



CHRIST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
MILFORD

December 20, 2020  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

## REFLECTION

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### Celebrating Jesus Christ: God With Us, God Like Us

God had always been with his people.  
But in the incarnation of the eternal Son  
God is with his people that he might be like them!  
And to what end?  
In the words of one of the ancients:

*In his unbounded love,  
God became what we are,  
That he might make us what he is.*

Blessed be the God of heaven and earth who sent Christ,  
that in due time we might share the Divine Nature,  
and even now, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
pass from one degree of glory to another!

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### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

**Gathering Hymn**    Angels, from the Realms of Glory

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Call to Worship**            Isaiah 9:2-7:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
**on them has light shined.**

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;  
**they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,**  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for  
his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For

every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;**

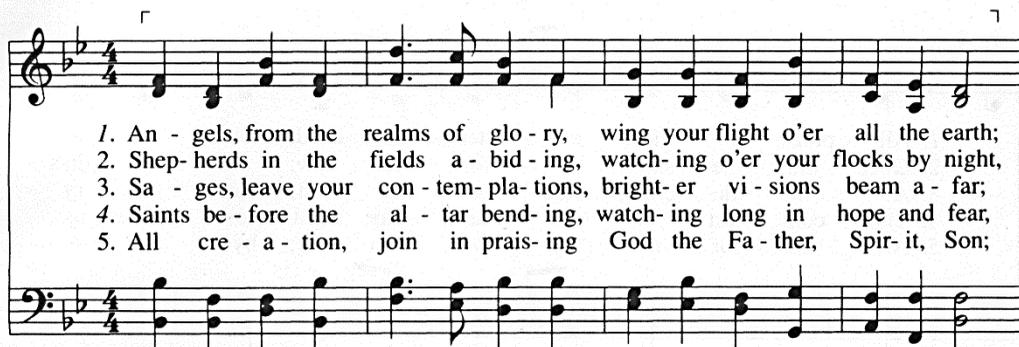
and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called,

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,**

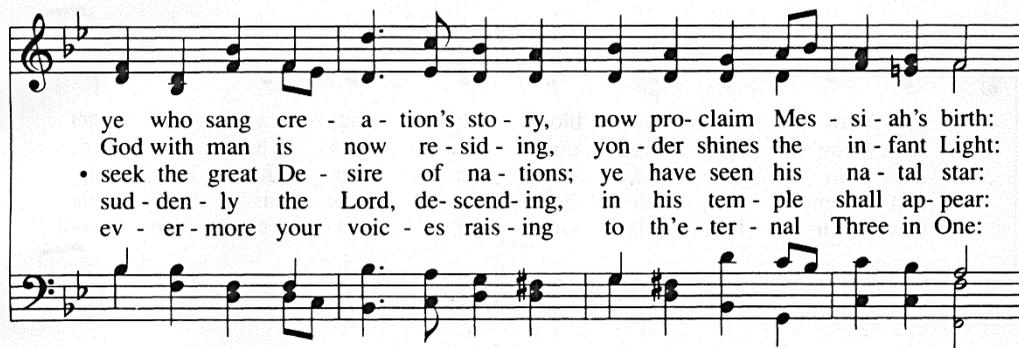
**Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

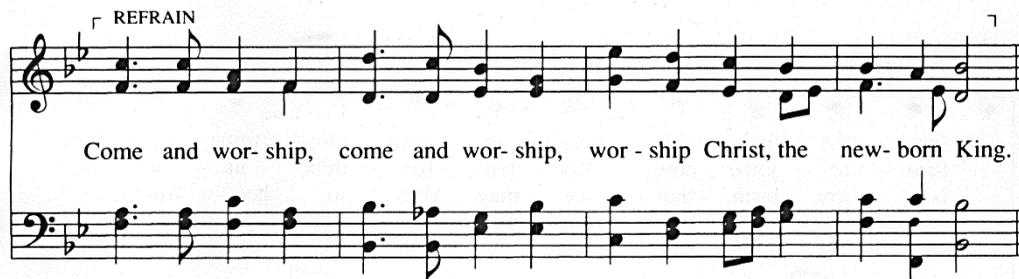
**The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!**



1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2. Shep - herds in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,  
5. All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son;



ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with man is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant Light:  
• seek the great De - sire of na - tions; ye have seen his na - tal star:  
sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear:  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to th'e - ter - nal Three in One:



REFRAIN  
Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

1. The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat a glo - rious  
 2. To hail thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, the gath - 'ring  
 3. For thou their bur - den dost re - move and break the  
 4. To us a Child of hope is born, to us a  
 5. His name shall be the Prince of Peace, the Ev - er -

light have seen; the light has shined on them who long in  
 na - tions come; they joy as when the reap - ers beat their  
 • ty - rant's rod, as in the day when Mid - ian fell be -  
 Son is giv'n, and on his shoul - der ev - er rests all  
 last - ing Lord, the Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - lor, the

shades of death have been, in shades of death have been.  
 har - vest trea - sures home, their har - vest trea - sures home.  
 • fore the sword of God, be - fore the sword of God.  
 pow'r in earth and heav'n, all pow'r in earth and heav'n.  
 God by all a - dored, the God by all a - dored.

6. His righteous government and pow'r  
 shall over all extend;  
 On judgment and on justice based,  
 his reign shall have no end,  
 his reign shall have no end.

7. Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,  
 and make us thine alone,  
 who with the Father ever art  
 and Holy Spirit, one;  
 and Holy Spirit, one.

Invocation

**Scripture Lesson** Micah 5:1–5; Luke 2:1-7

**Praise Hymn** The People that in Darkness Sat

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### **Confession of Sin**

And now, Lord, what is our hope? Truly our hope is even in you,  
if your lovingkindness cover the multitude of our offenses.

O remember what my substance is, that I am dust, but precious in your site:  
the work of your hands, the likeness of your face,  
the cost of your blood, a name from your name,  
a sheep from your pasture, a child of your covenant.

Do not despise, O Lord, the work of your own hands,  
but look upon the face of your children, and remember the covenant of old,  
sealed with the blood of your one and only son;  
Who became like us, to make us like Him, and credit his payments to our great debt,  
and drown our guilt, as in the deep sea.

For we are yours, O Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### *Individual Confession*

**Absolution** Luke 2:8-14

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

**Thanksgiving Hymn** Good Christian Men, Rejoice

1. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
 2. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
 3. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

earth and heav'n be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
 He hath o - pened heav - en's door, and man is bless - ed ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## **Gospel Lesson**

Luke 2:15-20

## **Peace of Christ**

The peace of the Lord be with you!

**And also with you!**

## **Sanctus**

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts

Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory!

Hosanna in the Highest!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord

Hosanna in the Highest!

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## **Sermon Text**

Isaiah 11

## **Sermon**

The Book of Emmanuel, 4 | Curran Bishop

## **Response Hymn**

Immanuel

From the squalor of a borrowed stable  
By the Spirit and a virgin's faith  
To the anguish and the shame of scandal  
Came the Savior of the human race  
But the skies were filled  
With the praise of heav'n  
Shepherds listen as the angels tell  
Of the gift of God come down to man  
At the dawning of Immanuel

King of heaven now the friend of sinners  
Humble servant in the Father's hands  
Filled with power and the Holy Spirit  
Filled with mercy for the broken man  
Yes He walked my road and He felt my pain  
Joys and sorrows that I know so well  
Yet His righteous steps give me hope again

I will follow my Immanuel  
Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal  
He was lifted on a cruel cross  
He was punished for a world's transgressions  
He was suffering to save the lost  
He fights for breath He fights for me  
Loosing sinners from the claims of hell  
And with a shout our souls are free  
Death defeated by Immanuel

Now He's standing in the place of honor  
Crowned with glory on the highest throne  
Interceding for His own beloved  
'Til His Father calls to bring them home  
Then the skies will part as the trumpet sounds  
Hope of heaven or the fear of hell  
But the bride will run to her Lover's arms  
Giving glory to Immanuel

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## Bringing Our Life to God

Prayers | Collection | Profession

## Prayers of the People

### Collection

text **MNA 1708** to **76959** and follow the prompts  
or visit [give.pcamna.org/to/1708/](http://give.pcamna.org/to/1708/)

### Confession of Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) 8.2, 33.1

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by

Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

### **Communion in Christ Jesus**

*All Christians are invited to join us to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. During this time of social distancing we offer for our pastor to come and bless your partaking of elements you provide to preserve the corporate-presence of Christ pictured in the supper as best we can. If you've been part of our streaming service please text Curran (203-812-9928) to set up a time he can meet you (from a distance) to celebrate communion.*

### **O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide**

O Saviour, rend the heavens wide  
Come down, come down, with mighty stride  
Unbar the gates, the doors break down  
Unbar the way to heaven's crown

### **Prayer for those searching**

*Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.*

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### **Coronation Hymn**

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

### **Benediction** from Micah 5:4-5

Christ shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. May you dwell secure, for Christ is great to the ends of the earth. And may He be your peace.

1. In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
 2. Flocks were sleep - ing; shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new

ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.  
 saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.

Swift are wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, no - els ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
 Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:

Christ the babe is Lord of all. Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
 Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.

## REFLECTION

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### **God With Us, God Like Us**

I grasped that over it [the chasm between heaven and earth] lay, as it were, a cable-bridge, frail, swaying, but passable. And this bridge, this reconciliation between the black despair of lying bound and gagged in the tiny dungeon of ego, and soaring upwards into the white radiance of God's universal love – this bridge was the Incarnation, whose truth expresses that of the desperate need it meets. Because of our physical hunger we know there is bread; because of our spiritual hunger we know there is Christ.

– *Malcolm Muggeridge*, journalist (20th century)

The implications of the name Immanuel are both comforting and unsettling. Comforting, because He has come to share the danger as well as the drudgery of our everyday lives. He desires to weep with us and to wipe away our tears. And what seems most bizarre, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, longs to share in and to be the source of the laughter and the joy we all too rarely know.

The implications are unsettling. It is one thing to claim that God looks down upon us, from a safe distance, and speaks to us (via long distance, we hope). But to say that He is right here, is to put ourselves and Him in a totally new situation. He is no longer the calm and benevolent observer in the sky, the kindly old caricature with the beard. His image becomes that of Jesus, who wept and laughed, who fasted and feasted, and who, above all, was fully present to those He loved. He was there with them. He is here with us.

– *Michael Card*, guitarist & songwriter (20th century)

Jesus became a human being because God the compassionate One could not suffer and lacked a back to be beaten. God needed a back like our backs on which to receive blows and thereby to perform compassion as well as to preach it.

– *Meister Eckhart*, German monk (14th century)

In the Incarnation, God the Son takes the body and human soul of Jesus, and, through that, the whole environment of Nature, all the creaturely predicament, into His own being. So that “He came down from Heaven” can almost be transposed into “Heaven drew earth up into it,” and locality, limitation, sleep, sweat, footsore weariness, frustration, pain, doubt, and death, are, from before all worlds, known by God from within. The pure light walks the earth; the darkness, received into the heart of Deity, is there swallowed up. Where, except in uncreated light, can the darkness be drowned?

– *C.S. Lewis*, Cambridge scholar (20th century)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Community Group** will meet tonight, December 20, 4-5:30pm. Since the cold means we'll need to meet indoors we will meet in several smaller groups to protect each other. Please RSVP to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org) and we'll let the sorting hat script assign us between houses to enjoy (socially distanced) time together.

**Thursday Night Prayer Meeting – Will not meet this week**—because it's Christmas Eve! Instead:

**Christmas Eve Service** Thursday, December 24, 6-7pm at the MAC (40 Railroad Ave, Milford, CT). In-person space is limited to 40 participants; please RSVP to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org) to reserve an in-person spot.  
[Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 844 3944 3883 Passcode: 995837

### Contact us

203.812.9928 or [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org); find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/CPCMilford](https://facebook.com/CPCMilford) or visit us online at [cpcmilford.org](http://cpcmilford.org)

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