

**WORSHIP SERVICE**  
**December 17, 2023**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**

**WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP**

Prelude

Welcome

\* God's Greeting

\* We Greet One Another

\* Call to Worship (from Isaiah 35)

*Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come to save you."*

**They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.**

*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*

**Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.**

*They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.*

**Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.**

\* Opening Song: "How Great Our Joy" *Lift Up Your Hearts #90*

While by the sheep we watched at night, glad tidings brought an angel bright.

How great our joy! (Great our joy!)

Joy, joy, joy! (Joy, joy, joy!)

Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! (Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!)

There shall be born, so he did say, in Bethlehem a child today.

How great our joy! (Great our joy!)

Joy, joy, joy! (Joy, joy, joy!)

Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! (Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!)

There shall the child lie in a stall, this child who shall redeem us all.

How great our joy! (Great our joy!)

Joy, joy, joy! (Joy, joy, joy!)

Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! (Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!)

This gift of God we'll cherish well, that ever joy our hearts shall fill.

How great our joy! (Great our joy!)

Joy, joy, joy! (Joy, joy, joy!)

Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! (Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!)

\* Opening prayer

\* Song: "My Soul Cries Out With A Joyful Shout" vs 1, 2, 3 *Lift Up Your Hearts #69*

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.

You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,

so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn!

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,

you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn!

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.

Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more for the food they can never earn;

There are tables spread, every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn!

### Lighting of the Advent Candles

Today we light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ-A light which brings joy to those around us.

(Light candle)

Joy ...

*“The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy... they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.” Isaiah 35: 1-2*

**Come, Emmanuel, our joy, our light and our salvation. Let us walk in the light of the Lord.**

Song of Response: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” vs 6

*Lift Up Your Hearts* #61

O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

### **WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD**

Prayer of Confession (based on Romans 12:9-21)

*Dear Father, you call us to love sincerely; to hate what is evil; and cling to what is good. To be devoted to one another in love, and to honor one another above yourselves;*

**To not repay anyone evil for evil; to be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone; and if it is possible, as far as it depends on us, live at peace with everyone.**

*Lord, so often we put the burden on others to treat us with love first, and we only respond with what we feel they deserve.*

**Lord Jesus, forgive our self-centeredness, help us to not be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good, as you showed us.**

*In your name we pray, amen.*

Assurance of Pardon (from Psalm 103:1-12)

*My whole being will praise the Lord and never forget all his kindness. The Lord shows mercy and is kind. He does not become angry quickly, and he has great love. He has not punished us as our sins deserved; he has not repaid us for the evil we have done. As high as the sky is above the earth, so great is his love for those who respect him. He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from west. The Lord's love for those who respect him continues forever and ever.*

Song of Entrusting: "Hark, The Glad Sound! The Savior Comes" *Lift Up Your Hearts* #60

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long!  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne, and ev'ry voice a song.  
He comes the prisoners to release, in Satan's bondage held;  
the gates of brass before Him burst, the iron fetters yield.  
He comes the broken heart to bind, the wounded soul to cure,  
and with the treasures of His grace to enrich the humbled poor.  
Our glad Hosannas, Prince of Peace, your welcome shall proclaim;  
and heaven's eternal arches ring with your beloved Name.

Children's Message

Congregational Prayer

## **WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-17

<sup>9</sup> "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's

business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

Message: Peace in Relationships

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

Prayer of Application

\* Song of Response: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

*Lift Up Your*

*Hearts #351*

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down:  
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.  
Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;  
let us all in thee inherit, let us find thy promised rest:  
take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its Beginning, set our hearts at liberty.  
Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee with thy hosts above,  
pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.  
Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be:  
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;  
changed from glory into glory, 'til in heav'n we take our place,  
'til we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

## **WE DEPART TO SERVE**

\* Blessing

\* Closing Song: "Soon and Very Soon" (vs 1, 2, 3 )

*Lift Up Your*

*Hearts #482*

Soon and very soon We are going to see the King.  
Soon and very soon We are going to see the King.  
Soon and very soon We are going to see the King.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We are going to see the King.  
No more crying there, we are going to see the King.

No more crying there, we are going to see the King.  
No more crying there, we are going to see the King.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We are going to see the King.  
No more dying there, we are going to see the King.  
No more dying there, we are going to see the King.  
No more dying there, we are going to see the King.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We are going to see the King.

Postlude

\*Please stand if you are able.

Children's Message: Rev. Randy Raak

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Musicians: Kathlyn Copely, Rex DeBruin, Andrew Friend, Tara Tilstra,  
Maggie VanDyk

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS :**

The special offering this week is for **Ames Ecumenical Housing**. Through Keystone Apartments and Stonehaven Apartments here in Ames, Ames Ecumenical Housing provides housing for lower income older adults and those with mobility impairments

**The education committee** invites the congregation, family and friends to our youth **Christmas Program, Dec 17<sup>th</sup>** after the service.

**After the program** on December 17<sup>th</sup>, everyone is invited to stay for a **potluck meal** of soup, sides and dessert! By last name please bring these items for the meal. A -H Dessert, I – P Bread/Side, and Q – Z Soup.

**A BIG Thank you to all who** helped make our Christmas program a success! A lot of creativity in writing the script: Maggie VanDyke and Elizabeth Hobson. Laura Hufford for organizing and directing the performance. Andrew Friend for playing the piano, and Rex De Bruin for sound system. Tom Kuyper for building the beautiful new nativity. Jess Irvin and Kelly Hobson for being extra hands and loving hearts when needed! Everyone who donated or purchased items for props or costumes--Thank you! The Fellowship committee for organizing the

potluck following our program. All is appreciated for the time and effort put into this wonderful time of celebration in our church.

**You are invited** to worship with us at our Blue Christmas Service on December 21st at 7PM, the longest night of the year. The holiday season is not always easy. Find a safe place to grieve whatever you are experiencing with scripture, traditional carols, candlelighting, and words of hope. We hope you will find God's comfort and connection with us during this time.

**Christmas Eve Service** - The Candlelight Christmas Eve service will be on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

**TCRC is the parent church** for the new **Church Beyond Borders church**, planted by Rev. SJ Kim. This is a cutting edge "hybrid" church with a combination of on-line worship in Korean and English, small groups, and 1-to-1 discipleship and pastoral care. The church ministers to 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation Korean Americans who have disconnected from their parents' Korean-speaking churches. The church runs on a very small budget with most funds coming from the CRC's Resonate Global Mission and Classis Northcentral Iowa. As the parent church, TCRC also committed \$5,000 a year to this church plant. We have raised \$3,550 so far, so we still have a little bit to raise yet this year. Please consider supporting them. Checks can be made out to Church Beyond Borders or Trinity Christian Reformed Church (with "Church Beyond Borders" in the memo line) and put in our offering basket, or you can go to [churchbeyondborders.com](http://churchbeyondborders.com). Donations can also be made on line, picking Church Beyond Borders for the account. Visit our web page for the link to online giving.

**The next Pub Theology** (or Beers & Bibles/Spirits & Spirit/Brews & Truths) night at the Mucky Duck will be Sunday evening (Jan 7th) at 6:30. Bring your thirst, sense of humor, and hunger for off-the-wall theology questions ;) We've got some good questions coming in already – keep 'em coming! At this point we're planning on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday evening of each month, but since the holiday is there, we moved it to the first Sunday in January, for our December meeting.

Pastor Randy will be on vacation December 26<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>. Please reach out to your elders during this time.

Reminder as we come upon the winter season, please be sure to wipe your shoes before you come into the church to help with keeping our church home clean.

### **Small Groups, Committees, & Sunday School Updates**

**Sunday School Classes** Dec 17 (Christmas Program), (no class 24 or the 31), Jan 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb 4, 11,18,25, March 3, (no class 10), 17, 24, (no class 31), April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5.

**Breakfast Club** meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at the Lincoln Center Hy-Vee at 8:30 AM.

**UFO** will meet Monday December 18th at 6:30pm at Sue Fee's home. You are welcome to bring something to work on, or you can just come and enjoy the fellowship. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Hobson

**Women's Bible Study** meet the first Monday of the month

**Next Council meeting** is January 10th

### **DENOMINATION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

World Renew

Christmas Possibility - Next week we celebrate the possibility of being made right with God, starting with the birth of Jesus. He showed us the way to give to people in need. You can give a goat, a family water filter, or a tree pruning kit from World Renew's Gift Catalog at [worldrenew.net/gifts](http://worldrenew.net/gifts) or call 800-552-7972.

Thrive

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - “. . . and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” In what ways might you make more space for Jesus in your everyday life? Learn more at [crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject](http://crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject)

ReFrame Ministries

Kids Corner: The Shepherds' Joy - Check out this week's kids' devotion at [www.kidscorner.net](http://www.kidscorner.net). At the beginning of Luke 2, the shepherds were kind of like the last ones to be picked. They got the long and boring night shift job that nobody wanted to do: watch the stinky sheep. But God picked

them for a special task the night Jesus was born. Check out all the great content at [kidscorner.net](http://kidscorner.net), like the Bible story podcast “The Shepherds.”

Groundwork: Jesus: Our Everlasting Father - Isaiah continued to reveal the nature of the Messiah when he called him the “Everlasting Father.” Join our Groundwork conversation as we study Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 63:15-16, John 14:6-14, 1 John 1:1-4, and 1 John 3:1-3 to better understand how this revolutionary title reveals the nature of Jesus and discover the comfort and belonging offered to us in Jesus, our Everlasting Father. Listen now at [GroundworkOnline.com](http://GroundworkOnline.com) and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.

The Banner

Christmas Greeting Video from The Banner - Watch a warm year-end video message where Banner editor Shiao Chong explains the impact The Banner has with its journalistic ministry that reaches thousands of people. He shares Christmas greetings to all readers. View it now!  
[tinyurl.com/BannerChristmas23](http://tinyurl.com/BannerChristmas23)

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Congregational Prayer: Lora Copley  
Sound: Tom Whitney  
Nursery: Rachel and Mindy  
Children's message: Randy Raak  
Greeters: Saldana

**Pastor Randy Raak:** [pastor@amestrinity.org](mailto:pastor@amestrinity.org) or 928-699-9329

**Lora Copley:** [director@isu-areopagus.org](mailto:director@isu-areopagus.org) or 505-387-6861 (Areopagus Campus Ministry)

**Elders:** A-G = Brian Sterenberg; H-K = Rex De Bruin; L-S = Tom Kuyper;  
T-Z = Jeff Kopaska

**Deacons:** A-G = Joseph Yoder; H-K = Pam Niemeyer; L-S = Tom Whitney;  
T-Z = Mark Irvin