**Suggested Liturgical Elements**

**4th Sunday of Advent December 20, 2020**

*Opening Sentences*

Look! The young woman is with child;

***she will call him Emmanuel, for God is with us.***

The mystery of the ages is now revealed.

***To God be the glory forever!***

Jesus says: I am coming soon.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

Hymn *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*  *Glory to God #93*

*Prayer of Confession*

God has always been there for us, loving us and calling us to be all that we can be. Let us tell God all about ourselves, not leaving anything out. (silent prayer) Let us pray together.

***Merciful God, whose care never ceases, we come to you as we are. We are tired from trying to do more than we can manage. We are anxious about problems which go unresolved. We are worried about events beyond our control. We do not easily let go. For mistakes we cannot redeem, for tasks left undone, for uncertain goals, we need your forgiveness and ask for your understanding. For recovery of strength and enthusiasm, we pray for your spirit. For fullness of life, generous hearts, and contented souls, we pray to be followers of Christ Jesus. In your mercy, restore us and lead us. Amen.***

*Assurance of Pardon*

Hear the good news! Though we have sinned, we are forgiven; though we have not loved, we are loved; though we have walked away from God's call, we are drawn back, with the promise of a new opportunity, a new hope, a new chance to show the world, and ourselves, that we are free in Christ. Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel:

***In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!***

*Response to Assurance Glory to God #88, v. 7*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind*

*all peoples in one heart and mind.*

*Bid envy, strife and discord cease;*

*fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*

*shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*Prayer for Illumination*

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

*Scripture Readings*

2 Samuel 7:1-11

Luke 1:26-38

This is the promise of God, to our ancestors and to us.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Sermon* “*Mind the Gap” the Rev. Dr. Sallie Watson, General Presbyter*

Affirmation of Faith *Savior of the Nations, Come Glory to God #102*

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

Holy One, who came as a child, we pray for your children everywhere.

For those who are hungry, we pray for nourishment….

For those who are fleeing, we pray for safety….

For those who are ill, we pray for your healing….

For those who are grieving, we pray for your peace….

For those who are suffering, we pray for your presence….

Holy Three, who patterns community, we pray for communities everywhere.

For those who are divided, we pray for unity….

For those who are isolated, we pray for connection….

For those who are afraid, we pray for your courage….

For those who are frustrated, we pray for new hope….

We pray especially for those in our own community who suffer this day…. (specific concerns are named aloud or in silence)

Holy God, as we await the coming of your Son,

bless us in the work of faith, that we might be truly faithful.

Nourish us in the labor of love, that we might show your love.

Keep our hope steadfast, that we might know your grace and your peace

as we wait for your coming reign of justice and overwhelming love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father…..

Closing Hymn *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*  *Glory to God* #*100*