

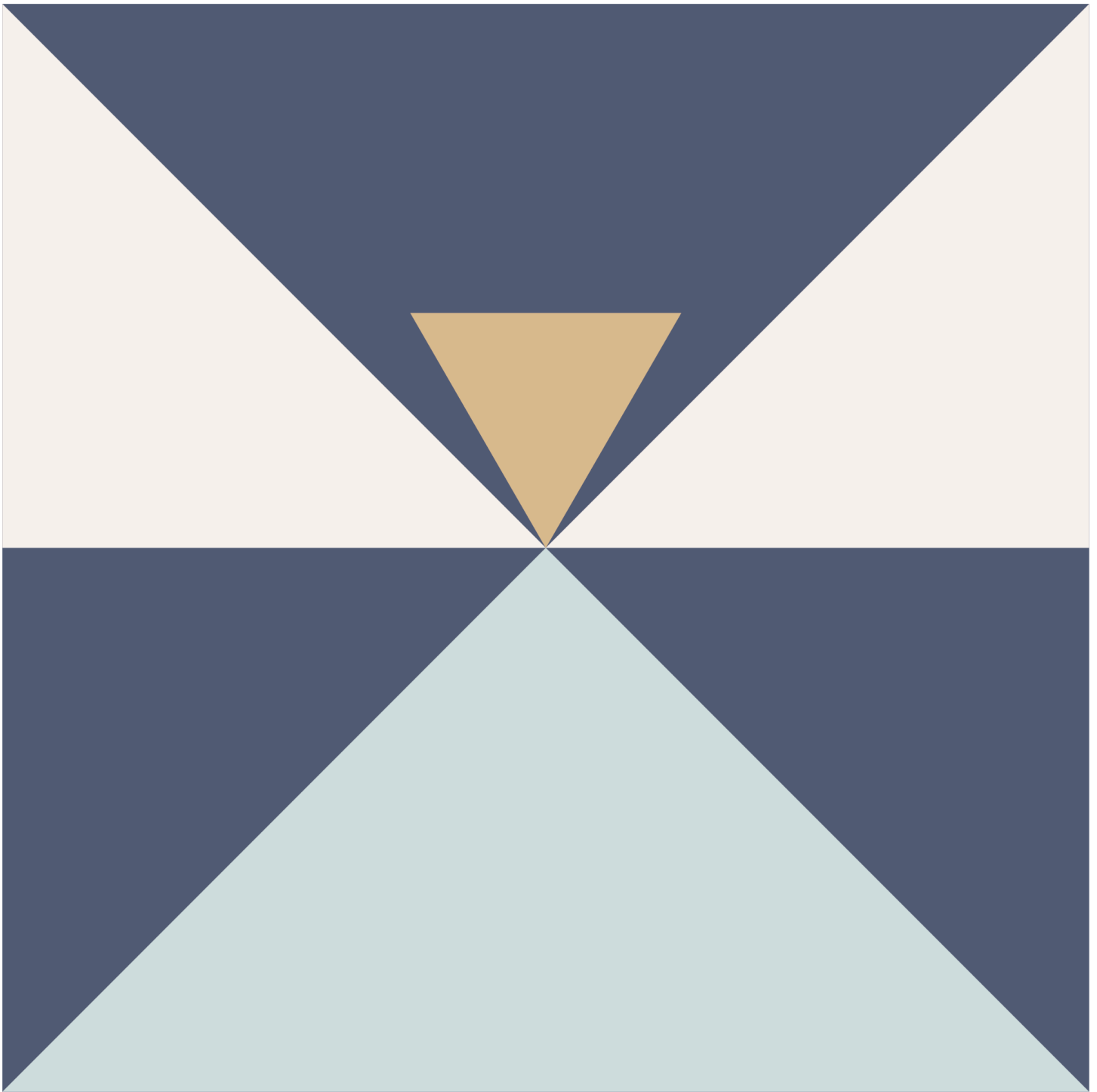
# FOR THE **Be**GINNING

**The Table**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

December 1, 2024 ~ First Sunday of Advent

YOU ARE A BLESSING This quilt square is a simplified abstract image of the angel Gabriel who tells Mary she is “blessed among women.”





*If you would like to keep this bulletin, please feel free to do so. However, they will be reused each Sunday throughout this season so, if you do not wish to keep it, please return the bulletin to the table near the entrance. Thank you.*

### **THE TABLE'S GOD GIVEN PURPOSE:**

As followers of Jesus, we are guided by the Holy Spirit to affirm God's unconditional love and grace for all people by advocating for, serving and walking with one another and our neighbors.

### **OUR VISION**

is to experience and extend God's transforming love by—

- Being in relationship with God, set free to share God's grace.
- Building authentic relationships within our faith community and with our neighbors through accompaniment and service.
- Aspiring to love like Jesus.
- Growing in faith through spiritual practices including worship, Bible study and prayer.
- Extending genuine hospitality, especially to the marginalized, those who have been hurt by the church and those who do not know God's love.
- Educating ourselves and others, advocating for, and implementing practices grounded in social justice.

### **BULLETIN ICONS can help you navigate the worship service:**



indicates that the congregation will be speaking. The words that will be said together are printed in **bold** on your bulletin or on the worship supplement.



indicates a time of prayer.



indicates a song to sing together.



indicates a time for quiet listening.



indicates a time when you may be asked to move around the worship space. The worship leader will give more instructions when it's time to move.

- \* an asterisk indicates that you are invited to stand in body or in spirit for this portion of the worship service.

## GATHER



### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God says,

**All: “Do not be afraid.”**

One: God says,

**All: “I have called you by name.”**

One: God says,

**All: “I will be with you.”**

One: God says,

**All: “You are precious and honored in my sight.”**

One: At the beginning of this season, at the start of this week, at the top of this hour,

**All: may we wrap ourselves in these words.**

One: May we begin again.

**All: Let us worship our Holy God!**



### **\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

One: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. Let us come before God with humble hearts and confess our sins.

**All: Affirming God, Your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at this earth and said, “It is good.” You spoke affirmations through the prophets. You spoke blessings over Mary. You spoke belonging through Christ. At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing, made in your image, held in your love. Forgive us for forgetting this truth. Forgive us for measuring our worth by society’s measuring stick instead of yours. We believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ’s name we pray, amen.**

*(Pause for silent, personal confession and reflection)*

One: ...hear these words from Isaiah: God says, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine.” We are forgiven. We are loved. Let it leave you awestruck.

**All: Thanks be to God! May we believe it. Amen.**



## \*GATHERING SONG - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vs. 1-3, 6-7

# 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som  
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest  
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy  
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge  
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the  
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, thou Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heavenly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery.  
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 6 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.

- 7 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.



## \*GREETING

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, ✠ the love of  
 God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with  
 you all.

All: **And also with you.**



## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



## **\*SHARING GOD'S PEACE**

### **TRANSFORM**



## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Isaiah 43:1-7**

But now, says the Lord—

the one who created you, Jacob,

the one who formed you, Israel:

Don't fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

when through the rivers, they won't sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you won't be scorched

and flame won't burn you.

I am the Lord your God,

the holy one of Israel, your savior.

I have given Egypt as your ransom,

Cush and Seba in your place.

Because you are precious in my eyes,

you are honored, and I love you.

I give people in your place,

and nations in exchange for your life.

Don't fear,

I am with you.

From the east I'll bring your children;

from the west I'll gather you.

I'll say to the north, "Give them back!"

and to the south, "Don't detain them."

Bring my sons from far away,

and my daughters from the end of the earth,  
everyone who is called by my name  
and whom I created for my glory,  
whom I have formed and made.

### **Luke 1:26-38**

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.



#### **A TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES**

*(children are invited to come forward for a moment with Pastor Pam)*



#### **SERMON "You Are A Blessing" - Rev. Pamela Meilands**



#### **\*SERMON SONG - In Case No One Ever Told You**

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING  
**YOU ARE A BLESSING**  
**IN CASE NO ONE**  
**EVER TOLD YOU**



Scan to hear  
the tune!

LOBE DEN HERREN ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty")

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music from the *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, 1668

In case no one e - ver told you or  
You are the mas - ter - piece born of God's  
You are u - nique - ly cre - a - ted for  
4  
you have for - got - ten You are a bless - ing and  
i - ma - gin - a - tion E - ven the parts that are  
9  
love and be - long - ing For - cing your - self to be  
have been since you were be - got - ten  
cry - ing out for res - tor - a - tion  
13  
some - one you're not is ex - haus - ting  
Fash - ioned from love Sent to the earth from a - bove  
All that you are Born out of star - dust and scars  
You are a gift There is no box you must fit  
18  
You're no - thing short of a god - send  
Re - flects God's per - fect cre - a - tion  
Let your be - lov - ed - ness blos - som



### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**All:** We believe in a blessing God who calls us Beloved. We believe that this blessing showed up in the life of Mary, and was also bestowed upon the hemorrhaging woman, the poor in spirit, the children, the crowds, the Jews, the Gentiles, the faithful and the doubting. So in faith, we trust that God's blessing, like ripples on the water, forever reaches toward us. And with wild hope, we believe that because of this blessing, we are covered in love. We are more than enough. Thanks be to God! Amen



### PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH





## OFFERING PRAYER

One: Let us pray together

**All: Once again, we find ourselves standing at the beginning of the month, at the beginning of this Advent season, at the beginning of this new day, bringing our hearts to you. Meet us here, gracious God. Hear our prayers and and bless our offerings, allowing them to be used to the glory of your Kingdom. Amen.**



## HOLY COMMUNION

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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



## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**



## INVITATION TO COMMUNION & THE COMMUNION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

One: Come to God's table. There is a place for you and enough for all.

*(Please come forward to receive the elements. Take a cup from the tray then proceed to the pastor to receive the bread and the communion assistant to receive the wine. If you would prefer, there are also sealed, pre-packaged wafer and juice combination cups on the tray. If you are not able to come forward but would like communion, please signal to the pastor or the communion assistant and we will be glad to bring it to you at your seat.)*



## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

One: Let us pray

**All: Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.**

**SEND**



## BLESSING

One: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, bless and keep you now and forever.

**All: Amen.**



**\*SENDING SONG - People Look East** (*printed on back page of bulletin*)



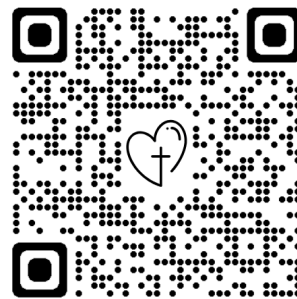
## SENDING

One: God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others. We go out to follow Jesus in the world – to show and tell the good news of God to everyone.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

Did you know you can make a contribution online? Try our  
**Virtual Offering Plate**

↓ SCAN HERE ↓



Online giving through [tithe.ly](http://tithe.ly)

*Go in peace  
to love and serve  
the Lord!*

## People, Look East

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the  
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more  
 3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the  
 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more  
 5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who

crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are  
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to  
 nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are  
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y  
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley

Peo - ple, look  
 a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.  
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.  
 fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.  
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.  
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

east and sing to - day:

Peo - ple, look east:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
 Love, the Bird, is on the way.  
 Love, the Star, is on the way.  
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Peo - ple, look east:

(Love is on the way.)



*Favored One*  
by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Luke 1:26-38  
Digital painting

*...What if my fully embodied self, including the most human parts of me, are not only acceptable but beloved by the creator of the universe? What if because of my me-ness, God couldn't stay away, and chose to come near and take on flesh too?*

*As I drew, I felt a few steps closer to accepting the steadfast, limitless, unconditional love of God that I claim to believe in, but have yet to fully receive. What resulted was an image of Mary and Gabriel in a warm, intimate embrace. Mary has a peace to her that is like a wave of relief over her whole being. A kaleidoscope quilt pattern surrounds them and patterns Mary's clothes. If we could open ourselves up to receive the incomprehensible love of God, maybe we would constantly feel wrapped up in a soft, cozy, lovingly-stitched-together quilt. Favored one, God delights in you—every single bit of you. Never forget: you are a blessing. - Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman (full artist's statement available on the information table).*