo-ry, come;  
With power and glo-ry, come.  
Je-sus, our Lord, Em-man-u-el,  
while we are wait-ing, come.***

***Come, Sav-ior, quick-ly come;  
Come, Sav-ior, quick-ly come.  
Je-sus, our Lord, Em-man-u-el,  
while we are wait-ing, come.***

### Placing the Flowers

The poinsettia, or “Flower of the Holy Night” as the plant is referred to in Mexico, is the most popular Advent flower. It was discovered growing wild in Mexico and was taken to North America where it was developed into the type of flower seen here today. The star-shaped center of the bloom reminds us of the star that shone on that first Christmas.

L: We place the poinsettias

P: remembering that God fulfills God’s promises.

Hymn No. 97

**“WATCHMAN, TELL US OF THE NIGHT”**  
(verses 1,2)

ABERYSTWYTH

***Watch-man, tell us of the night,  
what its signs of prom-ise are.  
Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight:  
see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.  
Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray  
news of joy or hope fore-tell?  
Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day,  
prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.***

***Watch-man, tell us of the night;  
high-er yet that star as-cends.  
Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light,  
peace and truth its course por-tends.  
Watch-man, will its beams a-lone***

***gild the spot that gave them birth?  
Trav-eler, a-ges are its own;  
see, it bursts o'er all the earth.***

Advent Reflection

Hymn No. 88

**“O COME, O COME EMMANUEL”**  
*(verses 6 & 7)*

VENI EMMANUEL

***O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.***

***O come, Desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.***

*(Move into the Gathering Area to decorate the tree with our ornaments.)*

## Prayer

L: Into our world as into Mary's womb ...

**P: Come, Lord Jesus.**

L: Into the forgotten places, as into the stable ...

**P: Come, Lord Jesus.**

L: Into the lives of the poor, bringing hope;  
into the lives of the powerful, bringing caution;  
into the lives of the weary, bring rest;  
into the lives of the wise, bringing restlessness;  
and into our lives and longings,  
whatever our estate ...

**P: Come, Lord Jesus.**

L: This is the good news:

Christ is coming,

and blessed are those who wait on the Lord.

**P: Therefore come quickly, Lord. Amen.**

## Benediction

Friends, go in expectation and hope.

Go with love and joy in your hearts.

And as you go, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
bring you peace in the midst of this blessed but busy season. Amen.