

**Prelude:** Away in a Manger - arr. By Norm Abbott Performed By: Nancy Quinn

**Call to Worship:** Adapted from Psalm 95:6-7 (The Psalter)

Come, bow down and worship, kneel to the Lord, our Maker.  
This is our God, our shepherd,  
we are the flock led with care.  
Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

**Hymn:** In the Bleak Midwinter VU 55

1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2 Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to  
reign:  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

3 Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and  
day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel which adore.

4 What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him -- give my heart.

**Prayer of Approach:**

We're a mixed bag of people!  
From different places, with myriad concerns  
and preoccupations.  
Some of us have worked all night; some of us  
are just waking! There's happiness here, and  
there are all sorts of painful experiences here,  
too.  
There's one thing we have in common  
Somehow we're drawn, yes there's habit and  
routine and discipline  
But more there's the sense we must look  
beyond

Beyond ourselves, beyond our business,  
beyond our tight-knit community.  
There's all the depth of human love, of  
human grief, of human hope, here.  
This binds us together, because it points us  
beyond ourselves. We come because in our  
smallness, we glimpse a world which is  
magnificent  
We glimpse into the breadth, and length,  
height and depth into the Divine bursting into  
and out of human life.

*John LI Humphreys*

**Prayer of Confession:**

Holy God, we realize that You know us more intimately than we know ourselves.  
We come before You now asking You to show us our sin, to make us aware of our failings,  
to open our eyes to our brokenness.

We are wandering sheep that have gone our own way. We do not love as you love.

Nor do we live as you would have us live,  
with courage, generosity or the boldness of the gospel.

So in the silence of our hearts,  
we offer up to you those things  
we have done and those we have left undone.

*(short silence)*

Forgive us, O God.

Renew us by your Spirit,  
and reform us with your compassion,  
remaking us more fully into the image of Christ,

We need Your wisdom and guidance to show us the path of truth and life, for we are lost without Your  
grace. Search us, O God, and know our hearts.

Test us and know our troubled thoughts.

Give us true repentance that only comes from You.

Do Your transforming work in us so that we can live as Your redeemed people in our homes, our church  
and our community. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

**Prayer of Assurance:****Assurance of Grace**

Dear Friends, the good news of the gospel  
is that God's love in Christ stretches  
so deep and so wide that it infiltrates  
every broken place in our hearts  
and in our world.

Our hatred is met with love,  
our cruelty is met with compassion,  
our sins and our trespasses are met with forgiveness.  
It is greater than anything you have ever done,  
or could do.

Open your hearts to let the love of God in,  
because in Christ you are forgiven, freed, made new.  
By the power of your Holy Spirit  
shine yet more light forth from your Holy Word,  
shocking our hardened hearts back to life  
with your freely given grace.  
This we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Children's Time:

(During Children's Time) I Just want to be a sheep

### Chorus

I just wanna be a sheep

Baa, baa, baa, baa

I just wanna be a sheep

Baa, baa, baa, baa

I pray the Lord my soul to keep

I just wanna be a sheep

Baa, baa, baa, baa,

1. Don't wanna be a goat...nope

Don't wanna be a goat...nope

Haven't got any hope...nope

Don't wanna be a goat...nope

2. Don't wanna be a hypocrite

Don't wanna be a hypocrite

'Cause they're not hip to it

Don't wanna be a hypocrite

3. Don't wanna be a Pharisee

Don't wanna be a Pharisee

'Cause they're not fair you see

Don't wanna be a Pharisee

4. Don't wanna be a Sadducee

Don't wanna be a Sadducee

'Cause they're so sad you see

Don't wanna be a Sadducee

5. Just wanna be a child of God

Just wanna be a child of God

Walkin' the same path He trod

Just wanna be a child of God

## PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE Readers: Glenn Baskerville and Janet Patterson

1: Loving God, we are here to celebrate and to receive the story of the birth of Jesus. Yet, even as we celebrate, we know that there are many in need here and around the world.

We think of those who won't be with family or friends for Christmas, those who are sad and grieving for a loved one, and all who are facing struggles and challenges of many kinds.

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

1: We think of the victims of the building collapse in London and the men that lost their lives

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

2: We think of all the people who fight for human rights and dignity around the world

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

1: We pray for the earth, and especially for the polar bears and other animals who are feeling the effects of climate change. May we, the people of the earth, find a path to heal the damage to our climate and to our earth.

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

2: We pray for all animals, for wolverines, koalas, red pandas, and all the wonderful creatures you have made, O God.

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

1: We think of all who are sick today and all who are grieving.

We think of those who don't have homes in which to live,

and those who aren't safe from abuse and violence at home.  
We think of those who are lonely and those who are being bullied.  
And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

2: We think of those who are experiencing so many emotions this Christmas, especially those who are not feeling merry or joyous.

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

1: We think of all women who are pregnant and all couples who are expecting a baby.  
We know they have worries as well as excitement.

And so we pray...

**All: May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

2: We can have so many different memories and emotions at Christmas.

Like those there at the first Christmas, we can be happy, sad, joyful, angry, peaceful, and frustrated.

Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Ones, and the innkeeper all discovered you were with them.

They found your peace when Jesus was born.

In the same way, may we here  
and people everywhere

find peace in knowing that you are with us, today and always.

For Jesus came as Emmanuel, God-with-us.

For this we give thanks

**Hymn:** See Amid the Winter's Snow VU 76

1 See amid the winter's snow,  
born for us on earth below,  
see, the tender Lamb appears,  
promised from eternal years.

[Refrain:]

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;  
hail, redemption's happy dawn;  
sing through all Jerusalem,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

2 Lo, within a stable lies  
God who built the starry skies,  
who enthroned in height sublime  
sits amid the cherubim. [Refrain]

3 Say, ye humble shepherds, say  
what your joyful news today;  
wherefore have ye left your sheep  
on the lonely mountain steep? [Refrain]

4 "As we watched at dead of night,  
lo, we saw a wondrous light;  
angels singing 'Peace on earth'  
told us of a Saviour's birth." [Refrain]

5 Sacred infant, all divine,  
what a mighty love was thine,  
thus to come from highest bliss  
down to such a world as this! [Refrain]

## **A New Creed :**

We Are Called To Be The Church...  
To Proclaim Jesus, Crucified And Risen,  
Our Judge And Our Hope...  
We Are Not Alone,  
We Live In God's World.  
We Believe In God:  
Who Has Created And Is Creating,  
Who Has Come In Jesus,  
The Word Made Flesh,  
To Reconcile And Make New,  
Who Works In Us And Others By The Spirit.

We Trust In God.  
We Are Called To Be The Church:  
To Celebrate God's Presence,  
To Live With Respect In Creation,  
To Love And Serve Others,  
To Seek Justice And Resist Evil,  
To Proclaim Jesus, Crucified And Risen,  
Our Judge And Our Hope.  
In Life, In Death, In Life Beyond Death,  
God Is With Us.  
We Are Not Alone.  
Thanks Be To God.

## **Invitation to the Offering:**

The great Swiss theologian Karl Barth once said that grace and gratitude go together like heaven and earth. The Way of Jesus Christ is the life lived in gratitude for the God who as created us and claimed us as her own. In gratitude for God's gifts, let's give back to God our gifts of time, talent, and treasure for God's mission in the world. The offering will now be received.

## **Offering Song: We are an offering**

We lift our voices  
We lift our hands  
We lift our lives up to You  
We are an offering  
Lord use our voices  
Lord use our hands  
Lord use our lives they are Yours  
We are an offering

All that we have  
All that we are  
All that we hope to be  
We give to You  
We give to You

## **Dedication Prayer:**

Receive these gifts O God,  
use them to reform this community of faith  
as you remake the world in your image.  
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Anthem:** The Holy Child poem by Martin Luther, music by Easthope Martin Performed by Nancy Quinn

**Scriptures:** Performed by Keith Green The Sheep and the Goats

**Sermon:** “Goats in Sheep’s clothing: Transforming the Inner Heart”– Tabitha

**Closing Prayer:**

Good Shepherd  
Teach us to follow you –  
to care for those  
who are close to us,  
To protect those  
who are threatened,  
to welcome those  
who are rejected,  
to forgive those  
who are burdened by guilt,  
to heal those  
who are broken and sick,  
to share with those  
who have little or nothing,  
to take the time to really know  
one another and love  
as you have loved us.  
Good Shepherd,  
Teach us to follow you –

to spread compassion to those  
who are far away,  
to speak for those  
who are voiceless,  
to defend those  
who are oppressed and abused,  
to work for justice for those  
who are exploited,  
to make peace for those  
who suffer violence,  
to take the time to recognise  
our connectedness,  
and to love as you have loved us.  
Good Shepherd,  
Teach us to follow you  
and to be faithful  
to the calling  
you gave us  
In Jesus Name Amen

**Hymn:** Still Still Still VU 47

1 Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.  
The Christ child in his crib is sleeping,  
angels round him watch are keeping.  
Still, still, still: the night is common still

2. Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep,  
while Mary sings AND gently holds you,  
safely in her arms enfolds you.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep.

3. Joy, joy, joy: glad tidings of great joy!  
For through God's holy incarnation  
Christ is born for our Salvation.  
Joy, joy, joy: glad tidings of great joy!

**Commissioning:**

Go out into the world,  
living in the light of Christ!  
By the power of the Spirit  
do all the good you can  
by all the means you can  
in all the ways you can  
in all the places you can  
at all the times you can  
to all the people you can  
as long as ever you can. —*words attributed to John Wesley*

**Postlude:** The Holy and the Ivey – arr. by Robert Schultz

## **Reflective Questions for the Week:**

- What role do I play in this church.
- In what areas am I challenged in relating with others in my faith community
- In what ways does my attitude and actions reflect goat qualities
- What are the unresolved issues I have with others in the church? Have I been hurt? Have I hurt others knowingly, intentionally or unintentionally?
- If Jesus looks at the heart, am I following Jesus, listening to the spirit?
- As a mature Christian am I holding myself and other members of my congregation accountable for their actions and attitudes. What actions would God have me take to bring justice and healing to this community.
- Will you take your thoughts to God daily, asking what God wants you to do to bring about healing in our community?
- Will you set aside time to read God's word?
- Do you care? Ask God to show you his heart for this church.