

## Prepare

Do you have a checklist of things to do in preparation for Christmas? How's that working for you?

When Isaiah proclaimed, "Prepare the way of the Lord," it was an announcement of freedom. Seventy years of bondage were over, the iron curtain was down, all were free to leave Babylon. God was coming to lead them to their true home.

John the Baptist picked up Isaiah's words to announce the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Christ is coming with healing in his hands, with hope for the disillusioned, and with unquenchable grace to mend our erring.

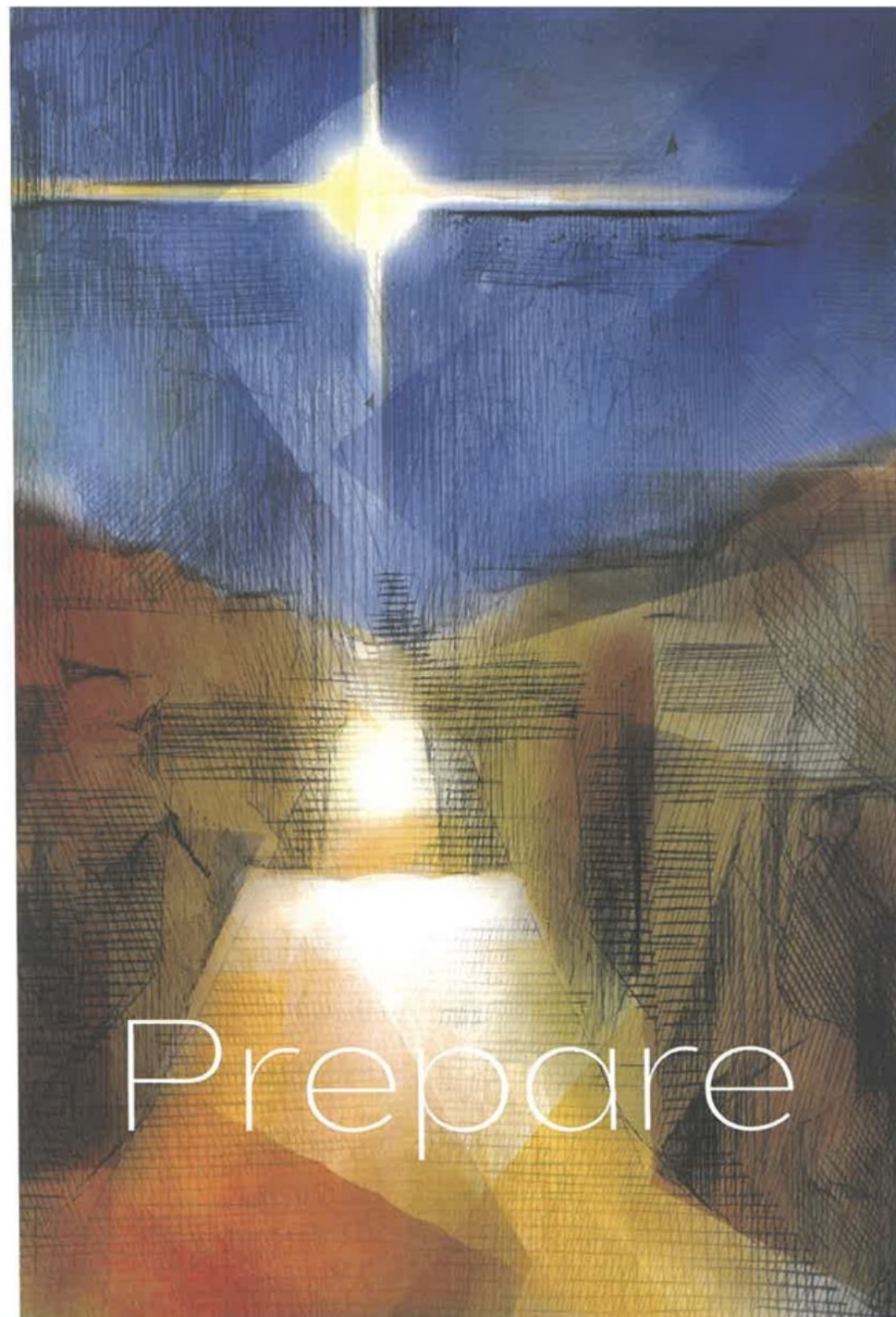
What does it mean today to prepare God's way, God's road? Preparing for Christmas may be hard, but preparing for Christmas is easier than preparing for Christ. The reason is that preparing for Christmas is done on our outsides. Preparing for Christ must be done in our insides.

And yet, there is only one thing on the checklist for preparing for Christ. That is to open the door. And that is hardest of all, especially for those of us who want to be rulers of our own castle. We fear Christ will come to judge, to demand, to make us uncomfortable. But the promise is clear: *if any one will open the door, I will come in and eat with them.* It is an invitation to a relationship! And, knowing Jesus, he will be bringing company. But don't worry about the Christmas cookies. He's bringing the meal also. Can you testify to that?

—Bob Bowman  
North Manchester, Indiana

"A voice cries out, 'In the wilderness **prepare** the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" (Isaiah 40:3, *NRSVue*). **Today's Bible readings from the lectionary:** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

December 10, 2023, Second Sunday of Advent. Cover design by Paul Stocksdales © Brethren Press.  
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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
Hagerstown, Maryland

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**MORNING WORSHIP** **10:45 AM**

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**December 10, 2023**  
**The Second Sunday of Advent**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** Amy Clipp, Worship Leader

**WHERE DID YOU SEE GOD THIS WEEK?**

**PRELUDE** "Lo! How A Rose E'er Blooming" (Mansfield)

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The day of God is coming; lift up your voices. Cry out with the strength God provides.  
**All:** *We await God's coming day with anticipation. We seek the peace and patience God provides*  
One: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God. Speak tenderly to my suffering people.  
**All:** *We will prepare the way for One who is coming. We look forward to baptism in the Spirit.*  
One: God will feed us like a shepherd. God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.  
**All:** *God's hand is upon us in blessing; we are welcomed by God's steadfast love.*

**\*HYMN #176** "Comfort, comfort, O my people"  
[Verse 1]

*Comfort, comfort, O my people, speak of peace, now says our God. Comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning 'neath their sorrows' load. Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them. Tell of all the sins I cover, and that warfare now is over.*

[Verse 2]

*Hark, the voice of one who's crying in the desert far and near, bidding all to full repentance since the kingdom now is here. O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way. Let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.*

[Verse 3]

*O make straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain. Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is shed abroad. And all flesh shall see the token that his word is never broken.*

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

Righteous and holy God, your glory is revealed to us day by day as valleys of despair are lifted up and as mountainous problems are leveled. In your presence we see more than our immediate situation. We catch a glimpse of your eternal purposes. So come among us now and speak your word of peace. Feed us with your truth, and equip us to welcome Christ's coming. Amen.

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE**

"Love's Pure Light" - Temple Choir

**Responsive Litany:**

One: In this season of Advent, we pray for God's peace.  
**All:** **Christ is our light and the source of our peace.**  
One: We witness the hostility between nations and neighbors.  
**All:** **Christ is our light and the source of our peace.**  
One: We see a world full of fractured relationships and unforgiving hearts.  
**All:** **Christ is our light and the source of our peace.**  
One: We seek relief from our own inner turmoil and restlessness.  
**All:** **Christ is our light and the source of our peace.**  
One: This morning we light two candles, the candle of hope and the candle of peace. This candle reminds us that Christ came into our world to restore peace, and that only through trust in God's word and his promises can we find our own inner peace. We remember that Christ is the Prince of Peace who taught us that through simple acts of love and forgiveness peace is spread throughout the world.

*(The congregation is invited to join the choir in singing the response to the litany printed on the insert.)*

**SERVICE OF GIVING**

**CALL TO GIVE**

One way we prepare for Christ's appearance is to support the church's mission in our community and beyond. Our church's programs share good news, our outreach provides comfort and practical help, and our goals are nothing less than newness of life for all God's children. May our gifts reflect God's generosity.

We joyfully give as one body, both gathered in his house of worship and gathered through virtual technology. We give by placing our offerings in the plate, mailing to or dropping off at the church, or using Paypal. Together, as we give, we declare our dedication to Jesus and our obedience to serve him.

“The Promised Savior”  
*“Praise God from whom”*

(Johnson)

## PRAVERS OF THE PEOPLE

## MORNING ANTHEM

“We Wait for Thee”  
Temple Choir

Isaiah 40:1-11

## SCRIPTURE READING

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In

says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

ed her term, that her penalty is paid, that she

and double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In

## MESSAGE

Pastor Twyla Rowe

*"O come, O come, Immanuel"*

*O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely  
exile here, until the Son of God appear.*

*exile here, until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, 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 vict'ry o'er the grave.*

[Verse 3]

[Verse 3]

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.*

[Chorus]

[Verse 4]

*O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home.*

*Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.*

[Chorus]

[Verse 5]

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh.*

*To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in thy ways to go.*

[Chorus]

[Verse 6]

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.*

*Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease. Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.*

[Chorus]

**\*BENEDICTION**

*After the Benediction, you may be seated.*

*Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.*

**POSTLUDE**

“Prepare the Way O Zion”

(Smith)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship

Thank you for joining us in worship today.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



*Second Sunday of Advent*



Hagerstown  
Church of the Brethren  
15 S. Mulberry Street,  
Hagerstown, Maryland  
21740  
301-733-3565  
Fax: 301-733-3598

Office: Tuesday—Friday  
Flexible hours  
(appointments welcome/  
call ahead)

Morning Praise Worship  
at 8:30 AM  
Sunday School at 9:30 AM  
Worship and Facebook Live  
at 10:45 AM

[www.hagerstowncob.org](http://www.hagerstowncob.org)

[www.facebook.com/  
hagerstowncob](http://www.facebook.com/hagerstowncob)

Twyla Rowe  
Pastor

Allyson McPeak  
Administrative Assistant

Burton Young  
Director of  
Music Ministries

Don Rowe  
Interior Esthetics  
Technician

*We welcome you to our church and  
Rejoice in your participation with us in  
worship. It is our prayer that you will  
experience the presence of God's Spirit and  
that it will equip you for service and ministry  
in the week ahead. Our Pastor, Deacons, and  
Cluster Leaders are available after worship  
and during the week to listen and assist you in  
your Christian pilgrimage.*

#### **THE ANNOUNCER    December 10, 2023**

**If you placed someone** on the prayer list and they are now celebrating a recovery and would like their name taken off the list, please contact the church office.

**If you or a loved one** has surgery scheduled, is hospitalized, or would like a visit from the pastor, please notify the church.

**"Take a Moment"** Let this be our "Take a Moment" prayer beginning Sunday, December 10 - Holy God, all around me I see signs of the season pointing me towards something special about to take place. I am grateful that I know what that something special is...the celebration of the birth of Jesus, my Savior. There is much to get done before Christmas Day arrives; and so, I am busy preparing for the occasion. I continually remind myself that it's not about the decorations, the gifts, the cookies, the parties...the stuff on the "outside"; but the most important part of getting ready for Christmas involves preparing my "inside" self...making space in my heart for my Savior. With your Spirit's inspiration, I will keep this as my daily preparation priority. I also pray for those God who are not finding joy, but rather pain and sadness, in this season because of grief or other challenges in their lives. Comfort them. May my preparations for Christmas include letting your light shine through me to help brothers and sisters, such as these, find some peace and joy during these challenging days. It is through the Spirit that I pray, these things. Amen.

**Our thanks** to Amy Clipp for being our worship leader today and to our Temple Choir for our morning music. Thanks also to Christine Ellis and Kathy Kelsey for lighting our advent candle.

**Attendance.** Please sign the attendance rosters found at the end of your pew, or possibly in the hymnal rack, and pass it down the row so everyone can sign.

**The Parish Nurse Blood Pressure Screenings** will be held today. The screenings will take place in the Fellowship Hall before the 8:30 AM Morning Praise Worship Service and in the Mullendore room before the 10:45 AM worship.

**Christmas Cards.** Please remember to use the new mailboxes in the hall outside the church office if you are giving Christmas cards to your church family. Please check your mailbox often. You never know what might be in there. Blessings and Have a Merry Christmas! - *Your Spiritual Nurture Team*

**Date change—Junior Church—December 17.** Junior Church will be held the third Sunday this month and is open to children ages Kindergarten through Grade 6. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a special time together. (Parents may, of course, opt to keep their child in worship with them especially if the child is uncertain about going.) If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Brenda Shane.

**Newsletter Deadline!** All articles should be submitted to the Administrative Assistant **no later than December 15th.** Thank you!

**Christmas Eve Evening Service**—Everyone is invited to the evening Christmas Eve celebration service of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Come and worship the newborn King through a traditional service of singing carols, listening to the angelic voices of the choir and the heavenly tones of the bell choir and the organ, and hearing the Christmas story, and we will also celebrate communion. Symbolizing the Light that came to the world on that holy night long ago, we will hold light high as we recommit our faithfulness to carry the light into the world. The service will begin at 7:00. Come...let us adore Him...Christ the Lord!

**Drivers Needed:** HCOB has some members who are in need of a ride on certain Sundays to church and back home. We are making a list of names of people in our congregation who would be willing to give a ride to an older member on occasion. Can you help? It is not a permanent job, hoping to have enough volunteers, so that it will only be once and awhile. You may sign up in the West Entrance to be a driver, or call/email Allyson. Thanks so much for your help.

**NEEDED:** A men's 26 or 27 inch bike for transportation. If someone has a gently used bike in their garage that is no longer used, please contact Jan Young. Thank you.

**Fellowship Time.** We're in need of volunteers to provide goodies for Fellowship Time, held the first Sunday of each month from 10:20 am—10:40 am. Goodies may be your favorite recipe or a delicious store bought treat. Suggestions include cookies, muffins, or doughnuts (3-4 dozen of whatever you choose) and may be dropped off in the Mullendore Room (the room behind the wing of the sanctuary) that morning. Beverages and paper products are provided. Please sign up on the sheet located in the west entrance, or contact Kristal Bricker or Amy Hardy. Thank you for helping to make Fellowship Time possible!

**Save the Date!** Our service week at the REACH Cold Weather Shelter is March 10-17, 2024. For all those who have volunteered in the past or plan on volunteering in 2024, please add this week to your calendar. Please note, it is a different month than in the past. Thank you for your continued support!

**Do you like to get notes from your friends?** Notes From Jesus is a little book for children with playful illustrations that is written in kid language from their friend Jesus. The book is written as Jesus would answer questions about himself. As the subtitle says, "What your new best friend wants you to know." The Christian Education ministry team thinks this would be an excellent book for grandparents, uncles, aunts or anyone to give to a child who is just learning to know Jesus or who wants to know more. If you would like to check out this great little book, please see Ann Platon or Deb Long. The cost of this gift for your favorite child is \$6.

**Cash for Causes/Martin's Gift Card Program.** Purchase Martin's gift cards to take to the store to pay for your groceries or gas, and 5% of the face value of the gift card is a donation to the church and goes toward your yearly charitable contribution. To purchase a card, please contact Larry Kees, Jr. (301-331-0107). We can make arrangements to leave cards in your church mailbox or mail them to you.

### Year-end Giving Guidelines

The Internal Revenue Service states under the heading of Timing of Contributions: *Contributions must actually be paid in cash or other property before the close of your tax year to be deductible, whether you use the cash or accrual method.*

This means all contributions for any given year must be physically at the church no later than December 31st to be applied to the year's contribution statement.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/charitable-contribution-deductions>

**Offering envelopes are located** in the pew racks and at other convenient locations around the church. To assist our financial secretary, we ask that you use an envelope and please put your name and envelope number on the outside. Here's a tip - take a few envelopes home and stick one of those return address labels we all get on the outside. Then all you need to add is your number. Having your name and number on the outside of the envelope is a huge help to our offering counters. Thank you!

## CALENDAR

### Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

8:15 am Parish Nurse Blood Pressure Screening  
8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall  
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms  
10:15 am Parish Nurse Blood Pressure Screening  
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & Facebook Live

### Monday, December 11

Church Office Closed

6:30 pm GriefShare/Mullendore Room  
6:30 pm Deacon Meeting/Fellowship Hall

### Tuesday, December 12

7:00 pm Hag. Choral Arts/Fellowship Hall

### Wednesday, December 13

Kiwanis Kids Christmas Party/Fellowship Hall

12:00 pm Deadline for bulletin announcement submissions

### Thursday, December 14

5:30 pm Praise Band Rehearsal/Fellowship Hall  
6:30 pm Brethren Bells/Choir Room  
7:30 pm Temple Choir/Fellowship Hall

### Friday, December 15

8:00 am Bulletin preparation time/Church office  
12:00 pm Newsletter deadline  
1:00 pm Islamic Center/Use of Parking Lot (1-3 pm)

### Saturday, December 16

Pastor Twyla's day off  
2:00 pm CCC Class Christmas Party/ Fellowship Hall  
7:30 pm Hagerstown Choral Arts, w/MSO

### Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

Junior Church

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall  
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms  
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & Facebook Live  
3:00 pm Hagerstown Choral Arts w/MSO

*Remember our weekday schedule is subject to rapid change.*

You may mail your offering to  
15 S. Mulberry Street,  
Hagerstown MD 21740  
OR  
you can make a secure offering  
donation on our website using  
PayPal [www.hagerstowncob.org](http://www.hagerstowncob.org)

The church calendar is online at  
[www.hagerstowncob.org](http://www.hagerstowncob.org).  
Click the calendar tab.

### Statistics

8:30 AM attendance ..... \*\*  
Sunday School..... 53  
10:45 AM attendance..... 102  
Facebook views ..... 225

The General Fund offering does not include monies given for any designated fund.  
For total offerings, please review the financial statement provided by the Assistant Treasurer.

## THE BIG ASK / THE BIG GIVE

You are probably wondering what this means. Let me explain:

### THE BIG ASK

Is me asking anyone willing to spread the word about becoming a living donor. Due to a 46-year battle with a rare form of kidney stones and dozens of surgeries and procedures, I am in stage 5 kidney failure. I am on a waiting list for a kidney transplant, but the wait is currently 4-5 years. By finding a living donor, it would eliminate the wait and provide me a better chance of a successful transplant and longer life span.

### THE BIG GIVE

The big give is you or someone you know willing to consider becoming a living donor. There is a completely confidential electronic questionnaire to fill out. The transplant team will review each submission to see if further testing is needed. If you fill out the questionnaire, there is no obligation to be a donor. The web site for the questionnaire is:

[www.UMMCLivingdonor.org](http://www.UMMCLivingdonor.org)

Through the entire process, there is no financial burden on the donor. Everything would go through my insurance.

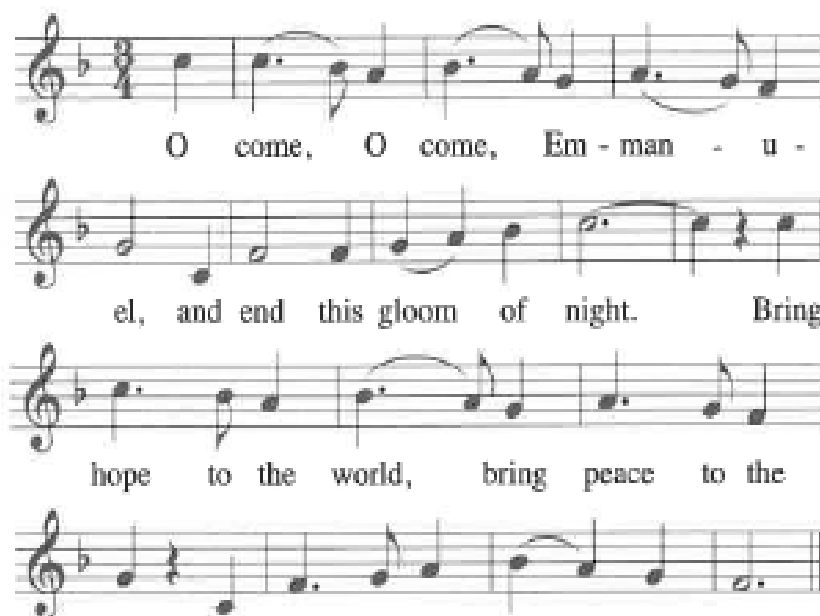
Thank you for your consideration,

Donnie Maas

## Love's Pure Light Congregational part

*"Gesù Bambino"*  
Music: Pietro Yon

Words and Arranged by  
JOEL RANEY



O come, O come, Em - man - u -  
el, and end this gloom of night. Bring  
hope to the world, bring peace to the  
earth, and fill us with love's pure light.

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