

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)  
Order for Worship ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ "Love Sunday" ~ 21 December 2025

Preparation for Worship:  
"Love is the whole thing. We are only pieces."  
~Rumi

**Prelude**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful  
Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Bower Hill 'Phil

**Introit**

*May I Be Empty*

**Call to Worship:**

Leader: Look! The young woman is with child;

**People: She will call her child Emmanuel, for God is with us.**

Leader: The mystery of the ages is now revealed.

**People: To God be glory forever.**

Leader: God of grace, your eternal Word took flesh among us when Mary placed her life at the service of your will.  
Prepare our hearts for Christ's appearing; keep us steadfast in hope and faithful in service, that we may receive the coming of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ, the ruler of all, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

**Litany for Advent:**

O Emmanuel, our Sovereign and lawgiver, desire of the nations and Savior of all: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

God of all generations, though signs and seasons change, your promise is faithful and your word will never pass away.  
Give us courage and strength as we watch and wait for Jesus Christ, our redeemer, who is coming in glory to reign.

**Amen.**

**Lighting of the Advent Candles**

Leader: On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we light the candle of love. The Lord will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child.

**People: She shall bear a son and name him Emmanuel: "God is with us."**

**\*Hymn 143**

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
you, who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations; you have seen his natal star:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!
- 4 All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!

**Call to Prayer**

There is a voice crying out in the wilderness of sin. God is calling to us with love. Let us confess our sin, trusting in God's saving grace.

**Prayer of Confession**

God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all things under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom of justice and peace, for we lead casual lives, ignoring your presence and your promise. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your love for us and for others. In your mercy, forgive us. Grant us the wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek the things that will endure when Christ comes to reign in every heart. Amen. [Silent prayers]

## Words of Assurance

The wilderness will rejoice; the dry land will blossom. The people of God will return with joy and singing. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in him we are forgiven. Amen.

## \*The Gloria

*Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

## \*The Peace

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

## Prayer of Illumination

Holy God, our hope and strength, by the power of your Spirit, prepare a way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may recognize the glorious signs of your promise fulfilled in us and for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## \*Hymn 100

*My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

Mary's Song

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,  
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight and my weakness you did not spurn;  
So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

REFRAIN: My heart shall sing of the day you bring.

Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near,

and the world is about to turn!

2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,  
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn  
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. REFRAIN

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more for the food they can never earn.  
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. REFRAIN

4 Though the nations rage from age to age we remember who holds us fast.  
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,  
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. REFRAIN

## Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

## Anthem

*Cold December Flies Away*

Jantz A. Black

## Sermon

**"Joseph's Dream"**

Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder

## Response

*Amen*

## \*Affirmation of Faith

"Credo for Christians"

I worship and adore God, source, essence, and aim of all things,  
Spirit that enlivens all beings.

I follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself  
and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.

He was born through love,

He lived for love,

He suffered for love,

He died for love,

But love never dies.

I submit myself to the leading of the love that is God,

that I may be compassionate toward all beings,  
that I may live and serve in community with others,  
that I may ask for and offer forgiveness,  
that I may praise and enjoy God forever. Amen.

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer:**

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 debts as we forgive our debtors,  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,  
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

\*Or "Mother" or "Parent"

**Welcome and Next Steps**

**Minute for Mission**

**Offerings and Gifts of Self**

**Offertory**

*Greensleeves*

Bower Hill 'phil

**\*The Doxology: Hymn 606, 607**      *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow\**      Old Hundredth  
*Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!*  
*Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.*  
\*For a gender-neutral version, use hymn 607.

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Closing Hymn 113**      *Angels We Have Heard on High*

*1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
*2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
*3 Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

**\*Charge and Benediction**

**Postlude**

*We Wish You a Merry Christmas*

Bower Hill 'Phil

*Feel free to exit during the postlude, mindful of those who wish to stay and listen.*

Many thanks to members of the Bower Hill Phil -

Addie Ivey, clarinet  
Bea Watterson, violin  
Leah Smith, violin  
Josiah Slaybaugh, viola  
Ella Belardi, cello