

Images of the Nativity

Advent
Midweek
Worship

Series inspired by the
Thrivent
Religious Art
Collection



Grace Hartigan
American, 1922-2008

St. Madonna, 1984
Watercolor

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Wednesday, November 29, 2023

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A LITURGY OF DOUBT AND HOPE

Worship in a traditional order drawing on along with words of doubt and hope
from Scripture, poets, and writers.

Opening Hymn

We Bring Our Art to You

tune: LSB 331



1 We bring our art to You, Our Sec - ond Ad - vent King;
2 We bring our art as prayer, Our suff' - ring and our dreams;
3 We see You in the art, Truth whe - ther known or not;
4 We are the art You made, But we are flawed and torn;
5 Your Ad - vent art in us Will be our hope for now;



We paint and draw to hon - or You, The new world You will bring.
I - mag - ine rooms which You pre - pare For us who'll be re - deemed.
All things can be a place You start Point - ing to what You taught.
Yet in Your love we do not fade; With Je - sus, hope's re - born.
One Day we'll see the God You are: Ar - tist Most Glor - i - ous.

Text: Benjamin C. Squires, 1973. © 2023.

Invocation

Jude 1-2,20-22,25

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:
May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

**C: To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority,
before all time and now and forever. Amen.**

P: We come to be built up in our most holy faith,
building one another up through the Word of God.
God the Father calls on us to have compassion on one another:

C: "Have mercy on those who doubt."

P: God the Son calls on us to support one another
as we wait for His mercy that leads to eternal life:

**C: Jesus is able to keep us from stumbling
and to present us blameless before the presence of his glory
with great joy. Amen.**

Confession of Sins

Based on "Emmanuel" by Aaron Niequist

P: Can we just admit together that we're not fine?

C: *Because I'm not fine, and you're not fine.*

P: Can we just admit together that we're afraid?

C: *Because I'm afraid, and you're afraid.*

P: Can we just admit together that we have doubts?

C: *Because I have doubts, and you have doubts.*

P: Can we just admit together that we're not free?

C: *Because I'm not free, and I want to be.*

P: If you're not free, then call out to God with me:

C: *Emmanuel,*

God with us today,

We humbly call out Your Name:

Emmanuel,

As near as our need,

As close as the air that we breathe,

Emmanuel.

Lord, have mercy.

P: Can we just admit together that we have failed?

C: *Because I have failed, and you have failed.*

P: Can we just admit that our hands aren't clean?

C: *And our hearts aren't clean, and they'll never be.*

P: Until we're freed, and mercy sings.

C: *Emmanuel,*

God with us today,

We desperately cling to Your Name:

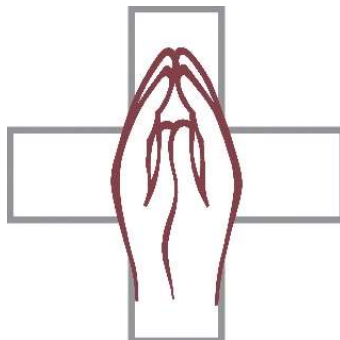
Emmanuel,

As near as our need,

As close as the air that we breathe.

Emmanuel.

Lord, have mercy. Amen.



Absolution (Forgiveness)

Based on liturgy by Bernie Seter and "Emmanuel" by Aaron Niequist

P: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, which means He does not desire your death. But rather He calls you to turn from your wicked ways and find life in the life of Christ. He has had mercy upon you. He graciously forgives your sins through the death and resurrection of your Lord Jesus Christ. He strengthens you by the power of the Holy Spirit to amend your sinful lives according to His will, and will keep you in His grace until that day when He will take you to be with Him for eternity. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, in His stead and by His command, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Emmanuel,

God with us today,

In thanksgiving we praise Your Name:

Emmanuel,

Who came near so we are freed,

As close as the Word that we hear.

Emmanuel.

The Lord has had mercy on us.

P: Now we can admit together that we've failed,

C: ***Because I am forgiven, and you are forgiven.***

P: Now we can admit together that our hands aren't clean,

C: ***Because Jesus made me clean, and He made you clean.***

P: If you're now free, then call out to God with me:

C: ***Emmanuel,***

God with us today,

In thanksgiving we praise Your Name:

Emmanuel.

The Lord has had mercy on us. Amen.

Tonight's Reading

Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He 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 father David, ³³and he will reign

over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

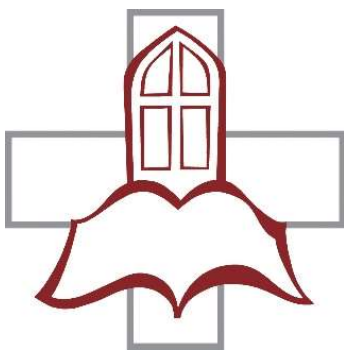
L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Collect (Prayer of the Day)

P: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You caused Your only-begotten Son to be born of the blessed virgin Mary for our salvation. Bless our meditation on Your Word, which shows the wonders of that sacred birth, that all who behold it may ponder and adore the mystery of His holy incarnation and may joyfully partake in His divine grace unto life eternal; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**



Acknowledgements

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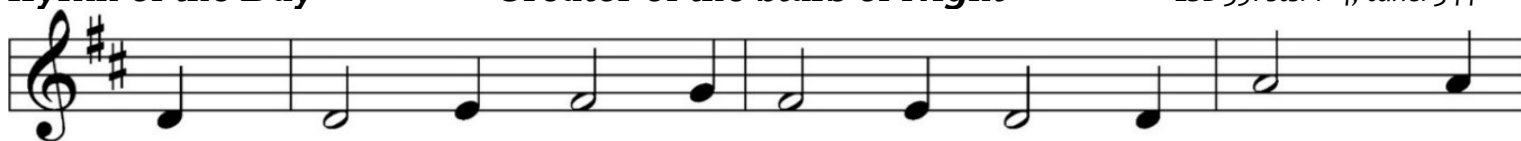
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Hymn of the Day

Creator of the Stars of Night

LSB 351 sts. 1-4; tune: 344



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, Thy peo - ple's
 2 Thou, griev - ing that the an - cient curse Should doom to
 3 Thou cam'st the Bride - groom of the bride, As drew the
 4 At whose dread name, ma - jes - tic now, All knees must



ev - er - last - ing Light: O Christ, Re - deem - er,
 death a u - ni - verse, Hast found the heal - ing,
 world to e - ven - tide, The spot - less Vic - tim
 bend, all hearts must bow; All things ce - les - tial



save us all And hear Thy ser - vants when they call.
 full of grace, To cure and save our ru - ined race.
 all di - vine Pro - ceed - ing from a vir - gin shrine.
 Thee shall own, And things ter - res - trial, Lord a - lone.

Sermon

Confession of Faith (adapted from the Apostles' Creed)

First Nations Version

Our Father and Creator, the One Above Us All,
 made all things in the world above and the earth below.
 Jesus, his special born Son,
 was fathered by the Holy Spirit
 and was born into this world through a virgin named Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate, a ruler of the Roman people,
 who had him nailed to a tree pole, the cross, where he bled to death.
 He was buried and then went down to the world of the dead.
 On the third day he came back to life, never to die again.
 He returned to his Father in the world above
 and sat down at his powerful right hand.
 One day he will return to this earth to make the final decision
 about the eternity of the living and the dead.

After he went to the world above,
Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to us from the Father,
to live in and through us.

There is only one holy and world-wide group of believers in Jesus
—a Sacred Family called his Church.

All of the Holy Spirit's holy people sit together equally in this Family
and share his Sacred Food at his table.

He has forgiven us and set us free from all of our broken ways,
and all who trust in him, even though they cross over to death,
will be brought back to life again,
to a life that will never end. Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Savior of the Nations, Come

LSB 332, st. 8

(we join in singing as the offerings are brought forward to the altar)

△ 8 Glo - ry to the Fa - ther sing, Glo - ry to the
Son, our king, Glo - ry to the Spir - it be
Now and through e - ter - ni - ty.

Prayers of the Church

based on Langston Hughes' poem "Prayer [2]"

P: Gather up in the arms of your mercy

C: **The sick, the depraved**

The desperate, the tired,

P: All the scum of our weary city. Gather up

C: **In the arms of your mercy.**

P: Gather up

C: **In the arms of your love—**

P: Those who expect

C: **No love from above.**

P: For them—for us—

C: **We pray now.**

* Jesus reached out to people considered by others to be "scum". We reach out to all people. And we ourselves may even feel like "scum" sometimes. But look at how God responds with love.

Pastor then offers the Prayers of the Church

The Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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 and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction (Blessing)

Colossians 1:19-20

P: God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus Christ, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. You are reconciled to God the Father, through the work of God the Son, and kept in this faith by God the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

LSB 338



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Announcements