



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We find joy in
connection*

Cover Art: “Comfort, O Comfort”, by Lauren Wright Pittman, inspired by Isaiah 40:1-11, digital painting

I wanted to create an image that spoke tenderly to the viewer as this text does to the reader. “Comfort, O comfort my people” (Isaiah 40:1). When I’ve read this text before, the shepherding metaphor has only yielded masculine imagery in my mind. It makes sense with the text’s pronouns that I would imagine a masculine figure. It was also ingrained in me— through translations, biblical art, movies, children’s pageants, etc.—that shepherds were always men. I learned recently, however, that women were shepherds too. Some young women were trained and worked as shepherds before they were married; this notion completely added new dimension and depth to the shepherding metaphor. I decided to use imagery of modern-day shepherds to inspire this image. A shepherd is at once fierce and tender, willing to face the most dangerous of predators in the dead of night while warmly cradling the most vulnerable of the flock.

In this image, the shepherd nurtures a lamb while leading the flock through fields of tall grasses and flowers. The fuchsia flowers in the foreground are marjoram flowers that represent comfort and the steadfastness of God’s word even in the midst of the leveling of the land. The shepherd’s clothes have repeated medallions with simplified imagery of a straight highway in the wilderness. Within the stylized landscape, a voice proclaims the coming glory of the Lord.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

*With Christ as the Cornerstone, we will build a church of living stones,
where every member is a minister and is equipped to express God’s love
by word and deed to all people.*

Based on 1 Peter 2:5, 6

The Worship of God

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023

Gathering Music

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

GENEVAN 42;
Words by Johannes Olearius trans.
Catherine Winkworth, Music from the *Genevan Psalter*

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL;
Words by Charles Wesley,
Music by Rowland H. Prichard

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

MENDELSSOHN;
Words by Charles Wesley (alt),
Music by Felix Mendelssohn

“You’ve Got a Friend”

Words and Music by Carol King

Prelude

“There’s a Song in the Air”
Cynthia Griesedieck

by Karl P. Harrington
arr. Cindy Berry

Welcome

April Alston

✠ Call to Worship

One: Welcome to worship.

All: Welcome to worship.

One: I’m glad you’re here.

All: I’m glad you’re here.

One: Surely God is in this space.

All: Surely God is in this space.

One: I see God in your face.

All: I see God in your face.

One: Let us worship together.

All: Let us worship together.

One: How does a weary world rejoice?
How do we give peace and love a voice?
How do we find joy in suffering?
In grateful hope, together we will sing.

✠ Please rise in body or spirit.

† Opening Song

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE;

Basque Carol, Words trans.

Sabine Baring-Could, Music arr. Edgar Pittman



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



With wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
All gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
In Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
Thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
And Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!

Tune and text: Public domain

*During the last stanza of our Opening Song,
all children are invited to come forward for today's children's sermon.*

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Erin Delgado, Mia Ng

Children's Sermon

Lou Dawson

Pastoral Prayer

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Offertory Anthem

"Waiting"

by Pepper Choplin

GBC Choir

Waiting, we are waiting, Lord.

Waiting, we are waiting, Lord.

Fill the mind 'til we find Your light, Your truth.

(cont'd on the next page)

Waiting (waiting), we are waiting, Lord.
Waiting (waiting), we are waiting, Lord.
Fill the mind 'till we find Your will, Your way.

Refrain:

Now let us know Your presence, Lord,
Emmanuel, God be with us.
We welcome you with open hearts,
Emmanuel, God be with us.
God be with us. Emmanuel.

Listening (listening), we are listening, Lord.
Listening (listening), we are listening, Lord.
Draw near, let us hear Your Word for us.

(Refrain)

Patience, give us patience, Lord.
Patience, give us patience, Lord.
When we pray, give us faith that You hear every prayer.

As we're waiting (waiting)...
We are waiting (waiting)...
Waiting.

✠ Doxology for Advent

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel**

VENI EMMANUEL; Words by Thomas Ken,
15th Century French Melody

✠ Prayer of Dedication

Steve Rose

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:24-45

Gary Hollingsworth

Sermon

"Joy that Joins"

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Silent Reflection

Invitation

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a Flow’ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah ’twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright
She bore to men a Savior
When half-spent was the night.

This Flow’r, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very god,
From sin and death He saves us
And lightens every load.

Celebrating Community

Christian McIvor

Benediction

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Postlude

“Love Has Come!”

Susan Gardner

ES IST EIN’ ROS’;

from *Geistliche Kirchengesäng*,
harm. Michael Praetorius

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