

**Largs Church of the Nazarene
29 November 2020**

It came upon the midnight clear
Edmund H. Sears

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long,
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong.
And man at war with man hears not
The love-song which they bring,
Oh, hush the noise ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world gives back the song
which now the angels sing.

First Sunday of Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: 2020 has been a year of waiting. Waiting for the lockdown to end, waiting to see family and friends, waiting to hear what new

restrictions have been put in place, waiting for a vaccine, waiting for this "longest year ever" to pass away.

Reader 2: Advent marks the beginning of a brand new year on the Liturgical Calendar, a brand new year for the Church, and for Christians all over the world. But we begin our year with a time of waiting, as we remember the years upon years and the lifetimes upon lifetimes that passed while the People of God were waiting—hoping and praying for the long-foretold Messiah who would bring light and life to the world.

Reader 1: We remember today that the Angel Gabriel appeared to a young girl, bringing news that would change not only her own life, but the lives of all people, news that the waiting was almost over.

Reader 2: Mary was told that she would be with child, that she would be expecting a son, and so we, too, wait in hopeful expectation. We light this first candle as a sign of our hope. Let this light remind us of the Light of the World, who still comes to us, even as we wait.

Both readers: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

The people: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel

J.M. Neale

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

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

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse free,
Thine own from Satan's tyranny.
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave. [Refrain]

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh,
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

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. [Refrain]



Luke 1 (NRSV)

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and

said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He 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 ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. . . .

46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 48 for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
 Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
 50 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
 51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
 52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
 54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The Angel and the Virgin (Luke 1)

- Ordinary time
 - Latin *Ordo*: order
- Gabriel's appearance and Mary's proclamation change things
 - FROM waiting with hope and assurance but **without** specifics
 - TO waiting with hope and assurance **with** specific knowledge of who the Messiah is and where and when He will arrive
- Mary is perplexed
 - *diatarassó*: intensely going back-and-forth between inner thoughts and emotions
- Here am I. Use me.

Come Thou long-expected Jesus

Charles Wesley

Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
 Born to set Thy people free;
 From our fears and sins release us,
 Let us find our rest in Thee.
 Israel's strength and consolation,
 Hope of all the earth Thou art;
 Dear desire of every nation,
 Joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
 Born a child and yet a King,
 Born to reign in us forever,
 Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
 By thine own eternal spirit
 Rule in all our hearts alone;
 By thine all sufficient merit,
 Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Doxology

Thomas Ken

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
 Praise Him all creatures here below
 Praise Him above ye heavenly host
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost